

National Project Helps Wisconsin Learning Disabled Students

By Teri Sisulak

Project Eye-to-Eye is an exciting, new concept designed to get learning disabled /ADHD college students into middle school classrooms to mentor learning disabled, ADD and ADHD children. Project Eye-to-Eye is a nationally recognized program. The program is separated into two components: an art workshop once a week and one-on-one mentoring time. The goals include developing interpersonal skills, self-advocacy, self-concept, study skills and organization.

There are two Project Eye-To-Eye sites in the Midwest, one is in Minnesota and is the other in Wisconsin. The program site in Wisconsin is a partnership between DeLong Middle School in Eau Claire and faculty and students at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. The UW - Eau Claire students under the direction of co-coordinators Teri Sisulak and Korah Petrasko have formed the group into a campus organization. The UW – Eau Claire mentors participated in a series of training sessions lead by the National Director of Eye-to-Eye, David

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-Adrian

Flink. The art room visits began on November 17 and will run until April 27 when Mr. Flink will be in Eau Claire for a family art show for the students' work. Each student will have an opportunity for their work to go to a national art show in New York.

When DeLong Middle School students were asked what they liked about meeting with their mentors, this is how they responded:

“Fun – I get to express myself and do a lot of projects and express my self in creativity.”

-Adrian

“Everything – All my new friends – University friends. They taught me to do better in school! They are nice and smart and sometimes funny. “

-Dan

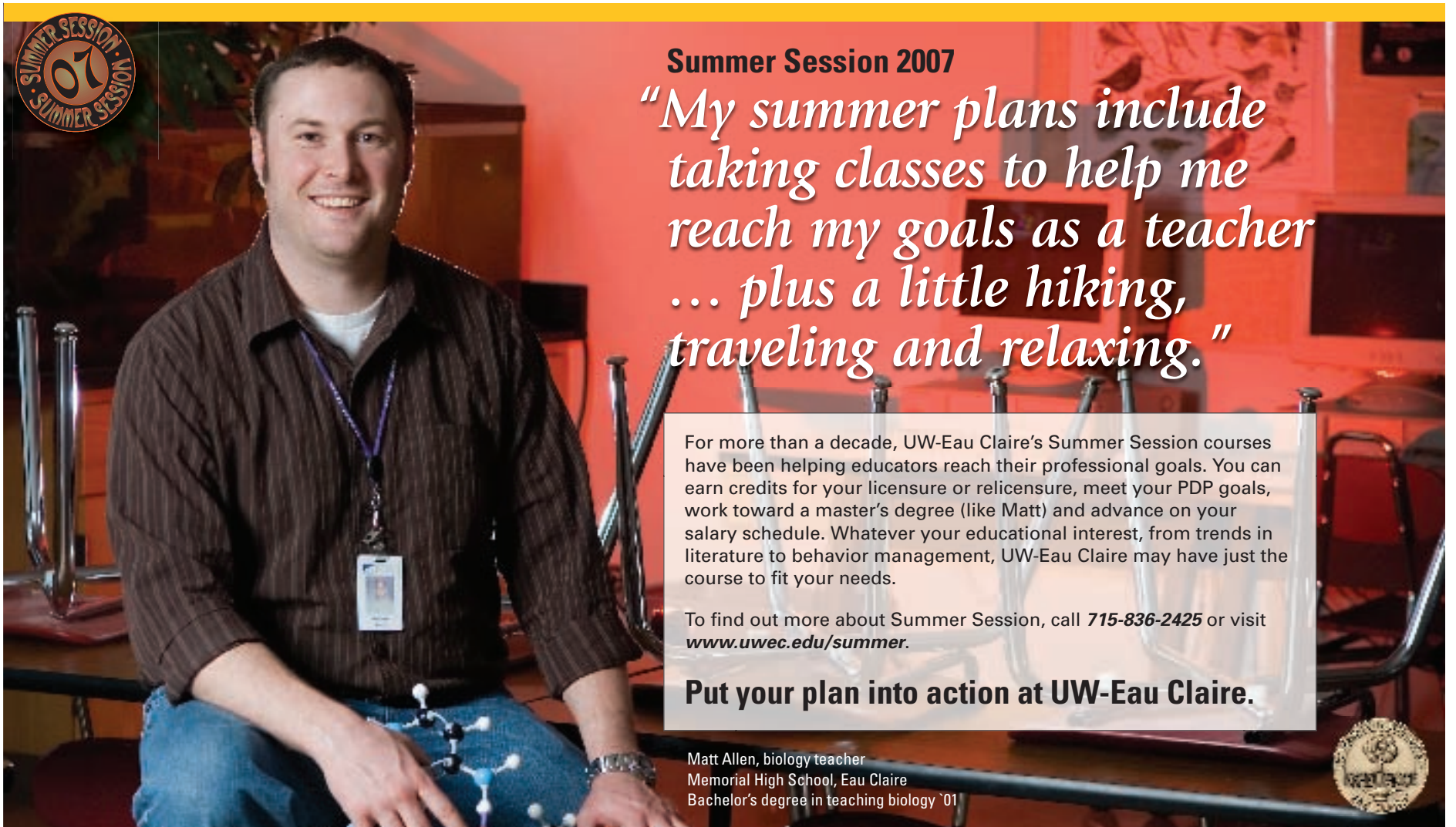
Project Eye-to-Eye works to create a more inclusive and empowering learning environment for its students. Project Eye-To-Eye's research, however, shows that many of its programming methods can be mirrored in non-Project Eye-To-Eye classrooms with dramatic results. Fundamental to the Project Eye-To-Eye programming model is the concept that it is essential to develop healthy self-esteem to promote student success. Helping a student find his or her niche and praising them when they do a great job is one of the first steps. Another way to support students is through allowing them different options in activities. For example, some students may do a better job with verbal poetry than written poetry or by incorporating the same idea into a visual piece of artwork. Students may

also use “fidgets” underneath their desks in order to help them focus on the task at hand, and this way they are less distracting to classmates. Other alternative accommodations can include books on tape and medication. To promote skills necessary for life, talking with students about the way that they study and using reading and study strategies can also help.

If you are interested in getting a Project Eye-to-Eye site started, there are three things that you need to do: contact a post-secondary school in the area and enlist faculty assistance and students to do the mentoring, have contact with a teacher at a school with a group of struggling students, and fill out a Project Eye-to-Eye Program Model Agreement Form. For more questions about setting up a site please contact David Flink at newsite@projecteyetoeye.org.

For a full resource guide about more accommodations, please contact us at: info@projecteyetoeye.org or visit www.projecteyetoeye.org.

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