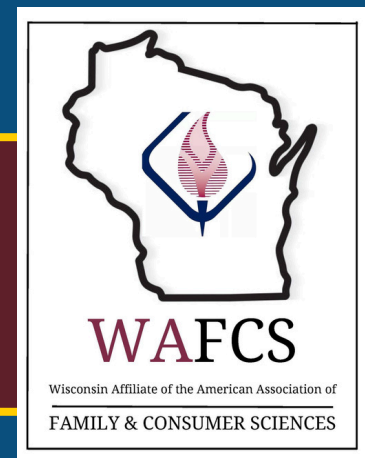


# WAFCS News - January, 2026

## WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCES



## 2026 WAFCS Annual Conference

- **Register** now - Early Registration Ends 01/31/2026
- See Conference **Program, Registration, Hotel**-page 2
- Support the Service Project “**Beyond Blessed Pantry**”
- Bring **Silent Auction** items and/or a basket
- Share your **Art and Design** treasures from home
- Apply for **Foundation Scholarships and Travelships**-pg 4
- Check out **AI in Education**-pages 6-7

### 2026 WAFCS Annual Conference Service Project



WAFCS can impact the  
Baraboo community by  
supporting  
**Beyond Blessed Pantry!**

Bring food or hygiene items to the conference to be  
donated to Beyond Blessed Pantry! The Pantry is  
especially in need of: Canned Fruit, Pasta, Pasta Sauce,  
Peanut Butter, and Soup

Be sure to catch their Thursday  
morning session to learn how  
they supported an average of  
735 families per week during  
2025 doing a drive-thru  
distribution on Wednesdays!



### Top 10 Reasons to Attend the Annual Conference

1. Inspiring Keynote Speakers including Dr. Delores L. Williams and Executive Chef Elena Terry.
2. Hands-On, Classroom-Ready Breakouts Sessions
3. Innovative Focus on AI in FCS Education
4. Real-World Industry Connections
5. Choose-Your-Own Learning Path with sessions and pre-conference experiences
6. Strengths-Based Professional Growth - Gallup CliftonStrengths Workshop
7. Meaningful Networking & Mentorship with peers, experienced professionals, and students
8. Support for New & Young Professionals
9. Celebrate Excellence in FCS at the Awards Banquet
10. Renewed Passion for FCS leaving energized and inspired.



---

# 2026 Annual Conference

February 26 & 27, 2026  
The Wisconsin Hotel and Conference Center  
WI Dells, WI

---

## Annual Conference Information

Link to [Conference Program Overview](#)

- Preview the Schedule
- Check out the Tours
- Plan your Workshops and Breakout Sessions
- PDU's will be available for Conference Attendees

Link to [Online Conference Registration](#)

- Tour Sign-Ups based on First Come, First Serve Basis
- Online Conference Registration Fees include 5% Credit Card Service Fee

### Paying with a Purchase Order?

- Complete [Paper Registration Form](#)
- Make PO payable to UWSP
- Mail PO & Registration Form to:  
UWSP Continuing Education  
2100 Main St  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

### Paying by a Check?

- Complete [Paper Registration Form](#)
- Make Checks Payable to UWSP
- Mail Registration Form & Check to:  
UWSP Continuing Education  
2100 Main St  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Need a hard copy of Conference Registration Form?

Email [wafcsconf@gmail.com](mailto:wafcsconf@gmail.com) or call 715-308-0506.

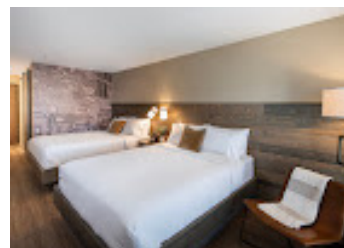
**Early Bird Registration Ends 1/31/2026**

### [Book A Hotel Room](#)

**-Room Block Closed 1/25/2026-**

[Hotel S-211 Tax-Exempt Form](#) PRINT THIS FORM BEFORE ARRIVAL

- The Wisconsin Hotel & Conference Center
- Truly One-Of-A Kind Accommodations
- Enjoy Wisconsin fresh meals at Farmer in the Dells Restaurant
- Unwind at The Silo Bar



## WAFCS Basket Raffle and Silent Auction

Get ready for some fun and exciting prizes at the WAFCS Basket Raffle! Each beautifully themed basket is filled with goodies, surprises, and items you won't want to miss.

### Raffle Details:

**Date & Time:** Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Tickets:** 6 tickets for \$5, 13 tickets for \$10, or 30 tickets for \$20

All proceeds from this raffle will go toward supporting WAFCS expenses, helping us continue to provide valuable programs, resources, and events for our members.

We already have some amazing baskets, but we are in need of more baskets and silent auction items! If you can contribute or have questions, please contact **Emily Larson** at [larsone@amerysd.k12.wi.us](mailto:larsone@amerysd.k12.wi.us).

## Opportunities at Annual Conference

### Art and Design Show 2026

Hello everyone! I hope the new year is off to a good start, and with the WAFCS Conference coming up soon, it's time to think about what you want to bring with you to the **Art and Design Show!**

We have two categories to enter into this year. The first is “**Best Gift/Sample from a Student/Family Project**”, so something that a former student might have left with you as a sample you used for future classes to see, perhaps a gift they gave you when you had a rough day, or maybe something that you made with a 4H group, retirement group, or family member. What is a handmade thing that means so much to you? Would you share it with us?

The second category is “**I Finished That!**”. With the theme last year being our unfinished projects, we're hoping to see if you have finished a project that you shared last year.

Prizes are to be awarded, fun to be had, perhaps even some inspiration for a project for another time. Who knows?!? But we hope you'll bring something to show! No special entry required, just bring it with you when you arrive at the conference. If you would bring a card or paper with a description, sharing the story of your “Best Gift...” or “Finished That”, that would be greatly appreciated, otherwise note cards will be available to write it down.

Please put your name on things! We can't give you a prize, or properly return it to you if we don't have a name with the item at least. Thank you!

Any questions, please text or call **Terri Check at 715-254-5611**.

2026 brings new opportunities, challenges, and adventures - a blank canvas to explore new interests and reflect on how our commitments shape our quality of life. Past endeavors and future plans continue to ask us to consider how to balance work and life.

American author Kenneth Blanchard offers insight as we sort through how we invest our time, energy, and talents: "There's a difference between interest and commitment. When you're interested in doing something, you do it only when it's convenient. When you're committed to something, you accept no excuses; only results."

I urge you to embrace 2026 by pursuing a new, captivating interest and letting go of a few commitments that no longer contribute to your quality of life. Cheers! And Happy New Year!

~President Cathy's  
Corner~



---

### WAFCS FOUNDATION AWARD APPLICATION DEADLINES

A reminder that the following applications are due **FEBRUARY 1, 2026**.

- **Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarships**
- **Student and Professional Travelships to the 2026 WAFCS Annual Conference**

The **Professional Project/Research Grant** application is due **February 15, 2026**.

Go to WAFCS website at <https://www.aafcs.org/wafcs/home> and click on the Forms tab for more information and the application form. If you have any questions contact Rita Houser, WAFCS Foundation Chair, [rhouser1010@gmail.com](mailto:rhouser1010@gmail.com)

---

Congratulations, Ginny Hall, who recently was recognized by Black Point Estate and Gardens for her historical work for Walworth County. Ginny has compiled 12 driving tour guides, 15 walking tour guides and wrote over 800 news stories preserving the history of Walworth County. Ginny's lifelong dedication as a historian, prolific author, dedicated volunteer and entertaining storyteller has impacted the lives of people in Wisconsin and beyond!



Ginny Hall



Jenny Abel

Congratulations, Jenny Abel, who recently was named Distinguished Financial Security Outreach Program Manager at UW-Madison Division of Extension. Jenny's new 'distinguished' title recognizes her extensive experience, advanced skills and knowledge, national reputation and remarkable contributions to her profession. Jenny's lifelong dedication to financial education has impacted the lives of people in Wisconsin and beyond!

#### *In Sympathy*

WAFCS extends its sympathy to Janet Powell in the loss of her husband, Fred Powell. Fred Powell's full obituary can be found [HERE](#).

## **WAFCS FOUNDATION SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR FOUNDATION FINANCE MANAGER POSITION**

The WAFCS Foundation is looking for a person to fill the newly created position of WAFCS Foundation Finance Manager. This is a contracted position that pays \$600 per year. Preference will be given to applicants who are a member of WAFCS/AAFCS. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Attends WAFCS Foundation meetings, which are generally zoom meetings
- Responsible for WAFCS Foundation receipts and disbursements
- Prepares reports as determined by WAFCS Foundation Board
- Manages investments
- Assists with IRS reporting
- Coordinates and communicates with WAFCS Treasurer
- Prepares for annual audit of WAFCS Foundation records
- Other duties as assigned

Please send a cover letter stating your current role in WAFCS, what special skills you have to be successful in this role and any other information you wish to share. Also list three people we may contact for references and include their title, email, phone and how you know this person. Send to Rita Houser, WAFCS Foundation Board Chair by March 15. [Rhouser1010@gmail.com](mailto:Rhouser1010@gmail.com)

If you have any questions, please contact Rita Houser.

---

## **WAFCS FOUNDATION NEWS**

The WAFCS Foundation, which provides funding for scholarships, travelships, grants and other activities of WAFCS, is expanding the foundation board from four to six members. Anyone who is a member of WAFCS/AAFCS is welcome to apply. If you are interested, please send the following information to Rita Houser, WAFCS Foundation Board Chair, [rhouser1010@gmail.com](mailto:rhouser1010@gmail.com) or if you have questions call 715-225-5884 by February 1, 2026.

- 1) How many years have you been a WAFCS/AAFCS member?
- 2) How have you been involved with WAFCS/AAFCS?
- 3) Why would you like to serve on the WAFCS Foundation Board?



## *~ Resource Share ~*

Jenny Wehmeier  
WAFCS President-Elect

### **Integrating AI into my Culinary Arts Classroom**

With less than six weeks until the WAFCS Annual Conference, both attendees and presenters are preparing for two inspiring days of learning, networking, and celebrating our profession. As a presenter, I would like to offer a brief preview of what I have learned as I begin integrating AI into my Culinary Arts classroom.

My journey with AI began during a schoolwide inservice that encouraged educators to embrace AI rather than avoid it. While I do not consider myself an expert, I have come to appreciate how tools such as ChatGPT and MagicSchool AI can enhance classroom efficiency and deepen student learning in a culinary arts setting, while also supporting real-world skill development. These AI platforms help students strengthen recipe comprehension by breaking down complex techniques, adjusting portion sizes, and modifying recipes to meet dietary needs, including allergies or cultural preferences. Most recently, I have used ChatGPT to standardize my classroom recipes into clear, easy-to-read formats tailored to a variety of reading levels.

For educators, MagicSchool AI streamlines lesson planning, assessment creation, and instructional differentiation. It enables teachers to efficiently generate rubrics, lab reflections, safety quizzes, and accommodations for diverse learners, freeing valuable time for hands-on instruction and individualized student support in the kitchen. I previously struggled to create rubrics that addressed the wide range of culinary arts topics I teach; however, by inputting my criteria into MagicSchool AI, I now have customized rubrics tailored to each of my baking labs.

When used responsibly, AI becomes a learning partner rather than a shortcut. Teachers can model ethical use by emphasizing originality, verification of information, and real-world application. By incorporating ChatGPT and MagicSchool AI, culinary arts classrooms become more inclusive, engaging, and aligned with industry expectations, while empowering students to use emerging technology as a professional resource they will encounter beyond the classroom.

If you are new to incorporating AI into your classroom, I invite you to join Theresa Schreiber and me for our session at 10:15 a.m. on Friday morning. In addition, Amanda Drews will be presenting Fueling Disciplinary Literacy through AI in FCS Classrooms at 9:15 a.m. Together, these sessions offer an opportunity to build confidence, expand capacity, and deepen our understanding of how AI can effectively support teaching and learning in FCS classrooms.

## ~ Resource Share ~

### Human-Centered AI Interactions by Joyce Malyn-Smith and Kirsten Peterson ACTE Techniques



Susan Turgeson  
WAFCS Treasurer

As AI is a technology everyone is impacted by, educators need to consider how it can be integrated into classrooms and used to help students develop critical thinking skills. The IAVES strategy outlined is beneficial in designing tasks that require students to go beyond having AI generate a basic response to a prompt. The authors state the need for “learners who blend technical knowledge with durable skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, adaptability, creativity, leadership and emotional intelligence (Hutson & Ceballos, 2023) along with the attitudes needed to engage with, design and manage AI responsibly” (pg 8). The IAVES strategy intentionally creates structured moments to question validity, determine what to revise, and incorporate personalized connections to the content generated by AI. The key is not to avoid AI, but rather to engage in human-centered AI interactions. Be sure to read the full article in the November/December 2025 issue of Techniques.

#### Human Centered AI Interactions

by J. Malyn-Smith & K. Peterson  
(2025). *Techniques*.  
November/December, p. 8 - 11

##### Tips for Teachers:

- Adopt reflection checkpoints in each of the steps
- Have students share how they elevated AI's response
- Grade the process, not the product

##### Initiate

- Define the job
- Specify the purpose & audience
- Draft prompt.

##### Analyze

- Read like a reviewer
- Does it meet the purpose? Check tone and readability
- Anything missing?

##### Verify

- Check facts, citations, calculations, and compliance against trustworthy sources
- Make needed corrections

##### Elevate

- Reflect on the big picture and add personalized examples

##### Socialize

- Share the information (Present)
- Explain choices clearly
- Tailor the message
- Get feedback

A Lesson Plan for You! [Teaching Responsible Use of AI](#)