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## **Farmers Union Camps provide cooperation, leadership and fun**

**CHIPPEWA FALLS** – Registration is now open for 2018 Farmers Union Camps. Each summer, hundreds of rural and urban youth from all over Wisconsin and beyond participate in camps at Wisconsin Farmers Union’s Kamp Kenwood on the shores of Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls.

According to WFU Education Director Cathy Statz, campers who participate in Farmers Union Camps develop skills and awareness of cooperation, leadership, rural heritage and citizenship in a safe, fun and inspiring environment.

“Our camp programs are designed so there is something for everyone, and for over 80 years they have focused on leadership development and citizenship with a cooperative approach,” Statz said. Campers at each camp session create their own Camp Co-op Store, elect a board of directors, buy shares and receive patronage dividends at the end of each camp.

A balance of workshops, speakers, hands-on activities and creative play keeps campers busy. Each afternoon offers free time for a swim in the lake, a game of sand volleyball or other supervised recreational activities. Campers have time for sports and games, swimming in the lake or hiking in the woods. Art, music, and drama teams meet each afternoon to prepare for the Evening Program, which features skits, songs and cooperative adventure theme games. Past evening themes have included Pirate Night, Highland Games Night and Pioneer Night. Each evening closes with a dance (folk or modern) or a campfire.

“Campers especially love the evening programs at camp, because they get to be really imaginative,” Statz said. “They develop skits, write songs and paint a stage backdrop for our special theme nights. We also play a lot of fun camp games where kids can apply the teamwork skills they learn throughout the week.”

Campers come from across the Midwest and a handful of other states. Illinois native and second-generation camper Ali Slaughter, who has spent the past few summers on camp staff, notes that “Through Farmers Union Camp you gain a sense of community and family, knowledge on a wide range of important issues, leadership skills, and countless memories.”

Camp sessions are open to ages 8-18 and are organized by elementary, junior high and senior high age groups. Sessions are available in June, July and August. There will also be an Acorn Day Camp for ages 7 and up from 9am to 2pm on Aug. 16, coinciding with Wisconsin Farmers Union’s Summer Conference at the camp. Family camps, open for families to attend with children of all ages, will be held July 27-28 or Aug 3-4 and offer a chance for families to enjoy the camp experience together.

Co-sponsored by a grant from the CHS Foundation, these four- to five-day camps are affordably priced at \$95 to \$105 per camper for Wisconsin Farmers Union members. (Non-members add \$30 for a one-year Farmers Union family membership.) Programming recognizes the values of cooperative values and particularly agricultural co-ops across the landscape.

“Agricultural cooperatives are such an important part of our rural economy, and our camp program uses them as the primary example of how people can build a better economy and engage in leadership,” Statz said.

To register or to view camp dates, please visit [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

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