



We're All About Families

by Jean Colvin,
Communications Director, Wisconsin Youth Company

Dictionaries define a family as everything from “a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children” to “a locally independent organized crime unit.” Oh boy. That’s a mouthful. At AFTER SCHOOL we don’t attempt to define families. We just make sure they are all welcome.

I was at Muir AFTER SCHOOL last month taking pictures at their fall family gathering. It was a Halloween party theme so the kids were in costumes. The kids helped set up for the party and there was a place where you could read scary books next to a pretend campfire; there was a table where you could build and decorate a gingerbread-style house out of graham crackers and frosting and another table where you could get your face painted with a pumpkin or a bat. Pizza and punch were available too so families could eat dinner together.

All our AFTER SCHOOL sites have fall family gatherings. It’s a tradition. Like a family cookout, picnic or holiday, we gather, eat together, play games, tell jokes and exchange news. It’s so wonderfully ordinary that you almost don’t notice what else is happening.

There is warmth in the exchanges between parents and staff; between staff and children and from child to child. There is a sense of connection. Muir families belong to Muir AFTER SCHOOL and Muir AFTER SCHOOL belongs to the AFTER SCHOOL family.

Family means a lot of different things to different people. At AFTER SCHOOL it simply means all of you folks and your kids. You’re family. You’re why we’re here.