



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Nancy Kunkler

Email: nkunkler@wbsd-schools.org

Phone: (262) 335-5459

New Partnership Allows for More Nature-Based Programming at Preschool Level

WEST BEND — The West Bend School District is partnering with the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast to use its 275-acre Camp Silver Brook in West Bend for a new nature-based preschool program.

Beginning in fall 2024, the West Bend School District and its partner the Kettle Moraine YMCA will use Camp Silver Brook two days a week for the students enrolled in the 4K program at Trinity Lutheran Church. The other two days of instruction will remain at Trinity Lutheran. This transformation is designed to provide a richer learning experience for our students within the natural world.

The West Bend School District's 4K program already partners with the YMCA and Riveredge Nature Center to offer a nature-based 4K program located at Riveredge and Holy Trinity Church in Newburg.

"This newest feature of our Early Learning Program brings together the West Bend Schools, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast, and the Kettle Moraine YMCA for the benefit of our youngest learners," explains Jen Wimmer, superintendent of the West Bend School District.

"Incorporating nature into the learning environment can have profound and lasting effects on a child's development, providing a well-rounded educational experience," said Wimmer.

"Children who participate in Girl Scouts' outdoors programs – whether it's nature activities like the YMCA's 4K or during summer camp – are exposed to challenging experiences that help them develop leadership skills and outdoor stewardship at all ages," said Ana Simpson, CEO of Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast. "We are excited to bring this outdoor education to students in the West Bend School District as we continue to provide access to these growth opportunities for the next generation."

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This shift aligns with research indicating that nature-based education not only enhances academic performance, but also contributes to the overall well-being and development of children, possibly resulting in enhanced academic performance, increased physical activity, and improved social skills.

“Outdoor learning environments can stimulate a child's curiosity and interest in subjects like science, math, and language arts. We are pleased to be a partner in this collaboration because we have seen how nature provides an endless source of inspiration and stimulates creativity and imagination,” said Rob Johnson, CEO of the Kettle Moraine YMCA.

Those interested in enrolling in the 4K program should review WBSD4K.org for more information or contact Matt Durant of the West Bend Schools at mdurant@wbsd-schools.org. Open enrollment opportunities are available for children of families living outside of the West Bend School District attendance area.

The West Bend Joint School District #1 is proud to serve nearly 6,000 students and their families from the city of West Bend, villages of Jackson and Newburg, and townships of Barton, Polk, Trenton, Jackson, West Bend, and Addison. We strive to ensure that every student is given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts, and co-curricular activities. Within our community-based 4K program, Head Start program, West Bend Virtual Academy, five elementary schools (K-4), one intermediate school (5-6), one middle school (7-8), and two high schools (9-12), families can expect a learning environment that supports the development of the whole child. Visit west-bend.k12.wi.us for more information.

About Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast

Girl Scouts bring their dreams to life and work together to build a better world. Girl Scouts of all backgrounds and abilities can be unapologetically themselves as they discover their strengths and rise to meet new challenges. Backed by trusted adult volunteers, mentors, and millions of alums, Girl Scouts lead the way as they find their voices and make changes that affect the issues most important to them. We serve approximately 11,700 girls in grades K5-12 and 5,800 adults who believe in our mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. With programs in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha counties, we give every Girl Scout in our council the chance to reach their full leadership potential. To volunteer, reconnect, donate, or join, visit gswise.org, email customercare@gswise.org, or call 800-565-4475.

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