

**July 7, 2023**



**Dear friends,**

**With July 4 in the rearview mirror, we are now in the “Dog Days of Summer”. You’ve probably heard the phrase but don’t know what it came from. The term “Dog Days” traditionally refers to a period of particularly hot and humid weather during July and August. The ancient Greeks and Romans believed this to be a time of drought, bad luck and unrest, when dogs and men alike would be driven mad by the extreme heat. This time of year also coincides with the rising at dawn of Sirius, the Dog Star. Other than our own sun, Sirius is the brightest star in the sky. The Greeks, Egyptians and Romans believed that the dawn rising of Sirius in mid-to-late summer contributed to the extreme weather of the season. So there you go – the Dog Days of Summer are here. Stay cool and safe.**

**Sincerely,**

*Bob*

## small business **SPOTLIGHT**



### ***Black Wick Candles & Creations Lets You be the Artist***

Black Wick Candles & Creations is unique in the candle business. The owners, Debbie and Desirea Morris, want you to tap into your creativity and style to make your own custom candle. They got the idea after visiting a similar business in the Chicago area. The store, located at 320

Main St. in Racine, allows you to design and create your own scent, which you will then incorporate into either a candle or soap. The shop is available for private parties and will rent their space out, including full use of tables and chairs, for a fee. Both walk-ins and reservations are welcome. Visit [blackwickcandlesandcreations.com](http://blackwickcandlesandcreations.com).

### **In Case You Missed It**



### ***Evers Signs Budget with 51 Partial Vetoes***

On Wednesday, July 5, Governor Evers held a press conference and signing ceremony for the 2023-2025 state budget. Using his veto pen, Evers issued 51 partial vetoes. One of the most consequential was a partial veto of the Republican tax cut, which would have heavily benefited the rich. Evers eliminated the tax cuts for the two highest tax brackets, saving the state \$2.7 billion while still cutting taxes by \$175 million for the two lowest tax brackets. Additionally, using partial vetoes, the Governor was able to save 188 jobs with the UW System that Republicans had voted to eliminate as part of their attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Showing his commitment to public education, Governor Evers once again used his veto

pen to invest more money in our public schools. In earlier negotiations with Republican leaders, Evers was able to secure a \$325 increase in per pupil spending limits for school districts in each of the next two years. Using his veto pen, Evers made the \$325 per pupil, per year increase effectively permanent.



## ***Racine Zoo Turns 100***

This week, the Racine Zoo held a “Centennial Celebration” in recognition of its 100<sup>th</sup> year of operation. On Wednesday, July 5, the zoo held a morning-to-night party, featuring live music and other entertainment; face painting; crafts and games; a bounce house; and fireworks.

In the early 1920s, Jacob Stoffel, Jr. – then President of the Park Commission – envisioned a zoo in Racine. In 1923, he gave the zoo its start by donating two deer and three monkeys; the zoo officially opened to visitors that summer.

The Racine Zoo has grown and changed throughout the years. Public support has allowed the zoo to make it to 100, and with continued support, the zoo might still be around in another 100 years. Find a list of zoo events at <https://racinezoo.org/>.



## ***Evers Directs Remaining ARPA Funds to Extend Child Care Counts Program after Republican Cuts***

The Child Care Counts Program was created in 2020 using federal Covid relief funds. The purpose of the program was to provide financial assistance to child care facilities, helping them to pay staff and keep the lights on. The program is credited with providing the stability to keep

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3,300 providers open. As the national state of emergency around Covid has expired and federal Covid funds dwindle, the program expires at the end of the year. In his 2023 state budget proposal, Evers had set aside \$340 million to continue the program; this was rejected by Republicans, who committed no new funding. Providers across the state have warned that discontinuation of the program would lead to increased rates and likely closures.

This has led Evers to try to find other funding sources. The state currently has \$11 million in federal pandemic relief money, which Evers has said he will dedicate to Child Care Counts; the state has another \$2.2 million that had been set aside for administrative support, which Evers will now direct to Child Care Counts. Unfortunately, reallocation of these funds is subject to approval by...the Republican-controlled Joint Finance Committee.



## ***Kenosha County Participating in Independent Living Pilot Program***

The state Department of Health Services has launched the Independent Living Supports Pilot program, which will provide eligible Wisconsinites with critical resources allowing them to continue to live independently in their homes rather than entering a long-term care program. Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the pilot will take place in select areas of the state, including Kenosha County. Those who enroll will have access to program benefits for up to 12 months.

To be eligible, participants must:

- Be a Wisconsin resident and U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant
  - Live in a pilot service area (Kenosha County)
  - Be over age 18
- Not be currently enrolled in Medicaid long-term care programs or living in a licensed or certified residential or long-term care facility
- Earn less than 300% of the federal poverty level (Dollar amount varies by household size; find yours at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/fpl.htm>)
  - Have at least one eligible functional need
- Have a qualifying diagnosis (may be a long-term disability) if under age 55

The program will offer up to \$7,200 in one-time, periodic or continuing services based on the needs of participants. Possible supports reflect the broad range of what people might need, including:

- Specialized medical equipment and assistive technology
  - Home and vehicle modifications

- Personal care, care management, or supportive home care
  - Personal emergency response systems
  - Internet/Wi-Fi services
- Financial management and legal assistance

Each participating ADRC will find eligible participants in the area, help them enroll, and coordinate one-time and ongoing services. ADRCs will also help participants transition to other services when the pilot ends. For more information, visit <https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/arpa/hcbs-ilsp.htm>.



## ***July is Disability Pride Month***

Disability Pride Month is celebrated each July as an opportunity to honor the history, achievements, experiences and struggles of the disability community. July was chosen as it marks the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, landmark legislation that brown down barriers to inclusion in society. However, barriers still exist, which is why we need to honor every kind of disability, the people who identify with them, and the wide range of supports they need in order to thrive. Whether you are a person with a disability or an ally of the disability community, you can be a part of breaking down the remaining barriers.