

Greenhouse begins to bloom

Volunteers move facility closer to realization

By Luke Ranker

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Central Rivers Farmshed's greenhouse moved closer to completion over the past week.

A group of AmeriCorps National Civillian Community Corps volunteers from across the country came to Stevens Point last week to help the Farmshed clean up the former commercial greenhouses at 1220 Briggs Court. Layne Cozzolino, executive director, said the eight AmeriCorps members have removed old glass from the greenhouse and cleaned debris from the site. She said having the AmeriCorps team at the greenhouse has given Farmshed the opportunity to teach them about community gardens and sustainability.

"They're getting to learn about all these projects going on around the Midwest," she said.

Farmshed is renovating the former Sorenson's commercial garden center into a sustainable garden and food education center that promotes local food and business.

The greenhouse project and Stevens Point left a strong impression on 21-year-old Mar-



Lucia Kerr shows Boys & Girls Club of Portage County members Emilio Oviedo, 16, and Andrew Gellinski, 16, of Plover, where to dump dirt Tuesday in the Farmshed greenhouse in Stevens Point.

quesah Barrett, of Chicago. The AmeriCorps volunteer said she enjoyed working at the greenhouse.

"I'd love to work here," she said. "Stevens Point is an amazing community."

Lucia Kerr, a 24-year-old Madison native, said working in the greenhouse was a new experience for most of the AmeriCorps team.

"I was happy to hear Stevens Point was starting sustainable growing," she said.

Most of the team's work was behind and to the west side of the main building, removing old glass and cleaning the grounds. Today is the group's last day, but Cozzolino said another group will be working for three weeks in late July and early August. Members of the

els for a courtyard that people can rent for receptions and other functions.

On Aug. 10 through Aug. 13, the Greenhouse Project will host a brick oven building demonstration by Dave Shantz and Mark Klein of Gimme Shelter Construction. Cozzolino said a brick oven will be built in the courtyard that Farmshed will use for future baking workshops, and also will be available for those who rent the courtyard. She said proceeds from the August workshop will pay for the oven's construction cost.

Inside the main building, Cozzolino said the kitchen was fitted with commercial-grade plumbing a few months ago. She said she hopes to renovate the space so it can be used by people renting the courtyard or for cooking and preserving demos.

She said Farmshed is considering reaching out to larger businesses such as Sentry Insurance or Travel Guard for sponsorship. Altogether, the greenhouse project needs about \$200,000 for completion, but Cozzolino said she's happy with how far the greenhouse has come.

"I'm really excited by the progress we've made with the limited resources we've had," she said.

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Lucia Kerr, 24, of Madison, spreads dirt Tuesday in the farmshed greenhouse in Stevens Point. She is part of an AmeriCorps team that spent 10