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City Pages



Blizzard's Trent Clark paved his own path
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Serving all who enter their doors

BY MELANIE ROSSI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – Staying true to their motto — “Open Doors, Open Hearts” — St. Willebrord Parish serves the community by always keeping a door open for those in need.

The church was founded by Dutch immigrants in 1864, and since that time, they’ve made acceptance, diversity and inclusion a main priority.

Father Andy Cribben, who on July 1 began his 13th year with the parish, emphasized the connection that the parish has with the Green Bay community.

“Serving the spiritual needs of whoever comes to our doors is a community service,” he said. “We receive people from all over the place — it’s amazing. Every day I see and encounter people who come from places other than those who would say they’re members of the parish.”

As a result of this open door philosophy, the parish has welcomed a diverse range of people; they’ve been frequented by



Staying true to their motto — “Open Doors, Open Hearts” — St. Willebrord Parish serves the community by always keeping a door open for those in need.
St. Willebrord photo

steadfast parishioners, travelers food — even Vince Lombardi attended St. Willy’s during his time in the city.

“It wasn’t his parish,” Cribben explained, “but he came here every day for Mass because his office was nearby, and we had an early Mass in the morning that was convenient for his work schedule.”

“With St. John’s Homeless Ministry just down the street, we get a lot of folks that come in here to get a drink of water, use the bathroom... We had rain on Monday, and our halls were full of folks just getting out of the rain, laying down and getting a nap in our hallway. Part of our service is being a church that’s open and available to people as much as we possibly can be. We open at 6:30 in the morning, and we’re open until 5 o’clock most days, and then the weekend’s even longer, so folks can find an open door here.”

For Father Cribben, the parish’s openness has been fundamental in helping it to pursue its mission.

“Our mission is the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, and we think that’s

See **ST. WILLEBRORD** page 7

Breaking the cycle: Providing pathways in education

BY KRIS LEONHARDT/
JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN/KAITY COISMAN
PRESS TIMES STAFF

As generational cycles occur, negative patterns and traits are known to transfer through multiple generations via learned behavior, family dynamics and environment. We continue to explore five northeast Wisconsin intergenerational family issues — physical health, alcoholism and drug use, mental health, education and housing — and what some organizations are doing to address the trends.

NORTHEAST WISCONSIN — Many high school graduates seek higher education to gain economic prosperity.

A November 2022 UW-Madison report on college-going rates for public high school students stated that “Wisconsin’s college-going rate typically hovers around 60%.” During COVID that dropped below 50%.

“On average, college-going rates

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When every second counts

Bellin Health Sports Medicine helps prepare for emergency scenarios



The SMC team ran the 50 participants through scenarios that they could then watch, receive critiques from SMC staff and equipment and see where they could have been more effective.
Submitted photo

BY KAITY COISMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – Bellin Health Sports Medicine is expanding its

emergency training repertoire with the help of Sports Medicine Concepts (SMC) — an organization that works closely with the NFL, NHL and MLB.

On June 28, professionals from different disciplines, experience levels and age groups joined together at West De Pere High School to create more efficient, effective and proactive emergency action plans for life threatening situations.

The event was initiated due to the past injury to NFL’s Damar Hamlin, as local athletic trainers want to be prepared for life-threatening injuries during sporting events.

SMC is a team of athletic trainers and EMTs that were able to bring a range of high-tech equipment which included mannequins that allowed for IV and advanced airway insertion as well as mannequins with CPR compression detectors.

“We thought how great would this be to bring to our staff somebody coming from the outside-looking-in to give us critical feed-

See **BELLIN** page 5



Biking for Babies is a nonprofit organization that aims to spread awareness and raise money for pregnancy resource centers while also spreading the gospel.
Submitted photo

Green Bay to serve as starting point for national Biking for Babies ride

BY ANNIKA MORSCHAUSER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GREEN BAY – Green Bay will serve as a starting point for the national Biking for Babies ride which begins on July 9 and ends on July 16.

In addition to the starting point in Green Bay, there are others starting in Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Kansas, New York and Mississippi. All routes either end in Missouri or Virginia.

See **RIDE** page 5

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EDUCATION
from page 1

are typically 20 percentage points higher for white and Asian students than for American Indian, Black and Hispanic students," the report further showed, and "college-going rates for non-economically disadvantaged students are about 27 percentage points higher rates than economically disadvantaged students."

But, a college degree can turn things around for those at a disadvantage.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said that those with a bachelors degree or higher had the lowest unemployment rate — at 2.2% — while high school graduates with no college education had an unemployment rate of 4.5%, based on February 2022 numbers.

However, pathways to that college education may seem daunting, due to limitations in college preparedness, family support, financial funding and low confidence in academic ability, especially if you are a first-generation student.

A first-generation student is defined as "one who is the first in their im-

mediate family to attend or graduate from a four-year institution."

UW-Green Bay said that in 2021, 34.2% (2,356) undergraduate students and 11.2% (51) graduate students were recognized as first-generation students — the first in their families to pursue a college degree.

Those numbers coincide with a national average of 33%, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

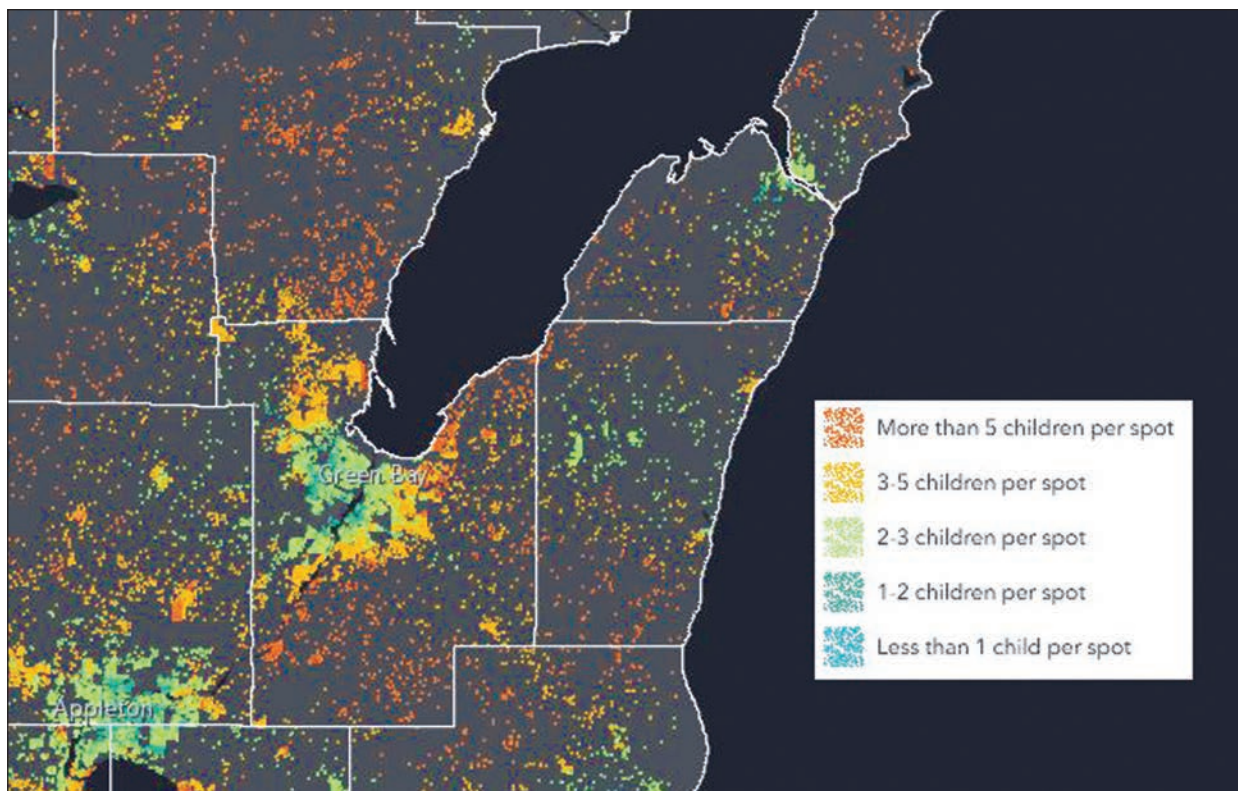
Post-secondary solutions

But, local colleges are working to make that pathway a little easier to navigate, especially for those trying to break the cycle.

In 2021, UW-Green Bay was designated as a First-gen Forward institution by the Center for First-Generation Student Success.

The First-gen Forward designation recognizes "institutions of higher education which have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students."

As a First-gen Forward Institution, interested faculty and staff are provided multiple opportunities to



A map of the child care deserts in northeast Wisconsin.

UW System map

engage with other institutions that are creating environments that improve the outcomes of first-generation students.

The CollegeReady Program — a partnership between UW-Green Bay, Northeast Western Technical College and the Green Bay Area Public School District — is dedicated to assisting first-generation students.

The program assists students financially and provides a supportive pathway to advance to that next step.

In May, the program saw 166 students complete their college readiness program, signing letters of intent with various colleges.

"Proving access to higher education for everyone who wants to learn is core to our mission. We are proud to be a First-gen Forward institution and welcome everyone who wants to continue to

rise and work to achieve their goals," UW-Green Bay Chancellor Michael Alexander said during the signing event.

Launched for the fall of 2023, the Wisconsin Tuition Promise works through the UW System to give underserved Wisconsin students a leg up so they may obtain a bachelor's degree, specifically targeting first-generation students and low-income families earning less than \$62,000 annually.

UW-Green Bay's Rising Phoenix program provides high school students in rural districts of northeast Wisconsin with access to dual credit services for their college education.

"Expanding Rising Phoenix to district partners in rural Wisconsin gives rural students who lack early college opportunities a jumpstart," Chancellor Alexander explained.

"Preparing our students for their futures can be a challenging task for any district. That challenge is much greater for us, due to the barriers and obstacles that come with being Wisconsin's smallest school district," stated Washington Island Principal and Curriculum Director Timothy Verboomen. "Partnering with UW-Green Bay's Rising Phoenix program for the rural district cohort offers our students access to opportunities that we hadn't imagined possible."

Not child's play

Early care and education supports the cognitive and social-emotional development of young children.

Early childhood education is a critical first step to the child's development, and northeast Wisconsin and the state as a whole struggle to keep up with the high demand and low availability of providers.

Quality education/care comes at a high cost, while providers and their staff struggle to make ends meet.

To meet YoungStar standards — Wisconsin's child care quality rating program — costs rise, as staff is required to meet educational standards through training.

To assist the industry, the Child Care Counts program provided almost \$600 million to nearly 5,000 providers from March 2020 to March 2023.

Gov. Tony Evers recently proposed making the program permanent, but the Joint Finance Committee voted to end the subsidy program in June.

"According to a survey of nearly 1,200 Wisconsin early care and education providers from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, more than 27% of providers reported that their program would have closed without the stabilization grants, and when the grants end, more than 60% of child care directors say they will have to raise tuition on families and another more than 33% say they will have to cut wages or will be unable to sustain wages/salary increases for their staff. According to Kids Forward, the median pay for child care workers in Wisconsin is \$12.66 an hour," a release from Evers office stated.

"Additionally, 54% of Wisconsinites today live in a child care desert — where there are few to no high-quality options for child care in their neighborhood or community — and even if there is a nearby child care provider, it still might not be affordable for a working family. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual Kids Count report, the average yearly cost of center-based child care in Wisconsin is \$12,415."

The "Access to Child Care in Wisconsin" report, prepared by the Early Childhood Advisory Council in 2018, showed that northeastern Wisconsin was home to 71 child care deserts, which means 35.9% of the region did not have enough childcare facilities; that was before COVID-19.

But, lack of child care has other implications outside of education.

"Everywhere I go I see Help Wanted signs," said Brown County resident, Charlie Frisk. "Finding help is already at a crisis point, what will happen when the parents of 87,000 children can no longer find affordable child care?"

"During high school, my older daughter worked as a waitress in a very nice Green Bay restaurant. She told me she was the only waitress working there who was not a single mother. These are the workers that

will go first when the cost of child care rises, or child care is simply not available.

"Eve's Supper Club, the east side Los Banditos and Victoria's Italian Restaurant all closed when they still had good business. The owners of all three restaurants cited the inability to find help as one of their major reasons for closing."

Thinking outside of the box

Programs such as the Boys & Girls Club and Literacy Green Bay help fill the need for those outside of a school system.

The Boys & Girls Club offers a "Wisconsin After Three" program to address math and reading skills for youth.

Wisconsin Boys & Girls Club President Emeritus Karen DeSanto said that students in the program demonstrated a 13% increase in math proficiency — nearly doubled the projected growth of 7%.

The Boys & Girls Club's "Be Great: Graduate" intervention program assists teens that are at risk of not graduating from high school.

"A teenage dropout costs taxpayers an average of \$292,000 over a lifetime, so the thousands of teens we've helped graduate translates to millions saved by taxpayers," DeSanto added.

Literacy Green Bay provides tutoring services for families to help with English, math, writing and computer skills.

"I say that what we do transforms lives," said Literacy Green Bay Executive Director Robyn Hallet in an interview with Press Times staff. "This isn't just a handout; we want to teach people 'to fish,' so to speak. Literacy must be learned and earned, and the people that come here are internally motivated."

The program recently received two large grants to upgrade from eight classrooms to 20, which organizers say are at full capacity.

"A majority of our students are individuals of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) background, and most of them — approximately 97% — are low income," Hallet added.

"We as a society need to change that."



Pathways to that college education may seem daunting, due to limitations in college preparedness, family support, financial funding and low confidence in academic ability, especially if you are a first-generation student. **Stock photo**

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