

**Profile of
4-H SySTEMatics Program
Cooperative Extension, University of Wisconsin–Extension
2016 Regents’ Diversity Award Team Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Led by UW-Extension and Program Coordinator Eva Terry, in partnership with colleagues from UW Colleges, as well as Milwaukee Area Technical Colleges.
- Created from an innovative partnership led by the Milwaukee County UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development team working with UW-Waukesha Continuing Education; the program is designed to bring low-income 7th and 8th-grade students into the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).
- Focusing on Latino and African-American youth, as well as girls, SySTEMatics started as a pilot program in 2010-11 on the south side of Milwaukee with two schools and 20 youth members participating; it has since grown to include UW-Richland with seven participating schools and almost 150 youth.
- Students in the program complete university-researched hands-on 4-H science and engineering experiments at their school sites; they also learn about higher education resources, the college application process, financial planning, and academic and career exploration through pre-college activities at their schools and through campus visits.
- Each year, the program becomes more diverse, reaching out to a larger number of students from different backgrounds; the program team evaluates the curriculum each year, and uses feedback from student participants to improve the program.

In the words of colleagues/participants:

- “There are two primary reasons I am enthusiastic about this program: It is a rare example of helping youth start to think and plan ahead – instilling in them the fun of learning and the possibilities of going to college, which for most is six or more years away. The program is marketed directly to schools within the poorest neighborhoods in the city. For many students, they could be the first generation in their family to go to college.”
—Allan Montezon, *Voluntary Chair, Advisory Council, 4-H SySTEMatics Program*
- “There was a group of four of my boys on the (UW-Waukesha) trip that day that never really saw themselves in college ever. For them, going to UW-Waukesha was the first time they set foot on a college campus. All they talked about after the trip was college. One of the young men even asked me if I would set up a spring break trip for them to see another college....My boys finally are starting to shift their thinking from the streets to college and that is huge – so thank you for that!”
—Jennifer Koss, *Teacher and STEM Leader, Westside Academy II*
- “Our students are learning both science and life skills that are imperative to be successful in high school and beyond. The program also sparks their interest so much that they consider science and engineering careers in their futures. We could not be happier with the motivation and future-thinking this program provides.”
—Julieane Cook, *Principal, St. Martini Lutheran School*