A Fond Farewell to Araceli from UW-Extension,

In April of 2015 Araceli Whitwam-Sell joined UW-Extension as the new Family Living Educator in Douglas County. Araceli had just recently completed her Master of Social Work at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, MI. Araceli relocated from Eau Claire to Superior to join UW-Extension.

During Araceli’s two-years in Douglas County, she brought an unparalleled energy and enthusiasm to our office and the community. Araceli viewing community needs through her experience and areas of interest found new programming and partnering opportunities for the City of Superior and Douglas County. Araceli brought new programming to the community, which included: Raising A Thinking Child, mindfulness education, programming to incarcerated persons in the Douglas County Jail to help their transition after release, and what turned out to be a popular and signature program… Tucker the Turtle.

While UW-Extension is losing Araceli, fortunately for the community she is not going far. Araceli will be joining Douglas County Health and Human Services, where she will bring her passion for strengthening families and relationships.

The entire UW-Extension Douglas County team wishes Araceli well in her new position, and thanks her for her energy and passion that she brought to the UW-Extension team.

Best Wishes Araceli!

Your friends and co-workers at UW-Extension Douglas County
Community and Economic Development

UW-Extension, Bringing Evidence Based Strategies Locally and Abroad

In May, I experienced my first international volunteer opportunity, something that many of my fellow UW-Extension educators have done when they can link the volunteer work to their academic work. While I have traveled extensively on my own, this was the first time I volunteered on a trip. This opportunity was presented by USAID grant recipient Winrock International through the Farmer-to-Farmer Program.

I traveled to Bangladesh in May for 18 days, where I worked with the Department of Youth Development, part of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The project I was assigned was to work with this department to conduct a needs assessment of current technical training, and to propose a curriculum for entrepreneurship training.

In my first week in Bangladesh, my hosts took me to Youth Training Centers in Dhaka, Jessore, Rangpur, and Khulna. During these stops we visited technical training centers operated by the Ministry, where training in agriculture and agribusiness, fabrics production, modern office systems, air conditioning repair, and other technical fields is offered. Unfortunately, the Bengali economy cannot keep up with the 160+ million population in the area of job creation. The Department of Youth Development is placed an increasing emphasis on self-employment and entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment.

In addition to the training centers, we also visited entrepreneurs at each location that received technical training and then started a business.

Some of these entrepreneurs started their businesses with family property and money, others accessed Department of Youth Development loans, repayable within 24-months for amounts up to 50,000 Bengali Taka (or about $620). These entrepreneurs started farms (dairy, goat, and/or chickens), aquaculture farms where they fish farm (tilapia, prawn, carp, and/or catfish), and fabrics & handicraft businesses. Some of these businesses are operated only by family members, others are contributing jobs to the Bangladesh economy.

Following these visits, I completed a proposed 2-week / 80-hour entrepreneurship training curriculum. I presented an overview of this curriculum to Anwarul Karim, Director General, Department of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth & Sports; and his senior leadership team of youth trainers and educators. Following feedback from the Director General and staff, I made necessary revisions that met their needs. I then conducted a two-day seminar to 14 senior trainers of the department, where I trained them on how to deliver the curriculum and make additional changes to meet their local needs.

This was an incredible opportunity to share my experience working with entrepreneurs. All good experiences provide an opportunity to share and learn. This trip provided me with many opportunities to learn about the Bengali culture... a trip I will not forget. Now that I am back, I am hoping to take some of my work, and use it locally to provide entrepreneurship education to individuals and groups that may not be currently served by resources from the Small Business Development Center and other entrepreneurship training and technical assistance programs.

James Anderson
CNRED

In addition, I am already looking forward. While my work in Bangladesh is complete, Winrock International through USAID will work with the Department of Youth Development to translate my curriculum to Bengali, so the training can be provided to youth across Bangladesh at the local district Youth Training Centers. Winrock International will also bring in one or two additional volunteers over the next 18 months to help the Department of Youth Development to refine their entrepreneurship training efforts.

As I wrap up the logistics of the trip, I am already looking forward. While my work in Bangladesh is complete, Winrock International through USAID will work with the Department of Youth Development to translate my curriculum to Bengali, so the training can be provided to youth across Bangladesh at the local district Youth Training Centers. Winrock International will also bring in one or two additional volunteers over the next 18 months to help the Department of Youth Development to refine their entrepreneurship training efforts.

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(Beat Regards),
James

James with some of the Department of Youth Development senior trainers.

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James
FoodWIse

Julie Montgomery
FoodWIse Coordinator

Spring Shopping Tour Highlights

Families on a tight budget report that the cost of healthy groceries is their biggest barrier to making healthy meals at home. Food skills, like smart shopping, can help overcome that barrier.

FoodWIse offers Shopping Matters, a free grocery store tour to empower families to stretch their food budgets so their children get healthy meals at home. Additionally, our focus is on reaching parents with kids ages 5 and under and adults or students in transition who belong to low-income families and make a majority of the food purchasing decisions in their household.

Tarah Nichols and Julie Montgomery led a grocery tour in May which included parents whose children are enrolled in WIC, Head Start and Northern Lights Elementary School. The group represented parents of twelve or more children. As a result, 75% of the participants stated they would try comparing unit prices, reading ingredients lists to find whole grains and comparing food labels on their next shopping trip. Parents reported they are very confident in using their WIC fruit and vegetable vouchers and identifying WIC foods at the grocery store. When asked what new ideas they learned for saving money or buying healthier food, parents learned: “unit pricing,” “to read the ingredients on food labels,” “how to choose ripe fruit,” “canned does not necessarily mean low quality and can be a healthy choice,” “to look for whole grain ingredients (even in bread)” and “how to buy meat.”

No child should grow up hungry in America, but one in five children struggles with hunger. UW-Extension FoodWIse and The No Kid Hungry campaign Shopping Matters grocery tour connects kids in need with nutritious food and teaches their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals.

Information adapted from cookingmatters.org

On May 10th, I had the opportunity to visit Four Corner’s Elementary School to teach students a nutrition lesson based on MyPlate. We talked about ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake and most agreed that choosing these at lunch helped get the daily requirements needed. With the younger students, we also read a book about fruits and vegetables and played fruit and vegetable bingo. The 4th and 5th grade students learned how to read food labels and the importance of looking at ingredient lists. Each of the 4th and 5th grade students was given a food label and had to find certain nutrients on the list. They then had to rate the food based on the facts they had just learned, not on how well they liked the food. Many were surprised to see some of their favorite foods not as healthful as they thought.

All students were offered a vegetable sample to taste.