



# FAMILY MATTERS

Supporting families in the  
St. Croix Valley since 1998

Summer 2017

## Patty Draxler retires after 14 years as Executive Director



Patty Draxler has led the Family Resource Center since 2003.

Photo Credit: Sandy Brecht Photography

You could say supporting the needs of children and families has been a calling for Patty Draxler. From her very first job as a ‘Mother’s Helper’, Draxler has worked tirelessly throughout her career on behalf of western Wisconsin children and parents. Prior to coming to the Family Resource Center in 2003, Draxler was a Children’s Librarian/Library Assistant with the Polk County Library Federation for 18 years. Her greatest passion has been the impact of reading on brain development, which was not as widely recognized then as it is today. “I come from a family of readers. My mom read to us every day as children and I saw first-hand the difference reading made with my own children, which drove me to continue the work and kept me motivated,” she said.

During Draxler’s tenure as Executive Director, the Family Resource Center has grown from a fledging nonprofit serving families in St. Croix County to an organization with numerous partnerships that extend across Pierce and Polk counties as well. In 2005, the organization joined together with United Way St. Croix Valley and the medical center in Baldwin to begin visiting families at birth; several more hospital partnerships followed and have become a cornerstone of the resource center’s outreach and education programming. In addition, formal service agreements have been developed with all three county health and human service departments and Salvation Army. *(Continued on page 4)*

### SUMMER PROGRAMS

#### Play & Learn in the Parks

This all-outdoor program for toddlers and preschoolers and their parents begins the week of June 12.

Register beginning June 5 by calling 715-684-4440.

Groups meet in Amery, Hudson and River Falls; schedule on page 3.



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## Reach for the Stars celebrates participants, honors leadership and welcomes new support

Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley hosted the Reach for the Stars gala with Caribbean flair on April 30 at the River Falls Golf Club, and despite the chilly, wet weather, the climate among the nearly 250 guests was warm and festive.

The event was the organization’s 12th annual, and a finale for Executive Director Patty Draxler, who retired on May 19th. “It has been wonderful to watch this event grow over the years. Each year we have built on the year before,” she said. “It is thrilling to see the level of support for early childhood initiatives grow, and Reach for the Stars plays a very integral part in generating this positive support.”



Participant Tori Isler spoke at Reach for the Stars on April 30. Photo Credit: Kelsey Tyznik

A highlight of the evening was hearing from participant Tori Isler of Amery, who shared her experiences as a parent and how her family has benefited from Family Resource Center programs.

*(Continued on page 4)*

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The mission of the Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley is to *strengthen children, families, and communities by offering education, resources, and support.*

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## NEWSLETTER

**Writer/Editor:** Kristin Thompson

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Please notify us if your mailing address has changed. For an electronic version of this newsletter, email [info@frcscv.org](mailto:info@frcscv.org) or call Keri @ (715) 684-4440. Thank You!

## From the Director's Desk

Having announced my retirement, this is my farewell "Director's Desk" so as you can imagine it will include words of celebration and thanks. I will start by saying our 12th annual Reach for the Stars "Caribbean Riviera" was a colorful, wonderfully successful event! The energy in the room was tangible and the support was evident as our silent, live and dessert auctions continue to amaze, with auctioneering led by Tom Morris. The festive flowers for the event for the past nine years have been created by Pat Hafele; this is Pat's last year as she is retiring too – thanks so much for your dedication over the years, Pat! I am grateful that we have such a strong family of friends that continue to support the mission of the Family Resource Center by attending and/or sponsoring this annual event!

Special thanks to our participant speaker, Tori Isler. Her words brought our programs to life for everyone in attendance. We also premiered our new promotional video - thanks to UWRF's Erik Johnson and student Kelsey Tynnik for their commitment to the development of this project. Kelsey also provided photography and videography at the event. Thanks to you both! Congratulations to John Marnell, who received the John M. Coughlin Memorial Volunteer Award – a well-deserved honor. Thanks to the Reach for the Stars and Board Development Committees led by Board Member Larry Gee, and staff Kristin Thompson and Keri Fitts – their behind the scenes work is what makes this event so successful year after year!

Our Young Parent program is also closing a chapter. Each year we celebrate graduation with our participant families, and I would like to congratulate them for their hard work and dedication!

Finally, as I thought about my own personal transition to retirement, I couldn't help but relate my small contribution to the work of the Family Resource Center through the words of the Chinese Philosopher Confucius. *"If you think in terms of a year – sow a seed. If in terms of ten years – plant trees. If in terms of a lifetime – teach a child."*

Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley is planning for a lifetime.

To the board, staff, participants and friends, thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you and this organization; it has been my honor and privilege. Together, since 2003, we have served 21,000 people and raised \$5 million dollars - I am convinced the impact for families will be lasting.

I also want to thank MY family for all the support over the years and for allowing a little piece of my heart, through a work of art, to remain at the Family Resource Center. I look forward to spending a lot more time with my husband Dan, my daughters and their families, and especially snuggling with grandson Leif and grandbaby #2 due in August.

To Agnes Ring, the Family Resource Center's incoming Executive Director. I am excited for you, and for the organization, to begin your journey together. I wish you all the best as the work continues for children and families in the St. Croix Valley!

*Patricia A Draxler*

Patricia Draxler, Executive Director (Retired)



## CALENDAR FOR SUMMER 2017 GROUPS



### PLAY & LEARN IN THE PARKS

Register beginning Monday, June 5 at 9 a.m. by calling 715-684-4440. Groups will run June 12th-August 14th; no groups will meet the week of July 3rd.

Parents and their toddlers or preschoolers will have the opportunity to explore the natural resources of the St. Croix Valley during this all-outdoor programming. Each group will include music, structured group activities, story time and snack. No cost to participate, however please note: a Wisconsin State Park sticker is required at the Willow River State Park location. A limited number of scholarships are available.

**Amery:** Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., DD Kennedy County Park, 1459 Kennedy Mill Ave.

**Hudson:** Thursdays, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Willow River State Park, 1034 County Highway A

**River Falls:** Wednesdays, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Glen Park, 355 Park St.

### BABY & ME

(Register at any time by calling 715-684-4440) A play and discussion hour for parents and their infants (birth to one year). Baby & Me classes are provided by Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley as a component of United Way St. Croix Valley's Success By 6 partnership.

**Amery:** Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Amery Hospital & Clinic, Birthday Suites Waiting Room

**Baldwin:** Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Western Wisconsin Health, Fitness Center

**New Richmond:** Mondays, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 365 W. River Dr. (Sponsored by Westfields Hospital & Clinic)

**Osceola:** Thursdays, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., Osceola Medical Center, Cascade Room

**River Falls:** Fridays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., River Falls Area Hospital, Classrooms B & C

**St. Croix Falls:** Tuesdays, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., St. Croix Regional Medical Center, O.B. Waiting Room

**Fall Play & Learn registration begins  
Monday, August 28 by calling 715-684-4440.**

**Baby & Me groups will not meet the week of July 3.**

**Office is closed Tuesday, July 4.**

## Boost your child's energy with healthy summertime snacks

Contributed by parent educator Kristine Brede

"I'm hungry!" How many times do you hear this every day? Many families keep certain snacks on hand that their children will enjoy. Have you thought of incorporating some new fun summertime snacks?

As a parent, you want your children to be healthy and ensure that they are getting all the nutrition that they need. A great way to accomplish this is using this rule of thumb for feeding your toddlers: starting with a tablespoon per year of age, for each food group at each meal. Using this guide will help your children explore different foods. Sometimes children don't eat a lot at one sitting, and you may choose to spread out the food groups throughout the day.

**PLAN AHEAD.** As you plan for summer this year, think about what type of snacks you will provide for your children. What was your favorite memory as a child during the summertime? Playing outside with friends? Swimming? Going to the Park? Whatever it was, there probably were snacks available at arm's reach.

**INCLUDE PROTEIN.** Protein, in addition to being essential for growth and development, helps kids feel full longer. An easy way to provide this is by making a snack mix that includes nuts (but be aware that nuts can be a choking hazard for children under 3). Children can help choose the ingredients and prepare the mix, and snack mixes are easy to toss into a backpack or beach bag.

**KEEP KIDS HYDRATED.** One challenge that some parents may have during summertime is to have your children take breaks from their fun activities to make sure that they are getting enough nutrition throughout their day. A great way to make sure that kids are staying hydrated is to have cut up watermelon.

**GROW A VEGETABLE GARDEN.** Some families are able to incorporate family fun activities by growing a vegetable garden at home and then enjoying their own homegrown food. Others may choose not to have a garden or are unable to, but still would like to experience homegrown fresh vegetables and will turn to local farmer's markets.

*During the summer, Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley offers outdoor Play & Learn in the Parks groups to families with toddlers and preschoolers in Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties. In addition to promoting fun outdoor activities for families, parent educators provide snack ideas utilizing local farmer's market produce.*



Making fresh salsa is a fun activity that introduces children to vegetables they may not have tried. Families learn new snack ideas and enjoy sampling farmer's market produce each summer at Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley's Play & Learn in the Parks.

*(Patty Draxler retires after 14 years as Executive Director – continued from page 1)*

“Patty has been an advocate of families and children for her entire career and made special efforts to include local health departments in her efforts to assure mutual families had coordinated services,” said Gretchen Sampson, Community Services Division Director in Polk County. “Her zest for prevention in the maternal child health area aligns perfectly with the mission of local health departments and she assured optimal collaboration occurred on projects with a prevention focus. Patty’s work in the community will have lasting impact and we have been privileged to work with her for so many years.”

Growth in Family Resource Center partnerships and communities served has resulted in a marked increase in staff as well as population served by the organization. Over the past 14 years, the staff has expanded from 3 part-time to 10 full-time employees, and the number of participants has quadrupled. “The ability to increase support to families is what I have enjoyed most,” said Draxler. “It has been a privilege to work with such impressive people on our board and staff.”

Mary Sue Ash has worked closely with Draxler throughout her years of service to the organization, as both a founding board member and United Way Success By 6 Coordinator. “Patty has been the ultimate Executive Director. She has so successfully and expertly led the FRCSVCV in developing, strengthening, and expanding programs, services, staff, geography, and partnerships in our area by building strong relationships and a robust fiscal foundation of support through grants, contracts, and community donors. So many families of young children in our area have received the benefit of her commitment, her dedication, her persistence, her passion—and her grace.”

“Leading an organization with the core mission of child abuse prevention is incredibly rewarding and sometimes challenging, as you might imagine,” says Draxler, “and I am certainly going to miss the work as well as my friends and colleagues.” Draxler is excited to embark on life’s next adventure, saying she looks forward to spending more time with her husband Dan, adult children, grandchildren and her parents. After an accomplished career supporting families, she says, “I look forward to spending more time with my own family now.”

*(Reach for the Stars – continued from page 1)*

Tori spoke briefly about her own childhood, and how her mother worked nights and then left the family when she and her siblings were young. Tori shared that she had wanted to be a mom for as long as she could remember, but specifically aspired to be the type of mom she never had. When she and her husband had their first child, they were confronted with challenges they did not anticipate.

“While he’s an amazing little person, he’s also anxious, timid and sometimes fearful,” Tori related, who said that her son would often scream for prolonged periods until he was 5 or 6 months old.

Tori signed up for Play & Learn after her second child was born, and after a period of time began home visits as well. “Because my son has a harder time with a lot of things, he made it harder for me to be the kind of mom I wanted to be,” said Tori. “My parent educator gave me some validation that it wasn’t just something I could be doing different or better. Just knowing there was someone else who was helping us look for a solution was such a relief.”

The event program also included a premiere showing of a video produced by University of Wisconsin – River Falls student Kelsey Tyznik, featuring interviews with several Family Resource Center program participants. Board member Mary Sue Ash

presented the annual John M. Coughlin Volunteer Award to John Marnell of Hudson, thanking him for his leadership and vision through his years of service on the Board of Directors and as a member of the Reach for the Stars planning committee. Marnell was instrumental in formalizing Board Member roles and responsibilities, staff succession planning and cultivating new business sponsorship for Reach for the Stars.

Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley wishes to extend sincere appreciation to all businesses and individuals who contributed their support through the event, which raised nearly \$60,000 in support of programs for local families.

A special thanks to Reach for the Stars sponsors that contributed at the Diamond and Platinum levels:

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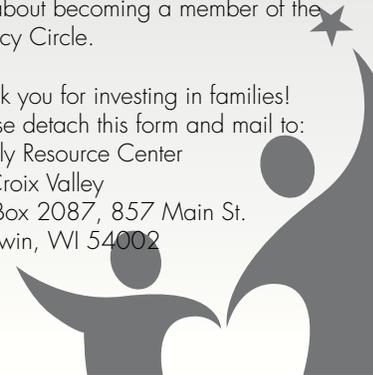
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Thank you for investing in families!  
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WALTER & SANDRA BOROWSKI of Madison, WI  
Grandchild: **Nolan Adams** of New Richmond, WI

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Grandchildren: **Clara, Evan & Lucy Cari** of Hudson, WI  
**Taylor, Carson & Caroline Cari** of Hudson, WI  
**George, William & Charlie Cook** of Hudson, WI  
**Nell & Sam Cari** of Deephaven, MN

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Grandchildren: **Finley & Jordyn Campbell** of River Falls, WI

THOMAS & AMY CASEY of Woodville, WI  
Grandchild: **Asher Casey** of Woodville, WI

DANIEL & PATRICIA DRAXLER of Amery, WI  
Grandchild: **Leif Wanken** of Northfield, MN

JOHN & MARY DYKSTRA of Roberts, WI  
Grandchildren: **Sydney & Jonah Thompson** of Roberts, WI  
**Alex & Sam Wilkinson** of Madison, WI

CHRISTINE ENGLISH of Hudson, WI  
Grandchild: **James English** of Hudson, WI

ANN & BILL FINDLAY of Baldwin, WI  
Grandchildren: **Maggie, Ian, Caden & Thane Findlay** of  
US Military Academy, West Point, New York

KEN & MOLLY GALEWYRICK of Amery, WI  
Grandchildren: **Olive & Rye Weinberger** of Victor, MT  
Great Nephews: **Wyatt & Colon Hebb** of Cloquet, MN

MELVIN & VIVIANNA HANSON of Downing, WI  
Grandchildren: **Bridget Draxler** of Northfield, MN  
**Breanna Draxler** of Seattle, WA  
**Brooke Draxler** of Roseville, MN  
**Trish Meyers** of Madison, WI  
**Christopher Hanson** of New Richmond, WI  
**Rhonda Rassbach** of Downing, WI  
**Bo Standaert** of Downing, WI  
**Treena Bonte** of New Berlin, WI  
**Tara Bonte** of Spring Valley, WI  
Great Grandchildren:  
**Izabella & Peyton Rassbach** of Downing, WI  
**Landon & Nolan Standaert** of Downing, WI  
**Amelia & Stella Meyers** of Madison, WI  
**Rowen Hanson** of New Richmond, WI  
**Leif Wanken** of Northfield, MN

DEAN & LINDA HENDERSON of Hudson, WI  
Grandchildren: **Taylor & Cole Causby** of Hudson, WI  
**Mallorie, Will, Drew, & Amelia Brinkman** of New Richmond, WI  
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Grandchild: **Evelyn Young** of Hammond, WI

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Grandchildren: **Kaleb & Bella Drinkman** of Baldwin, WI  
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Grandchildren: **Finn, Erin & Nolan McCarthy** of Eagan, MN

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Grandchildren: **Rhyan, Roslyn & Wesley Nichols** of Baldwin, WI

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Grandchildren: **Hans & Elin Williamson** of Amery, WI  
**Quinn & Olin Williamson** of New Richmond, WI

LORETTA YOUNG of Eau Claire, WI  
Grandchild: **Evelyn Young** of Hammond, WI

## HONOR YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

Honor your grandchildren for their birthdays, for their special achievements or milestones, or simply for the joy they bring to your life!

Your name and your grandchildren's names will appear in this newsletter when you donate \$100 or more to the Family Resource Center.

*\*Please contact Kristin at 715-684-4440 or [kristin@frcscv.org](mailto:kristin@frcscv.org) with questions, or to add a new grandchild to your list*



FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER  
ST. CROIX VALLEY

*Growing Kids by Growing Families*

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