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THIS MONTH

JULY 2022

The impact of the staffing shortage on caregiving in Waukesha County

ADRC of Waukesha County, adult children discuss caring for parents

By Karen Pilarski
 262-513-2657

WAUKESHA — Job vacancies are impacting many industries, and caregiving agencies are no exception. Shirley Peterson, supervisor, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Waukesha County, said during the pandemic people were scared of having strangers come to their home and help with loved ones. Now that people are ready for caregiver staff to enter their homes, there is a shortage.

"The job market for caregivers is very difficult. I know agencies are struggling to get people to be able to work," she said.

Peterson said people know there are jobs out there that pay more than agencies can.

"If agencies do pay more, then those costs go back to the families or like us (ADRC). The costs of people coming into the home are much greater," she said.

Peterson added it is a difficult cycle people are in right now.



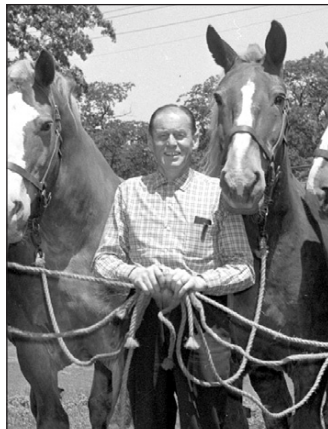
Courtesy of Mary Kolberg

See **CARE**, PAGE 4

Mary Kolberg (left) took on the role of caregiver for her mother Suzanne Kolberg (right) as she fought Alzheimer's disease.

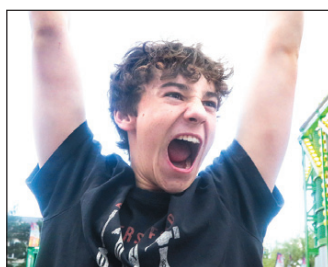
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INSIDE



Scenes from
 the past

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St. John Vianney
 Festival brings
 on the fun

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— SCENES FROM THE PAST —



From the Freeman negatives at the Waukesha County Museum

Parade horses

Rolland Ruby of Brookfield poses with seven of his Belgian horses, six of which were to be used to pull a circus wagon in Milwaukee's Fourth of July Parade, in this June 28, 1963, photo.



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What to do if you see a bear

MADISON — Following several recent black bear sightings across the state, including new sightings in Waukesha and Washington counties, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is reminding the public to take precautions to avoid potential conflicts this summer.

Sightings

A black bear was killed on Interstate 43 at the Hales Corners interchange on June 22. The bear is believed to have been the same bear spotted in Franklin the day prior.

In addition, a black bear was spotted by a Hartford resident after it wandered into his yard on June 3. A bear was also spotted in Oconomowoc the previous day on a resident's deck, on the northwest side of Oconomowoc off McMahon Road. The DNR believes the two sightings were likely of the same bear. In addition, a resident spotted bear feces in their yard near Highway LO and Highway E in Eagle.

DNR

The DNR is advising that while bear sight-

ings in southern Wisconsin remain rare, the sightings in Waukesha and Washington counties this summer are a reminder that bears can be found anywhere.

Sightings usually increase in early summer when young bears strike out on their own for the first time. Bear breeding season also occurs in early summer, resulting in many male bears wandering around in search of a mate.

- If a bear is near your home or cabin:**
- From a safe location, wave your arms and make noise to scare it away.
 - Back away slowly and seek a safe location where you can wait for the bear to leave.
 - When scaring a bear away, make sure it has a clear escape route; never corner a bear.
 - If you encounter a bear while in the woods, DO NOT RUN, stay calm and do not approach the bear.
 - Never approach any bear.
 - For your safety, do not attempt to break up a fight between your pet and a bear.

The DNR also notes that if a bear finds food, it will likely return for more.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Following several recent black bear sightings across the state, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is reminding the public to take precautions for avoiding potential conflicts.

- To avoid attracting bears:**
- Do not knowingly feed a bear.
 - Completely remove bird feeders, even during daytime hours, and clean areas where bird feeders were located.
 - Reduce garbage odors. If possible, keep garbage cans in a closed building until the morning of pickup.
 - Lock commercial dumpsters.
 - Keep grills and picnic tables clean.
- The DNR partners with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services Program to respond to approximately 800 bear-related complaints reported in Wisconsin each year. More information on co-existing with black bears can be found at <https://bit.ly/39tIMcl>.
- If unable to resolve a bear conflict, contact the USDA Wildlife Services toll-free line at 1-800-433-0663 for properties in Southern Wisconsin and 1-800-228-1368 for properties in Northern Wisconsin.



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St. John Vianney Festival brings on the fun



Above: Tyler Costigan said he “did well” after he finished the Strong Man Challenge on June 10 at St. John Vianney.

Left: Nathan Wasiclewski took a spin on the Sizzler ride at St. John Vianney on June 10.



Rain fell on festivalgoers at St. John Vianney.



Andy Seiter, swings his son, Wyatt, on June 10 at St. John Vianney.

Photos by Mary Catanese
Special to The Freeman



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Mary Kolberg (left) remembered her mom Suzanne (right) as an amazing person who always supported her daughter's hobbies and interests. Suzanne Kolberg died in October 2020.

Care
From Page 1A

The ADRC offers a variety of programs to meet the needs of older adults such as meal delivery, respite care and emergency alerts.

Due to professional caregiver shortages, there are challenges when people take on the role of caregiver themselves. Peterson has found sometimes caregivers have taken on so many responsibilities that their health takes a backseat.

“That is our concern. That is especially prevalent for working caregivers,” Peterson said.

She said those people are taking on extra roles to support their parents, and the job shortage adds extra stress. She added some employers are able to accommodate those caregivers while some can’t, depending on the industry.

Michelle Shulfer of Waukesha has been taking care of her mom for six years. She has a older brother but he doesn’t live with them. Her mom has a cataract, which is a cloudy area in the lens of the eye that leads to vision issues. She will be having surgery soon.

“It is full-time and I don’t have any help,” Shulfer said.

Her mom’s health is not good and she has to help her take insulin, among other duties.

She has had to make sacrifices because her mom’s health is very important to her. She agreed with Peterson and said her own health isn’t a top priority.

Her father was in a nursing home due to cancer and she said she doesn’t want to do that to her mom.

“I’ve been taking care of her this long and want to continue to take care of her for as long as I can,” Shulfer said.

‘Caring for Mom made me a better person’

Mary Kolberg, 28, of Mukwonago became caregiver to her mother, Suzanne Kolberg, for a decade while she fought Alzheimer’s disease. She remembered her mom as an amazing person who always supported her daughter’s hobbies and interests. She started losing her memory when Mary was young.

When her mom needed care, Mary shared responsibilities with her father, but she was her mom’s primary caregiver.

“I took on a very big responsibility at a very young age, but I knew no one would advocate and care for my mother like I could,” Kolberg said.

She took care of her mom for many years until the care she needed was more than Kolberg could provide. Her family eventually moved her into a nursing home for about a year and a half.

“Then I made the decision to bring her home at the beginning of COVID. I continued to care for her at home until she passed on,” Kolberg said.

Suzanne Kolberg died in October 2020. Like many people who care for a loved one, it impacted Kolberg in ways she hadn’t realized.

“Caring for Mom and being her person made me a better person and a compassionate and caring person,” she said.

While the silver lining was being there for her mother, there was a downside regarding her mental health.

“We live in a world where just about everyone is struggling with some kind of anxiety and depression. I certainly felt that,” Kolberg.

Kolberg was lucky to have a great support system with her friends and now her husband. She said it was hard because no one quite understood what she was going through.

“At such as young age it was hard to find people who understood. It did impact my personal life and I had to be home and couldn’t do things,” she said.

During the pandemic she had to decline a lot of social events to keep her mom and herself from getting the coronavirus.

Kolberg was able to get a little help from the hospice care, which provided an extra layer of support after her mom was taken out of the nursing home.

“We had a nurse here for a little bit in the mornings during the weekdays,” she said.

Kolberg reacted strongly to the staffing challenges of caregiver agencies.

“I think it is terrible, that part of the staffing shortage in the whole country,” she said.

Kolberg said it is a hard job because the person a hired caregiver is caring for can’t always say “thank you” or how much they appreciate you.

“It is different when it is your family member. When you don’t know the family and is for a job, it is more difficult,” Kolberg said.

Kolberg said it was hard for her to find additional resources due to making too much money to get free assistance but not making enough to pay for caregivers. She is launching a nonprofit called Suzie’s Angels to help others who were in the same boat.

Sheriff’s Department addresses Huber, staffing challenges

Not ‘going to be an easy fix or an easy challenge,’ says inspector

By Hunter Turpin
Special to the Freeman

WAUKESHA — The Waukesha County Sheriff’s Department addressed the Judiciary and Law Enforcement Committee during a June 17 meeting, saying the department is looking into short-term and long-term changes to corrections, including changing how the Huber program is used, amid staffing and budgetary challenges.

“It’s a difficult, uncomfortable discussion to have, but we think we have very educated, well-intentioned partners in the criminal justice system that can advise us and partner with us as we move forward to try and look at different ways of doing corrections,” said Waukesha County Inspector Jim Gumm.

As of June 17 around 45 of the approximately 110 Huber Facility inmates had been transferred to

the county jail, along with six full-time correctional officers, according to Gumm. These inmates are still able to exercise their Huber program privileges.

This effort is to use staff more efficiently as the county tries to fill the 25% vacancy rate of correctional officers.

The Huber program allows people who are convicted of crimes to be incarcerated during non-working hours and leave for job searches, education, child care, elderly care and medical needs. This will remain an option for judiciaries unless the state statute changes, Gumm said.

“...we have created a task force, so to speak, of stakeholders within the criminal justice community to look at some alternatives if in the future we move towards a reduction in Huber privileges being assigned,” Gumm said. “This is a discussion on ideology in terms of corrections options in

Waukesha County, given the challenges that we face.”

The Huber Facility on Northview Road has caused many challenges for the county, Gumm said.

“Just this week we had a fairly large piece of concrete fall off the building and into an area where people could have been injured — they weren’t,” Gumm told the committee.

These facility-related concerns, in addition to budgetary and staffing concerns, led to the decision to transfer some Huber inmates, according to Gumm. The first transfer has allowed the department to close a floor of the facility and move inmates onto one floor, separated by sex, therefore making staffing more efficient, Gumm said.

In response to committee members’ concerns about jail overcrowding, Gumm said there currently is room in the main county jail for some Huber inmates. This transfer of around 45 filled one pod of the county jail where the Huber program inmates are kept separate from other inmates.

“This isn’t going to be an easy

fix or an easy challenge,” Gumm said. “For every action, there’s a reaction, and moving inmates from the deteriorating Huber facility over to the main jail undoubtedly creates challenges of its own.”

The county jail was not built with continuous entry and exit from the public as the Huber Facility has, according to Gumm; ideally, not more than one pod would be dedicated to Huber inmates, though for emergency purposes they could accommodate more.

The department and committee are discussing using more electronic monitoring, such as ankle monitors, instead of the Huber program, officials said, but they did not go into specifics during the meeting.

Stewards of Prophetic Hopeful Intentional Action (SOPHIA), a non-partisan coalition of faith communities in Waukesha County committed to social justice, supports the closing of the Huber facility, Ralph Schultz of SOPHIA said during the public comments portion of the meeting.

“We are all aware that there are people that because of what they have done, their lifestyle, need to be in jail and receive incarceration as well as, hopefully, some help, and then there are those who are, really, eligible for other programs,” Schultz said.

ELMBROOK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parents give high marks to 4-year-old kindergarten program

By Dave Fidlin
Special to The Freeman

BROOKFIELD — As the 2021-22 school year winds to a close, Elmbrook school officials are taking a look at year one of the district’s 4-year-old kindergarten program.

After years of discussion, the Elmbrook School Board in January 2021 decided to add a 4-year-old kindergarten program to the list of curricular offerings for the current school year.

When the board cast its 5-2 vote in support of 4K, Elmbrook was one of five Wisconsin school districts with elementary education not offering a program for the youngest learners.

School Board member Jennifer Roskopf, who chairs the Teaching and Learning Committee, has been requesting updates on the program’s progress throughout the year to gauge how parents and students have taken to it.

“I think it’s a great entryway for our families,” Roskopf said as the committee met June 1.

Mike Sereno, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, echoed similar senti-

ments as he weighed in on the program’s initial debut in Elmbrook. He discussed 4K as “one of several key levers” to ensure students enter 5-year-old kindergarten and beyond with a base of knowledge.

“We’re appreciative of the board’s support and taking a leap of faith,” Sereno said.

Emily Greiber, director of continuous improvement and elementary education with Elmbrook, provided a high-level, year-end overview of 4K’s inaugural year at the committee meeting.

According to district data, 421 students, districtwide, have been enrolled in 4K across one of five elementary schools as the year ends. By contrast, there were 395 enrollees at the beginning of the year when Elmbrook took its official mid-September count to report to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Student assessments

Elmbrook did undertake a few basic student assessments throughout the school year to monitor progress.

For example, in the metric of uppercase letter identification, 56% of the 4K students demonstrated mastery in the winter. By spring, the number increased to 83%.

Student mastery of phonemic awareness was higher. By winter, 71% of 4K students were able to engage in such activities as rhyme recognition and blending syllables; in the spring, the figure increased to 95%.

Like most school districts offering 4K, Elmbrook has partnered with a local child care organization for an optional, fee-based wraparound program outside classroom instruction. The YMCA handled the service this year and will continue doing so in the 2022-23 school year.

Greiber said the structure of the wraparound child care option will be reviewed over the summer.

“The Y has been very open and receptive to that partnership,” Greiber said.

In the year-end report, Greiber also combed through feedback 164 parents or guardians offered in a survey about their take on the efficacy of 4K for their children.

According to the report, 93% of the respondents strongly agreed their child’s 4K school was a safe place to learn. A similar figure — 91% — indicated they would recommend the program to a friend.

“I think the feedback has been fantastic,” Roskopf said. “There’s a lot of energy there.”



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