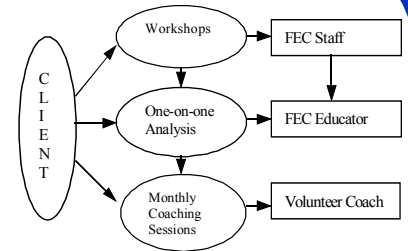


Reaching Financial Goals through Coaching

Dane County UW Extension's Financial Education Center launched a new volunteer coaching program appropriately titled **C.H.A.N.G.E.** The program provides support to individuals using **C**oaching, a **H**ands-on approach, **A**ccountability, **N**etworking with peers, **G**oal setting and an **E**ducational component. After an initial assessment with Financial Educator Susan Taylor, participants (primarily low-income families from the United Way "Housing First" initiative) are connected with a trained volunteer coach who partners with them for 6-months to achieve a self-selected financial goal. In addition to meeting at least once a month, the coach and participant attend monthly group workshops and network with other participants. The program was piloted in 2010 with a 95% success rate of participants meeting their goals. In 2011 we made it part of our core programming. To date, we have matched 16 participants with volunteer coaches, have approximately 20 participants in the goal setting process, and 15 coaches waiting to be matched.



Deb Neubauer, Family Life Educator, neubauer@countyofdane.com

Science Forum for Yahara Watershed Initiative



The Yahara River's chain of five beautiful lakes helps define our community and region and is integral to much of what we do. The quality of these lakes had deteriorated significantly over time as our population and use has increased. Many public and private organizations have dedicated time and resources to solve the lakes' problems, yet new challenges have emerged. The Dane County UW Extension assisted some of these groups design, convene, and facilitate a forum of University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource, US Geological Survey, and private corporation research scientists to discuss and develop action plans on how to improve the lakes. The scientists represented a broad spectrum of disciplines related to water issues. The proposed strategies and detailed plans will help set a future agenda for watershed actions to improve the Yahara Lakes.

Mindy Habecker, Natural Resource/Community Development Educator habecker@countyofdane.com

Extension Helps Local Organization Plan for the Future

The Stoughton Area Senior Center decided to update its strategic plan during 2010. To help them do so, they contacted Bill Rizzo, Community Resource Development Educator with the Dane County UW-Extension Office for his assistance. Rizzo worked with a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of members of the Stoughton Commission on Aging and several at-large members to develop the new strategic plan. A highlight of the planning process was a series of interviews and focus group sessions conducted by the Planning Committee to better understand the needs, concerns, issues of Center constituents, as well as what trends and other changes might be emerging relative to the Center's programming/service environment. This activity enabled the Commission and Center to revisit and recharge old relationships and, in a number of cases, establish new relationships with critical stakeholders. It also enabled the Planning Committee to identify five strategic issues or challenges for their plan. These included the need to achieve and maintain financial stability; the need to improve outreach to constituents; the need to expand the Center's pool of volunteers; the need to attract a younger and more diverse "younger-older" adult population; and the need to significantly expand the Center's collaborative/partnership activities. The new strategic plan was adopted by the Stoughton Commission on Aging during the Fall of 2010.

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For more information on Dane County UW Extension visit:

<http://dane.uwex.edu/>

