



**CELEBRATING
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of God’ brings
humor during
pandemic ▶ 2A**



DAILY NEWS

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The restorative power of nature

Blue Lotus helps those with life challenges enjoy outdoors



Photos by Art Dahlke

Milwaukee Rescue Mission day campers enjoy kayaking on the lily-pad filled pond.

By Kay Dahlke
Special to the News Graphic

TRENTON — For most, the opportunity to enjoy the glory of a summer day is a pleasure that’s taken for granted.

Studies show that enjoying a natural setting, like a park or forest, has many therapeutic qualities, such as reducing blood pressure, anxiety and stress levels.

For others with profound life challenges, however, these possibilities just aren’t a possibility.

Tucked away in Trenton, Blue Lotus Farm & Retreat Center assists those with profound life challenges of any age by providing accessible outdoor recreational and therapeutic opportunities in a safe, healthy, caring, accepting and inspiring day camp setting.

The farm was purchased in 1948 by Robert Bliffert for use as a summer home. In 2002, their son, Fred, and Fred’s wife, Susan, refurbished the grounds, turning the property into a nonprofit with the intent of sharing the beauty of the camp’s offerings with those around them.

Under Executive Director Jacqueline Janz, Community Engagement Coordinator Lisa Starke and Seasonal Group coordinator Dianne Rinn, more than 30 groups have access to Blue Lotus on a regular basis, from late spring to early fall for nominal fees. The grounds are maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers. Blue Lotus is funded with the help of special events, fundraisers and grants, including Helen Bader Foundation and Heart of Canal Street. In addition, the facility offers a space for company work and wellness retreats, also at reasonable prices.

“Making Blue Lotus work is like a dream come true,” said Janz. “I love and believe that this is where my heart is. Watching the day-campers is magical. The place comes alive with their smiles and laughter.”

Nonprofit groups can book the entire center as a backdrop for their group outings or individuals can join programs for children with disabilities and their families. The Milwau-



Amari shows off a fish he just caught off the dock at Blue Lotus.



Executive Director Jacqueline Janz welcomes visitors from the Milwaukee Rescue Mission to Blue Lotus Farm and Retreat Center.

kee Center for Independence was one of the first groups to visit Blue Lotus.

On an outing last week, families from the Milwaukee Rescue Mission enjoyed the magic of the camp. Seven families fished, enjoyed cruising on the pond and had their first taste of s’mores.

MRM helps its neighbors with

practical assistance like food, clothing and shelter, along with transformative programs that equip them to turn their lives around for good.

For more information about Blue Lotus Farm and Retreat Center, including information on utilizing the space, visit www.bluelotus-farm.org.

West Bend School District releases Return to Operating Plan for year

By Kendra Lamer
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SOUND OFF
What do you think?
Phone: 262-513-2641
Email: soundoff@conley.net.com

WEST BEND — The West Bend School District released a draft of the Return to Operating Plan for the 2020-21 school year this week.

Superintendent Jen Wimmer will present the plan during the School Board meeting on Aug. 17 at 5:30 p.m. at the West Bend High Schools Silver Lining Arts Center.

Wimmer shared the plan earlier this month after the district garnered feedback from more than 4,000 community members. Wimmer has been conversing with other district leaders, both locally and worldwide.

The 38-page plan includes detailed explanations of proactive measures in WBSD

buildings, instructional options, procedures during the in-person instructional day, transportation, food service, before- and after-school care, technology, grading student support and virus spread or COVID-19 incidents response plan.

The plan also includes supporting documents and a log of changes and updates.

WBSD is giving families the three instructional options: full-time in-person instruction, full-time virtual instruction through the West Bend Virtual Academy and a hybrid model.

See **PLAN**, PAGE 6A

TOWN OF ERIN

Officials say tree removal is necessary for safety, economic reasons

Residents say action will harm their Rustic Road

By Lisa Curtis
Special to Conley Media

TOWN OF ERIN — Orange paint stains dozens of trees lining a portion of Emerald Drive in the town, marking their imminent doom as town officials make way for a road improvement project that many say is long overdue.

What many residents don’t support, however, is the destruction of trees that form the canopy of the windy, Rustic Road that gives their neighborhood character and symbolizes the past glaciers that helped form the area.

But town officials cite numerous economic, safety and logistical reasons for removing the trees, and are setting the record straight



Lisa Curtis/Special to the News Graphic

Trees marked with orange paint are slated for removal along Emerald Road in the Town of Erin.

after they say social media has spread misinformation about their intentions.

See **TREES**, PAGE 6A

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WEATHER



Tomorrow:
Sunny
High 84 / Low 58

See complete forecast on Page 6A

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Town Clerk
Allenton

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MEQUON**
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COUNTY**
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