



UCC Director Wendy Eagon retiring; has touched lives of thousands of Fox Valley area children

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Three generations of families have experienced the loving guidance of Wendy Eagon at the [University Children's Center](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, a UW Oshkosh campus. Her initial preschoolers are now nurses, lawyers, early childhood educators, teachers and...parents.



By Eagon's own estimate, at the time of her retirement in September, she will have worked with more than 2,700 area children during nearly 37 years total at the highly rated childcare center and student-learning lab. She served as UCC director for the vast majority of that time, 35 years.

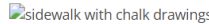
As parents, colleagues and students are quick to note, Eagon has shaped the quality and personal attention the center is known for, underscored by receiving the top YoungStar five-star rating from the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. UCC has received this top rating every year in the certification program's six-year history.

Positive Consistency

"The staff has remained consistent over the years, which is a testament to Wendy's leadership. Wendy's positive and welcoming personality set the tone for the community of staff and children within the center," said Menasha parent Sarah Holtz, who has two children under five years of age at the center. She chose UCC two years ago due to its longevity, reputation, and emphasis on developmental growth.

UCC is a unique bridge between the campus and its surrounding communities—providing a place for faculty, students, and staff as well as Fox Valley area parents to seek both early childcare and preschool services for their children ages six months to six years. It also offers hands-on experience to students from UW-Fox Valley, UW Oshkosh and UW-Green Bay who are studying education, psychology, nursing and human services and planning to work in a variety of child-centered professions after graduation. Each semester, the center serves about 65 families and up to 75 total children, and trains up to 15 student employees.

"Wendy has always put her heart and soul into the children's center. She is a huge advocate for the importance of quality early childhood care and education," said Amy Prideaux, head infant/toddler teacher at UCC and Eagon's colleague for 25 years.



Mentoring and Mindfulness

Eagon's influence runs remarkably deep for student Brittany Powers, who began working at the UCC because she enjoyed working with children and was taking college classes at UW-Fox Valley. Powers graduated from UW Oshkosh with a bachelor's degree in human services leadership two years ago.

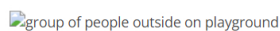
"After graduating, I realized I did not want to stop working with children and decided to go back to school," said Powers, who is on track to earn a second bachelor's degree in elementary education in December 2018 and has now worked at the center for six years. "Wendy mentored me in many ways. The key thing I learned from working with Wendy is that every family and child comes from different walks of life. No story is ever the same, and showing empathy toward the families and children can help everyone's day be a little brighter."

The center's humble beginnings in rented space in a nearby church in 1974 and then an on-campus mobile building two years later changed significantly in 1990 when the campus built a new facility designed specifically for the educational and developmental mission of serving children. Eagon noted this was the first building of its type in the University of Wisconsin System, and since then has served as a model for early childhood programs around the state.

"I cannot express how much I respect and appreciate the excellent service and dedication of the professional staff," Eagon said of her long tenure at UCC, which she joined in 1981. "I think this is a big part of why I was able to work at UCC for so many years, and still enjoy doing so today. I appreciate the families who have trusted me to guide the staff and shared their wonderful children. I hope I have been able to make a positive impact on their lives. They have enriched my life and will forever be a part of who I am. My UCC family will be with me forever in my heart."

Written by Monica M. Walk

Photos by Laurie Krasin



UW-Fox Valley students gain valuable career experience working at the University Children's Center located on campus. Many go on to earn degrees in field related to education. A few of the UW-Fox Valley students working (and playing with the children) at the UCC are (left to right): Leo Fadul, exchange student from Brazil; Arianna Hernandez and Roni Young.

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