

Early Childhood Programs Expand at WMFC



Fall 2001 brings significant changes to the Early Childhood programs at West Midland Family Center.

Additional grant dollars from the Michigan Department of Education will enable WMFC to conduct two full-day and one half-day preschool classes five days a week, accommodating 54 children. This compares with only three half-day classes in previous years. The program, now in its 10th year, will continue to have one traditional half-day preschool class four days a week.

With this full-day grant, the childcare and preschool programs will be combined, enabling siblings of preschool children to receive childcare. Also, as needed, the preschool children will have the opportunity for care beyond the core preschool times. The additional funds enable WMFC to equip and staff the early childhood department with high quality teachers, caregivers and materials.

The need for full-day programs is evident. All available spaces have been filled and we have a waiting list. There is an application and interview process for prospective students. Children must meet some requirements to enroll in the classes, including risk factors and income limits.

Requirements for the grants also include active parent participation, two home visits by the teachers, parent education programs, family activity events, field trips, lunches for the full day students, and morning and afternoon snacks for all children.

Taking advantage of the full-day component is the Head Start class, which is in its fourth year at WMFC. This collaboration enhances the partnership of Head Start and the Michigan School Readiness Program with shared staffing and projects.

Care for infants through children six years of age will continue much as it has in the past. Care for siblings of preschoolers is available at a reduced rate. When special projects and events

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Oak Tree Café Branches Out - Open to Public

In June the Greendale Dining Center closed its doors to reopen as the Oak Tree Café. The café is now open to the public Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for lunch. Every day, lunch choices range from a full meal to salad and sandwiches. Excellent cooks prepare meals the way your mother used to, with years of experience and TLC. So if you find yourself in the vicinity of WMFC during the lunch hour stop by at the Oak Tree café. You'll be glad you did!

Family Center Staff and Patrons Settle Into "New Digs"

It's only been three months since the doors opened on the expanded WMFC. The short time has proven to be a whirlwind of activity. The ongoing construction chaos quickly gave way to the turmoil associated with a move. A common mantra became..."Has anybody seen".... my stapler.... my 3-hole punch... the Xerox machine?!

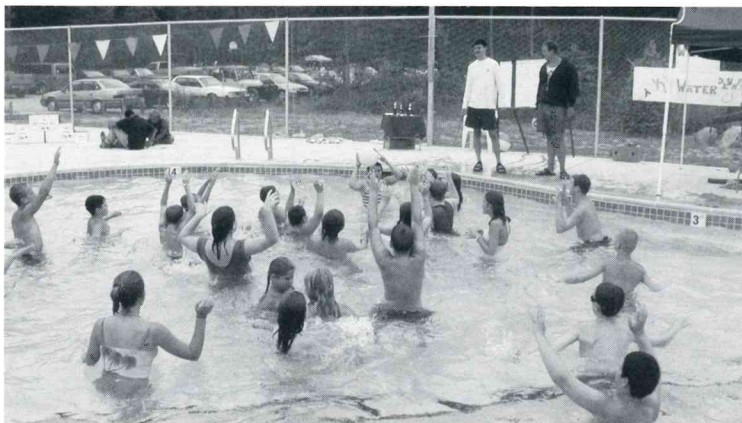
While maintaining a sense of order was challenging to say the least, work did get done, and people became organized once again. All in time to put

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the finishing touches on West Midland's fabulous summer program that was made even better this year because of the additional facilities.

The pool was a big hit with Summer Program participants, Seniors, staff members and area families. Every morning Renee Allen, Recreation Coordinator, or Beth Doubles, Aquatics Director, could be found leading a group of 12-15 seniors in water aerobics. The pool was then turned over to the summer program for a

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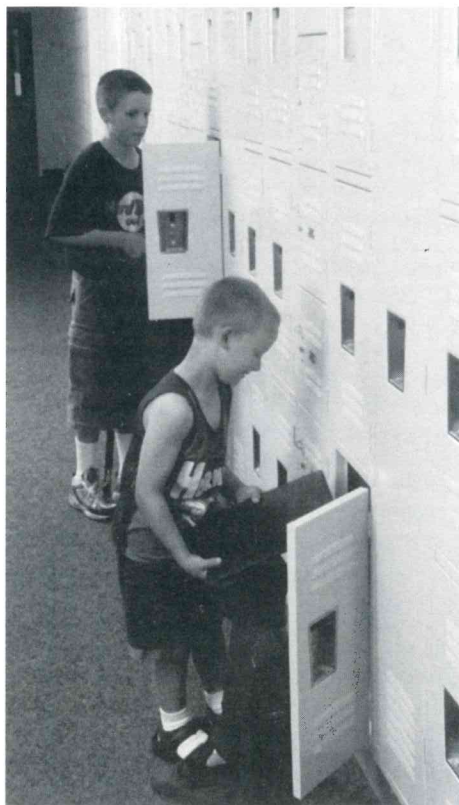
Center Gets Used To "New Digs"

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morning swim followed by lunch hour staff aerobics and back again to summer program participants.

The building was initiated by the laughter of more than 200 children. From one end of WMFC to another, the building was alive with activity. Each of the new activity rooms was transformed to accommodate the imagination of children. The North Activity Room was recreated to become "King Arthur's Court" and all the children members of his court. The Middle Activity Room served two different groups: the "Snoops for Scoops" who published news articles for our reading enjoyment and the "Once Upon A Time" group. Their refreshing talent for make believe transported the Center's grown ups to simpler times before computer's and Nintendo games when playtime was constrained only by the limits of a child's own imagination.

From the softball fields to the swimming pool, the Children's Cottage to the new gymnasium, children infiltrated every corner of the Center. The expanded facility served well the needs of WMFC's summer program, and as each new season arrives, we will reap the additional rewards. The expansion chaos was a small price to pay for the overall community benefit we have already witnessed...and will continue to experience in the future.



WMFC 2001 BENEFACTORS

Organization	Amount	Organization	Amount
Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation	1,500,000*	Homer Township	6,250
Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation	1,000,000**	Children's Trust Fund.....	6,037
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.....	750,000*	FIA/Children's Trust Fund	5,931
The Dow Chemical Company Foundation.....	240,000*	NE Michigan Community Service.....	5,647
Charles J. Strosacker Foundation.....	220,000*	NE Michigan Arts Council.....	4,000
Dow Corning Foundation.....	90,000*	Midland Preschool Centers.....	3,000
Alden & Vada Dow Family Fund.....	20,000**	Snow Machines, Inc.....	2,500
State of Michigan	575,127	Stuart Bergstein Foundation.....	2,000
United Way of Midland County.....	210,000	Midland County ESA.....	1,625
Strong Families/Safe Children	73,443	First United Methodist Church	1,000
Governor's Discret. Drug Fund.....	52,750	Herbert & Junia Doan Foundation.....	1,000
Alden & Vada Dow Family Foundation.....	52,000	Midland County Child Protection Council.....	500
Harry A. & Margaret D. Towsley Foundation	45,000	Comerica Bank.....	500
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.....	20,000	Sunrise Optimist Club.....	500
WMFC Auxiliary	17,010	Homer United Methodist Church.....	462
Charles J. Strosacker Foundation	15,000	Humanities	250
Dow Chemical Foundation	15,000	TOPS.....	100
Midland Area Community Foundation	12,000	Midland Seventh Day Adventist Church.....	100
MCYAC.....	9,940	Caltech Industries.....	100

*3-year grant pledge towards the Center's Building Expansion Project.

**Endowment Fund gift.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Julie Arbury, Amy Bailey, Mr. & Mrs. R. W. Caldwell, Diane DeMott, John & Virginia Dorrin, Bob & Mary Ann Dostal, Dana Gibbs, Lindsay Gustafson, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hotchkiss, Ruth Houlihan, Norman & Ruth Hozak, Robert Keil, Betty & Ora King, Herbert & Antoinette Lyon, Paul & Doris Lyons, Tim Mantyla, Robert & Janet Miller, Scot & Sherri Pirie, Frank & Jean Popoff, John Reder, Richard Smith, Doak & Amy Stolz, Sue Thumma, Betty VanderKelen, Jeff & Kay Wagner, G.J. Williams, JoAnn Winchester.

Childhood

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are appropriate, these children will participate with the preschoolers.

The childcare and preschool programs are now under one umbrella, with Elaine Fabinski as Early Childhood Coordinator and Ginger Yarch continuing as Childcare Director. The two new preschool teachers are Wendy Plewa and Katie Woods. The Head Start teacher is DeeDee Campbell. There is an assisting staff of twenty.

This fall, the Early Childhood department is enthusiastically beginning the process of acquiring national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It is approximately a two-year process, including intensive self-study, with parent input and outside observers. This along with opportunities for teachers and assistants to continually update their training through workshops and conferences, indicates the sincere desire of all associated to have the very best Early Childhood program possible at West Midland Family Center.

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Early Childhood Coordinator Elaine Fabinski
Childcare Director Ginger Yarch
Teachers Elaine Fabinski, Wendy Plewa,
Katie Woods, DeeDee Campbell (Head Start)
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Senior Program Staff Susan Wells
Council On Aging Site Manager Judy Wirtz

Teens 'N Training Make 2001 Summer Program Memorable with Travel, Painting and Building

The summer of 2001 brought particularly inspiring opportunities for the Teens 'N Training program members. In addition to the mentoring and service work that is standard practice, the 60 teens became artists and construction workers as well! All within the course of seven weeks! Their artistic adventure came about as a result of a grant from Northeast Michigan Arts Council.

The teens worked as a group to plan and paint a mural as part of the overall Teen Activity Room renovation which has been funded by the Midland Area Community Foundation, the Midland County Youth Action Council and the WMFC Auxiliary. Artist Jenna Andrews from Mt. Pleasant assisted the teens through all aspects of the mural creation. WMFC is grateful to Ms. Andrews for the knowledgeable way she encouraged the teens to recognize the artists within themselves. Also thanks to Percha Paint in Mt. Pleasant for the many discounts and

expert advice they extended to us.

While one group of teens was inside painting, another group was outside preparing "The Path" for the seven element "Challenge Course" they built with assistance from our maintenance staff...(this is where the construction part comes in)! Each element is made of treated lumber and was built as one would build a deck, with nuts and bolts, saws and nails. The individual elements came together as whole to create a Challenge Course that will be used for team building, bonding, and communication activities by many of the Center's programs.

The T'NT program is designed to help teens develop a greater sense of personal worth and the teens learned much from their summer experiences. When asked how the summer had changed her, one teen said, "I am more respectful, responsible and aware. I was happier this summer."

Community Responds in a Time of Real Need

Traditionally, WMFC has had a blood drive in the fall. This year was to be no exception, a simple opportunity for staff and community members alike to give back to the community. This blood drive took on special significance, held on September 12 in the wake of the terrorist attacks.

This was no longer a simple response to ongoing community blood needs, but a demonstration of national unity. The West Midland community responded in a notably generous manner. Initially we expected approximately 25 donors. We had close to 100. While people waited, sometimes for several hours, they chatted with neighbors, watched CNN, ate cookies, grieved and supported one another.

While being a blood donor has always been a worthwhile cause, it now has new meaning. To those who came forward, thank you. You have shown your true colors... and they are Red, White and Blue.



From left to right are Amanda Baker, Mike Lacrosse, Larry Fletcher, Jessica Loose and Robert Mys working on the mural in the Teen Activity Room. This was just one of many groups of teens who dedicated their time to the completion of the mural project. Teens planned, sketched, transferred the original paper sketches to the wall, mixed the paint, and painted the mural. A great deal of time and effort went into the project. The resulting mural is an example of teamwork at its best.

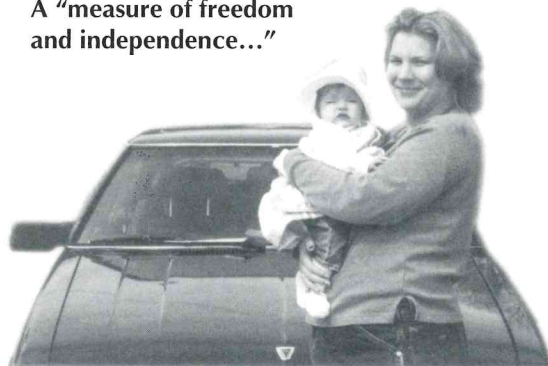
FRIDAY NIGHT TEEN ACTIVITIES

• DJ For Dancing • Open Gym • Games

8:00-11:00 p.m. Only \$2.00

YOU COULD MAKE ANOTHER PICTURE LIKE THIS POSSIBLE

A "measure of freedom and independence..."



— that's what Michelle Frohm gained when she received a car through WMFC. The generosity of one of our benefactors made it possible. Maybe you can make it happen too!

Won't You Help Us Help?

It doesn't have to be a car! We can use appliances, furniture... even a check... to help us help deserving members of the community. Remember... it's tax deductible!

For detailed information, please contact:

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER

4011 W. Isabella Rd. • Shepherd, MI 48883

Phone: (989) 832-3256 or

Toll Free: 1-877-631-9632



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Dow College Opportunity Program Students Include Trips and Home Repair in Busy Summer



This summer the Dow College Opportunity Program (C.O.P.) has been busy!

The freshman and sophomore classes volunteered for a week of repairing houses in the area and traveled to Hiram College in Ohio and two amusement parks.

The junior class toured six colleges on their College Exploration Trip: Alma, Michigan State, The University of Michigan, Spring Arbor, Olivet and Purdue. On their way south they spent a weekend in Chicago which included dining and watching jousting at Medieval Times, a day at the Museum of Science and Industry, and dinner at the Hard Rock Café.

The senior class designed their own trip...seven states in seven days...plus Washington D.C.! Everyone ate fresh fruit from roadside stands, swam and surfed (or tried to) in the ocean, toured museums at the capitol, and survived white water rafting in Pennsylvania. The journey covered 2,250 miles!

The staff of WMFC would like to wish the following seniors well as they embark on their journey to higher education; Curt Holsinger, Annelise Pfruender, and Wendy Russell. Congratulations seniors...you have made us proud!

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Community-Wide Effort Benefits Area Families

WMFC was recently part of a community-wide initiative to address the needs of children in Midland County. The result of this collaboration is the "Success by Six Program," which is designed to promote positive parenting skills, parent/child interaction and further parental involvement in the lives of their children. Well-trained parent coaches serve as liaisons to help link parents to information, programs and services.

In the spirit of collaboration, parent coaches and staff are based in eight different agency sites throughout the community, including WMFC. To date Success by Six has enrolled more than 150 Midland County families, all of whom have participated in playgroups, receiving important parenting information.



Feature Artist Amanda Herron, Age 4, Miss Woods Preschool Class

Amanda drew this picture for Miss Woods as part of a home visit before the beginning of this fall's preschool classes. The teaching staff use pictures such as this to monitor a child's development through the school year. This is Amanda's first year of preschool. She is the daughter of Gary and Lisa Herron.

ASSISTANCE

WMFC is committed to providing quality programs for all community members regardless of background or economic circumstances. We will assist anyone who is in financial need to participate in our programs. We reserve the right to cancel any program due to lack of registration.

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4011 Isabella Road
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