

# FAMILY FOCUS

NEWS FROM WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER



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## State grant allows for expanded preschool services

In an effort to provide more classroom instruction, parent education and to become less reliant on the United Way, the West Midland Family Center recently requested and received a \$45,000 state preschool grant.

"The grant enables the WMFC to double the number of hours the class is in session and also provides funding for a parent-education component, Greg Dorrien, WMFC assistant director, said. "The parent-education nights have turned out to be the most exciting aspect of the program, both for the parents and other family members," said Susan Mathis-Lilly, WMFC preschool instructor.

"We initially were apprehensive about how this would be received by the parents, but we're very happy the way the parents have taken to the program," said Mathis-Lilly.

A typical parent-education night starts with a nutritious dinner for the entire family, then each family member goes to an appropriate activity. The children in the preschool have a special nighttime session.

Older siblings are dis-



Students in Susan Mathis-Lilly's preschool class recently received word that their class hours would be expanded. Helping Mathis-Lilly, left, is Bonnie Larson, center, and Gail Crosby.

patched to the Activity Room and gym while younger kids go to the babysitting room.

Parents then form a semi-circle and are guided through group discussions by Sally Peterson and Kathy Kanifzenski, both parent education

facilitators from Midland-Gladwin Mental Health. "Sally and Kathy do a great job of leading the group over difficult parenting issues. They skillfully field each question and are able to give positive examples of strate-

gies the parents can readily use in their dealing with their children," said Mathis-Lilly.

A preschool open house is being planned for a Saturday April 13 from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Parents are invited to attend.

## Donations help WMFC provide services

Donations — like volunteers — are the lifeblood of an organization such as the West Midland Family Center.

All are needed and deeply appreciated, said WMFC Assistant Director Greg Dorrien. Recent donations to WMFC

include:

- Midland Jaycees — \$100 Sept. 8 and \$300 Jan. 9 for WMFC's general fund.
- Midland Daily News — \$408 for three preschool scholarships.
- Midland Foundation —

\$2,200 for a preschool for the Midland Preschool classes.

- Midland Rabbit Club — \$100 for general fund.
- Dr. James B. Adams and Leah Sirrine Adams — \$50 for memorial for family of Dr. Terry and Barb Johnson.

•United Way — \$7,500 additional allocation.

- Phi Delta Theta — \$200 from the Northwood Institute fraternity to the general fund.
- Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts — an undetermined amount of food.



# Dauer: Volunteer supreme

By Greg Dorrien

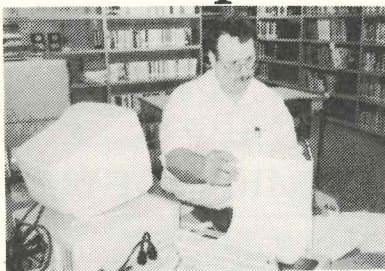
Gene Dauer is wrong. He claims to be a "jack of all trades and master of none." But around the West Midland Family Center we know better.

When a computer glitch has us fouled up, or when the pinball machine breaks (AGAIN!) we call Gene.

When we need a volunteer to drive the school bus for a field trip, we call Gene.

What? We need a dance chaperone, soccer coach, fitness room supervisor, bingo volunteer — wait a minute, I'll call Gene.

When I asked him what changes he would like to see in any of the programs, he said, "I'd like to see a more consistent group of youth and



**Gene Dauer** adults for the Leathercraft Club."

Oh, did I forget to tell you he lead our 4-H Leathercraft Club?

Next time your group or organization needs someone to burn pancakes at the annual fundraiser, you may want to call Gene. He's the "Best in the Business."

Naw, forget it, he's too busy here.



People look at crafts at the Auxiliary's Bazaar recently.

## Auxiliary members make a difference

By JANET MILLER

Surprisingly, many volunteers at West Midland Family Center are not aware of their title, auxiliary member!

Could you be one of those people?

If so, read on to discover how important you have been to WMFC. If you are not a volunteer at WMFC, read on and discover how much you are needed.

The Auxiliary has many goals. We need to raise \$13,000 in the Bingo Program, which will be donated to WMFC's operating fund. We will conduct a Spring and Fall Bazaar, sponsor one or two bingo marathons, run a woman's ball tournament, help send local 4-Hers to Camp Neyati, sponsor at least six Sunday

Dinners and a Fourth of July Picnic, as well as contribute to the Youth Summer Program and many youth holiday events; i.e., Easter, Halloween and Christmas, just to mention a few.

It was reported at the last bingo event in January, our best yet, 97 were in attendance and that volunteer bingo workers' helped make a profit of \$700 for the evening.

Currently, there are 100 active Auxiliary members but more are needed to maintain current programs and many more members are needed to create new programs.

You can see the difference WMFC has made to our community as a whole, but more importantly YOU can be the person who makes that difference.



Nicki Woods and Janeen Simons, right, dance to the music of the "German Boy" at the WMFC Open House.

## WMFC celebrates first year with Christmas open house

By LISA ZIETLOW

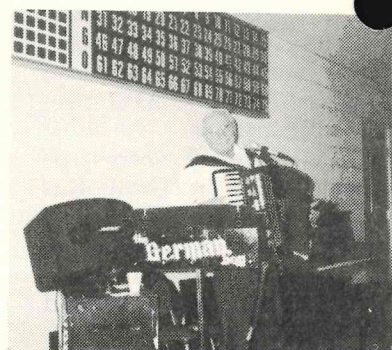
Is it possible that already we are celebrating our first year in the new West Midland family Center?

A year ago, families and guests were welcomed to our new building at our first open house. This year, we continued the tradition ... and what better time than the Christmas season, a time for joy and gratitude?

On Dec. 2, about 250 people came out to the WMFC Holiday Open House. Among the festivities — and a highlight for our junior guests — was Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, on hand to pass out gifts of coloring books and crayons.

Most of our guests were neighborhood families. Other visitors included contributors from Midland as well as a group from Gratiot County, who are considering the development of a similar facility in their area.

"I just love to see the families come and enjoy this new building," says WMFC Direc-



The 'German Boy' plays music at the open house.

tor Phyllis Breedlove. "So many folks were pleased to see how we've grown in programs and opportunities in the past year."

Special thanks to the volunteers who helped host this year's party: Ellen Bukett and Barbara Fenby, who worked in the kitchen; the many families who donated "goodies" for our refreshment table; Robyn Dorrien and Janet Miller, who decorated the dining hall, Peggy Norisez and "The German Boy," who provided the music.





Linda Nieman and Greg Baird add their faces to the ones put on the pumpkins after a session of pumpkin face painting. The event took place two days before the WMFC Halloween Party, which attracted 250 people.



Students in the Armchair Aerobics classes of Bonnie Larson exercise in the West Midland Family Center gymnasium. Larson leads the classes from 11:20 to 11:40 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. She also teaches a humanities class on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:20 a.m.

## Calendar

### MARCH

- 1 ..... 'Just Do It,' ninth grade and up
- 8 ..... 'Just Do It,' ninth grade and up
- 12 ..... Youth Dance, 2nd through 5th grade
- 15 ..... 'Just Do It,' ninth grade and up
- 16 ..... Auxiliary Spring Bazaar
- 22 ..... 'Just Do It,' ninth grade and up
- 29 ..... Closed Good Friday
- 30 ..... Easter Egg Hunt

### APRIL

- 13 ..... Preschool open house (registration)

- 19 ..... Volunteer dinner

### MAY

- 1 ..... Trip to Tiger Stadium to see game
- 27 ..... Closed Memorial Day

### JUNE

- 17 ..... Summer program begins

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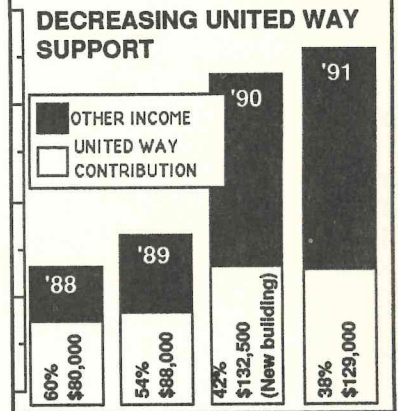
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**Youth Director** Jamie Smith  
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Angela Markovich  
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## From the president's chair

Demand for services at West Midland Family Center has been growing significantly as we enter the second calendar year of operation in our beautiful new center. While usage is seasonal, we have seen a broad increase in usage across all age groups. For this we are pleased, and we owe our gratitude to the donors, staff, board and many volunteers who serve this community.

On the funding side we have had generous operating cost support from faithful donors, townships, user fees and the United Way. It has been our plan and expectation that the United Way would provide half of the WMFC revenue during the 1990-95 era — but we are deeply concerned about the trend as shown below.



When our actual decrease in United Way contributions is added to cost of living wage increases, we have no choice but to cut the hours the building is open to the public. We need \$11,500 to maintain the same open building hours as 1990.

Like schools, when revenue cuts are made, the programs which help people are in turn cut, because substantially all other costs are fixed. We project losing 5,800 client participations.

The cost per participation is roughly \$1.98 (\$11,500/5,800).

While the staff and board has taken a realistic approach to cutting activities during WMFC's least active periods, it is unfortunate that we are squeezing usage just as we are preparing to test the potential for serving west Midland County.

Rest assured we will continue to search for funding sources. Please give us your ideas and support as we continue the process.



# Reading is essential

By THERESA OWENS

Reading to a child daily is essential to their development!

This was the message conveyed in a demonstration given at West Midland Family Center in November by Donna Lindsay, a graduate student from Saginaw Valley State University.

During the morning preschool class on Nov. 14, Lindsay showed child-care givers how to help kids by reading to them. She used wordless books and other library materials to illustrate ways to give children a feeling of security and love, along with the joy of reading. She also offered suggestions for increasing reading ability throughout routine daily activities.

For example, give your child the grocery list when you're shopping and have him or her find certain items.

Elaine Fabinski, the teacher of the WMFC preschool class, said it is important parents become comfortable reading to their kids while making it a part of their daily routine.

She said, "the goal of this demonstration was to teach parents the importance of reading to their kids daily."

In conjunction with the de-



Donna Lindsay

monstration, the Literacy Council of Midland County donated books as incentives to care givers. If the care giver reads 30 books to the child and keeps track of them, they can exchange the list of books read for a book or books averaging \$7 to \$10 in value. There is also a poster, "I Pledge to Read to My Child at Least Three Times a Week," in the classroom as an added incentive.

According to Marilyn Adams, West Midland Family Center's literacy contact, 20 care givers participated in the free book program. About eight children have received free books,



Youth attending the 'Say Yes to Youth' party do a snake dance through the halls. 147 youth attended the last dance.

## 'Just Do It' attracts youth

By THERESA OWENS

January's "Just Do It" program was so successful that it will be through March.

Each Friday night, area youth in grades nine and up are welcomed at the West Midland Family Center for an action-packed night of fun. In cooperation with "Say Yes to Youth," a local non-profit organization that deals with the concerns of youth, WMFC sponsors this program to give area teens something safe and fun to do on the weekend. For a \$2 admission fee, the youth have complete use of the center from 8 p.m. until midnight, including supervised access to the fitness room activity rooms with its free pool tables, video games, pinball and low-cost concessions. There is also a dance in the di-

ning room, sometimes featuring deejays or local bands.

"This project really benefits everyone involved," said Ann Ward, secretary for Say Yes to Youth. "It gives kids something to do on Friday night and it is a very positive event. They want to do something bad enough that they're willing to drive out of town to do it."

She also said that many Midland youth didn't know WMFC existed and this program increased awareness and involvement.

The center staff, Say Yes to Youth, and youth participants are all very happy with the program so far and are excited that it is being continued. Greg Dorrien, WMFC assistant director, said,



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