

## Michael Wickus, Quarter I, 2009



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### UWEX AmeriCorps\*VISTA Success Story

#### **4-H Afterschool: Bringing 4-H to Everyone By Michael Wickus, VISTA Member**

**Situation:** Currently, 26.7% qualify for free and reduced lunches in the Baraboo School District. Half of the students attending South School are a part of this program. 4-H can be a difficult program to participate in for

those families with parents who work long hours at one or more job, have only one vehicle, and other financial and time impediments. During the hours between 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm many youth are left unattended and the potential for them commit crimes and damage property increases. 4-H Afterschool gives these underserved youth the opportunity gain the educational and experiential benefits of attending a 4-H club while in a safe, supervised environment.

**Response:** In order to give the program the attention it required, 4-H Youth Development Leader Jessica Jens applied for and was given the ability to hire Michael Wickus as full time volunteer for a one year term from the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Wickus met with Baraboo School District administrators, Community Education Director Donna Baker. Together, they determined that would be best to hold meetings twice a month from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm at South, East and G.L.W. Elementary schools. North Freedom, Jack Young Middle School as well as the Bluffview community will be included after funds are secured.

Sauk County 4-H Leaders graciously donated fifty dollars to all three clubs. This enabled Wickus to purchase a "Club Tub" filled with materials for games, projects and activities for each club. Wickus also compiled a "Club Binder" which contained 4-H Afterschool projects, games, activities, and other resources for each club.

To find volunteers, Wickus had e-mails sent to all UW Baraboo college students, gave presentations for the Baraboo High School Key Club and Student Council, and spoke with Parent Support Groups at each school. Three adult volunteers were recruited from UW Baraboo and twelve volunteers from BHS. All volunteers have stayed with the program. Volunteers received an hour-long orientation from Wickus and Jens with more training from Donna Baker and other staff planned in the coming months. The volunteers have lead four meetings at each of the three 4-H Afterschool clubs since November of 2008.

**Results:** 4-H Afterschool is still in its infancy, but it has shown promising results thus far. South School's Wacky Badger Club has 9 members; G.L.W.'s Go Brewers! Club has 12 members; and East School's Panther Pride Club has 14. Each club has elected officers that conduct at least one business meeting per month based on parliamentary procedure. The club members have all expressed their enjoyment of and satisfaction with the clubs whenever asked. To date, all volunteers and all participating youth have stayed with the program.

**Evidence:** Attendance of club members and volunteers is recorded at the beginning each meeting.