

Daycare centers face COVID-19 challenges

By Mary Hookham
Special to the Reporter

Edgerton’s daycare centers are doing their best to serve families during the COVID-19 pandemic. While some are completely closed, the ones who remain open face challenges as they grapple with new guidelines, headcount decreases and extra sanitizing efforts.

over 50 kids each day but has now decreased to about 20 kids. She has reduced the number of staff members working during this time as well. But she and her staff members have ramped up their efforts on sanitizing, even wiping down walls.

“We are cleaning all surfaces, toys and toy areas as well as walls and bathrooms with bleach and water, which definitely helps keep the kids and staff safe,” said Engler.

Beth Fox, owner of Creative Arts Class, is taking similar precautions. All kids must wash their hands and have their temperatures taken upon arrival, she said. Anybody who’s temperature is 99.9 degrees or above goes back home.

“Our increased expectations are an effort to keep everybody safe and healthy while providing a safe place for the kids and our employees,” said Fox.

Fox has also decreased the number of kids she has as the families she works with

try to make their schedules coordinate. But she remains optimistic that this new normal won’t last too long.

“Overall we are doing well,” she said. “Hopefully nobody in town has to close their doors, but people need to be patient as this comes and goes.”

Engler echoes Fox’s sentiments about the public being patient while keeping in mind her mission to serve families. Her most immediate challenge is the timing of the school and work closures, she said.

“Everything happened so fast,” said Engler. “Everything is so fluid and things change hour by hour. It’s really tough to keep weighing out the best thing to do.”

St. John’s Little Saints Learning Center is closed down completely but has a voicemail message providing the number for pastoral care. Tammy’s Little Sweethearts declined to comment. ABC Learning Center is unavailable for comment.



Suspects sought for passing counterfeit money

The Rock County Sheriff’s Office has provided media with these photos and the following information regarding two suspects allegedly passing counterfeit \$50 bills at the Carl’s Shell in Newville. One of the suspects is shown along with a photo of the car the two were using, a gray 2019 Toyota Rav 4 with a Massachusetts license plate of 8KP354. The vehicle belongs to a rental car company. The Reedsburg Police Department is investigating a similar incident with the same suspects. Anyone with any information regarding this incident should contact the Rock County Sheriff’s Office at 608-757-2244.



Submitted photos

Olson decides to step down as Sumner supervisor

By Tristan McGough
Special to the Reporter

Sumner Supervisor Rosemary Olson declared at the regular board meeting on March 16, 2020, that she would be stepping down from her elected position at the end of term in 2021.

“I will not be running again but I will always be a concerned citizen and volunteer my time, and work elections,” she told fellow officials and local residents in attendance at Monday night’s meeting.

Standing up and leaving the board table, Olson walked to the back of the town hall where she not only announced her departure, which was a surprise to all, but gave her reasons why.

She said, “The County Board decided on Dec. 10, 2019, to allow a 1.37 million gallon sludge and sewage pit to use for land spreading within the Town of Sumner and Jefferson County.”

But what got to her wasn’t just that the county had approved the rezone and conditional use permit (CUP) resolutions for Valia Excavating and Septic Services, the Sumner board had removed its opposition to the measures on Jan. 13, 2020, in effect permitting the rezone and CUP.

“We are a town divided on this issue,” she asserted. “The veto resolution was denied by two of the three supervisors. I voted in favor of the veto resolution.”

Further, the issue had been

hotly contested, not only by Olson but also by other residents, some whom have created a committee—Save Our Town—to continue its opposition to the allowance of a 1.37 million gallon holding tank that will contain hauled-in septage, including treated human waste, for the purpose of land application on about 23 acres of adjacent farmland owned by the Weigand’s, who also own Valia. She confessed, “I am disappointed, but truly believe that the committee that is exploring the science and regulations around this matter will continue their county, state and federal engagement.”

“I feel my 20 years in the medical field gives me the knowledge of what a biohazard human waste really is.”

Nevertheless, Olson mentioned that she wouldn’t join the aforementioned committee until her term ends next year.

“What I found astounding was the participation in public comment by a County Board Supervisor who does not represent the Town of Sumner, and comments from the nonprofit membership organization, the Jefferson County Farm Bureau. These representatives did not provide organizational policy information, but rather spoke against the resolution on the usual and general farming principles. An attorney representing the Weigands also spoke, off topic, until the chairman informed him he was off topic and his discussion would not be

entertained.” But it wasn’t just the divisive nature of the debate over this issue that continued to upset Olson: she’d gotten personal push-back and seemed to be reeling from it.

“I received an official letter, two days after the meeting, suggesting a lawsuit. I then read what I was being accused of and also a sheriff’s report made by Lindsey Jilek accusing me of things that I didn’t do.”

The distraught supervisor continued, “I have endured many harassing phone calls before the meeting and after, many of which I was able to identify, many hang-up phone calls from people I didn’t know, and most recently, what I can only say was a horrible text message that I felt I needed to call the sheriff about.

“I have retained a lawyer, because I feel the county not only let our town down, but they let me down.

“I have made the decision, as much as I love this town and the people in it, that my family means more to me. I love them and they have supported and stood by me and my decision to fulfill my obligations to the town.”

Franz and Vicki Weigand were in the audience, and during Public Comment, they attempted to assuage Olson, but she would have none of it, concluding her remarks with, “When my term ends, I will be able to join the committee that

wants to Save Our Town from this biohazard.”

Clearly, the mental contagion of tribal perspectives that have fractured our nation and swept across the world, creating entrenched social polarization and uncivil discourse, have hit home hard in the Town of Sumner.

United Way announces COVID-19 Fund

From United Way
Blackhawk Region

The emergence and rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a level of disruption in our lives that none of us could imagine just a short while ago. This public health crisis is driving urgent and unexpected needs in communities across our region, as many face financial uncertainty stemming from efforts to contain the virus: businesses forced to reduce workforce or closing, leaving some without incomes, childcare while schools are out of session, food and housing services bracing for new complexities in their work, and health care workers preparing for a surge in patients.

United Way has always been on the front lines for both everyday problems and crises. Today, United Way Blackhawk Region announced a COVID-19 Action Fund to provide flexible resources for local nonprofit organizations working directly with communities in Rock County, Wis., and northern Winnebago County, Ill., who are disproportionately impacted by coronavirus and the economic consequences of the outbreak.

When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, “We know this crisis is impacting nonprofits in many ways, including an increased demand for services, lost revenue due to closures and cancellations, declines in volunteerism, as well as other unanticipated challenges. The very groups we rely upon to provide critical services are understaffed, under resourced, and may not be able to respond in the way our communities need them to,” said United Way Blackhawk Region President and CEO Mary Fanning-Penny. “Nonprofit organizations are doing the very

best that they can in tumultuous, uncharted waters.” The volunteer board of directors for United Way Blackhawk Region approved activation of the COVID-19 Action Fund and authorized utilization of \$100,000 in reserve funds to seed it.

United Way Blackhawk Region’s Board Chair Al Hulick urged individuals and organizations to also answer a call to action. “Now is the time to double down for our community. Contributing to this Action Fund is one meaningful and collaborative way to direct dollars where they’re needed most and will be stewarded responsibly,” said Hulick. “United Way is proud to complement the efforts of our partners in health care, public safety, human services and emergency management. We applaud and extend our heartfelt gratitude to every individual and entity selflessly serving our region during this unprecedented situation.”

In order to move resources quickly, United Way has implemented a streamlined, online application.

The application, as well as a frequently asked questions document detailing eligibility and the funding process, is available at LiveUnitedBR.org/COVID-19. United Way’s volunteer-driven Community United Way Blackhawk Region, 205 North Main Street, Suite 101, Janesville, WI 53545-3062

Tel 608-757-3040
Fax 608-757-3055
LiveUnitedBR.org

Impact Council will oversee all requests to ensure fiscally responsible allocations. Programs awarded funding will be asked to report on outcomes or results, and will be communicated publicly.

Anyone interested in mak-

ing a gift of any size to United Way’s COVID-19 Action Fund, please visit LiveUnitedBR.org/COVID-19 or text “Give-Covid” to 41444. Checks made payable to United Way Blackhawk’s Region Action Fund may also be mailed to PO Box 2780, Janesville, WI 53547-2780.

Fanning-Penny concluded the announcement by saying, “Establishing this Action Fund is at the heart of United Way’s mission to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. We are called upon to lead in a way that is most needed and impactful, right now, today.”

United Way Blackhawk Region’s additional COVID-19 response efforts include directing the public to 211; United Way’s 211 is a free, confidential, 24/7 information and referral helpline. The 211 system across Wisconsin is working tirelessly to meet the needs of callers searching for information and support due to the public health emergency. Community members are able to access 211, in order of recommendation, by:

- Texting COVID19 (no hyphen) to 211211 to receive information and county details;
- Visiting the website page 211wisconsin.org/coronavirus; and
- Calling 211 for information and referrals. Please note: wait time is longer than usual due to high call demand but specialists will help as soon as available.

In an effort to further address the unique and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak, United Way is also promoting safe and virtual volunteer opportunities. Entities in need of volunteers and individuals interested in learning more are encouraged to get connected at: LiveUnitedBR.org/Volunteer.

RESTAURANTS

“We are not selling that much. If it (the coronavirus) goes on for quite a while, it is going to be tough. Right now we are able to maintain normal procedure,” Mallon said. He added: “We are getting some freeway business, but not as much. A big source of our business is people going to the Dells on weekends. We have noticed a huge reduction on that traffic.”

Meanwhile, Mallon said, “locals have come through for us pretty big. They have stepped up to help us.”

Operating since 1949, the A&W has been one of Edgerton’s oldest restaurants. It has been at its current location, 601 N. Main St., since 1953.

“The community has been helping us a lot,” said Kathy Dunlap, a member of the staff. The restaurant offers both drive-in and call-in orders.

The restaurant has maintained its daily operating times from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m.

At Subway, 1204 N. Main, customers can carry out by telephone or on cell phone apps.

“We are taking remote and call-in orders and customers are still able to come in to order their food for carry-out,” said Molly Leeder, business owner.

Leeder said the restaurant’s business is down between 70 and 80 percent since the coronavirus pandemic hit Wisconsin three weeks ago.

Usually open between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., Subway reduced hours to between 10 a.m.

and 8 p.m. daily. On Monday they began offering a buy-2-footlongs-and-get-1 free as an attempt to draw customers.

Leeder said she has had to cut her staff significantly, which has resulted in a large number of workers filing for unemployment.

Subway recently went through an expensive remodeling. Leeder said plans were underway to add a drive-up window as part of its remodeling.

“It is very difficult to keep up with the costs of running the business as well as covering the costs of the remodel,” said Leeder.

The restaurant has adopted health safety guidelines, including sanitizing all touch points every hour while also requiring the 6-foot social distance.

The Lakeview restaurant, with one of the largest waitstaff of between 30 full-time and 100 part-time, has reduced staff to between 10 and 15 workers.

“It has been pretty slow,” said Jake Pettit, operator of the restaurant.

Pettit said the restaurant is closing two hours earlier than in the past. Its new hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

“We just do call-ins with curb-side pickup. We go out to the car and deliver an order,” Pettit said.

At Yetti’s Bar and Grill, 1190 N. Goede Rd., part owner Justin Axcell said he has returned some beverage inventory back to distributors because of a lack of business.

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However, local residents “are helping us,” with carry-out orders from the grill.

He said the Friday fish fry business has been hurt the most due to the coronavirus.

Cesar Austin of El Patron Mexican Grill, 2 W. Fulton St., said the restaurant has reduced its hours substantially because of the change in business demand.

Normally the restaurant would be open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Its new hours are 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Austin said business has been “pretty slow.” “Hopefully this will be fixed soon,” he added. The restaurant is providing pick-up service only.

Winchester Restaurant, 568 Haugen Rd., also has been impacted by the coronavirus.

“We are doing carry-out. We’re down a lot. We’ve definitely seen a decrease in customers,” said manager Mika McCormick.

Mario’s Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria, 201 W. Fulton St., is maintaining its delivery business while providing walk-in pickups.

The restaurant has been in business for the past 35 years.

Carla Zimmerman, owner, said business has been “pretty slow. We are way down.”

The restaurant, which is open seven days a week, has shortened its hours by 2 hours each day.

“I employ 13 people. It is a pretty good workforce. I cut some hours but I have not laid anyone off,” she said.

CALL FOR CALM

the Edgerton Fire Department. “We ask questions first and are limiting our crews to one person making contact with patients until the questions are answered. If anything raises a red flag with us during the questioning, patients are given a mask and our crews put on personal protective equipment.”

The 9-1-1 call center is screening calls and asking very specific questions, said Kowalski. Officers go into situations as necessary after assessing each one, similar to the way the firefighters and emergency medical technicians are assessing situations.

“I monitor my officers daily for both physical and mental health,” said Kowalski. “I try to

make sure that whatever they need, they get.”

Both departments are encouraging citizens to stay calm and follow guidelines put out by the Centers for Disease Control and local authorities. Kowalski and Russ also hope citizens will stop over-buying products that public servants need in order to do their jobs keeping the community safe.

“People are trying to absorb as many products as possible, and the nation is at a huge shortage right now on those products,” said Russ. “We are doing the best we can with the PPE we have been able to obtain.”

Kowalski insists people should listen to what they’re being told by local authorities,

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use common sense and keep an open line of communication. If people eat correctly, get enough quality rest and don’t put themselves in stressful situations, they will decrease their chances of contracting any sickness.

“We’re going to get through this,” he said.

Russ also advises people who have coronavirus symptoms to contact their primary care physicians before doing anything else. If they need to be seen by their doctors, they should either transport themselves to their doctor or ask a family member rather than calling 9-1-1.

“By transporting oneself, it helps stop the spread to EMS staff who must attend to normal daily incidents,” he said.