

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 11, 2011

**CONTACT: Joan LeFebvre, UW-Extension Family Living Agent
(715) 479-3653**

Family Impact Seminar Focuses on Community Connections

“University Extension’s needs assessment consistently identified “sense of community” as a priority concern,” says Joan E. LeFebvre, UW-Extension Family Living Agent. Vilas County citizens value the volunteerism, interconnectedness, and synergy of collaborative community efforts, notes LeFebvre, while simultaneously residents have different values and different backgrounds. One stakeholder described it as, “...a melting pot that doesn’t melt well,” which leaves people feeling isolated and disconnected as well as having the potential to contribute to conflict. Improving community connections has many benefits including making dollars stretch farther, decreasing isolation, improving quality of life and breaking down barriers.

In response to the concern about community connections, a Family Impact Seminar will be held Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 8:30am – 2:30pm at the Eagle River Inn. Family Impact Seminars provide neutral, high-quality, solution-oriented research and information on family issues to people who influence public policy. The Seminars help decision makers consider the impact of policies and programs on families. University Professors will present information about how community connections affect families, elders, and the well-being of the entire community.

David A. Riley, Ph.D., Professor of Human Development & Family Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison / Extension will get you thinking about community and community services in a new way. His presentation focuses on local and voluntary associations. Specialist Riley says, “Parents are responsible for raising their own children well, but some communities make this easier and some make it harder.” He will review research that shows how important social support (and “community” generally) is to parents.

- more -

Clifton E. Barber, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies and Specialist in Aging, University of Wisconsin-Madison / Extension will highlight research linking social connectedness to healthy aging. Specialist Barber says, “Social isolation and social connectedness impact the quality of a person’s life.” He will discuss elements of social connectedness that contribute to inclusion, as well as barriers that produce social isolation among older people in the community.

Following a complimentary lunch, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in discussions with the University Professors and others at the Seminar.

There is no cost, but seating is limited. Please RSVP no later than April 22, 2011. For more information or to register, contact: Vilas County UW-Extension Family Living, Phone: 715-479-3653, Fax: 715-479-3605, E-Mail: joan.lefebvre@ces.uwex.edu. Funding for the Family Impact Seminar is provided by Family Resource Coalition of Vilas County, Incorporated.

#