

Children Create Summertime Fun at WMFC

Do you recall summertime as a child? Up at the crack of dawn, running out the door with your friends early in the morning, as mom yells "be home in time for lunch."

Then, "scarfing" down lunch to chase after the ice cream man, playing sandlot baseball, hunting for frogs and getting home just before the streetlights came on? Well, summertime these days is very different. Children wile away the hours in the comfort of their air-conditioned living room, gaming controller in one hand, the T.V. remote in the other...no friends necessary, no imagination required. Where did the days of create your own summertime fun go?

To WMFC where Summer Program participants awoke at the crack of dawn, anxiously awaiting 7:30 a.m. so they could meet their friends at the Center: to WMFC where every day was filled with exciting things to do or explore. Like long ago summers, children have the freedom to choose what they want to do

throughout the day. However, unlike summers past, they are well supervised by adults!

Throughout the summer, WMFC was alive with energy, young voices, and laughter as 267 young people ages 6-18 descend upon the Center. It was an amazingly smooth process as children found their groups to begin the day. Thanks to a gifted summer staff, the selection of activities was vast. They learned about nature and science. For children who love movement there was

yoga, Tai-chi, or dance. There were opportunities for gardening, or acting, scrap booking, and making musical instruments. These are just a few topics children explored this summer. With so many different options, how *did* they choose?

When asked, one little "scrap booking" girl said "I always thought it looked like fun, I've seen them do it on T.V. but I never had the chance before." The classroom was full of other children proud to present their scrapbooks.

Outside, a group of children were on a nature walk with their group leader.

"What are you doing?" I asked.



His determination pays off! Tim Tripp catching a frog

"Looking for frogs" came the reply.

"Frogs... what will you do with frogs?"

"I don't know - keep 'em and throw 'em back!"

What could be better than that? So there you have it, there was something for everyone during WMFC's summer program. Made complete with create your own fun...friends *and* imagination required. So if you've forgotten that spirit of summertime, come to the Center next summer and refresh your memory. Now ~ if only we could convince the ice cream man to drive out here!



"Did we get one?" Tom Berlin and Shelby Koenitzner checking for frogs.

The Adventures of "Do Crew" & "T'NT"

This summer, Midland's dynamic duo, the "Do Crew" and "T'NT" a.k.a. Teens in Training were headquartered just west of town at West Midland Family Center. These teens are truly unique; the two groups totaled more than 60 teens. Their mission...to spend their summertime pursuing volunteer opportunities for their community!

The "Do Crew", a group of middle school-aged teens, alternately helped with Center needs i.e. painting or gardening projects or mentoring younger summer program participants and volunteering for the Isabella or Midland County Soup Kitchens. These dedicated teens each contributed approximately 60 hours of time to improving their community! "Do Crew" mem-

Backpacking Broadens Horizons for Dow COP Students

As a capstone experience for their year-long theme, "Challenges and Personal Development," the Dow College Opportunity Program Classes of 2004 and 2005 spent a week backpacking on North Manitou Island.

The students went on several hikes to prepare for the physical demands of the trip and had meetings to plan packing lists and menus. Together the students carried all of the supplies they needed for a week of living in nature – food, stoves, fuel, pots and pans, tents, sleeping bags, clothing, water pumps, first aid supplies, maps and compasses.

The boys and girls had separate trips, but both

began with an hour and a half longboat ride to the island – fun for many, but a few experienced seasickness. Many students had been camping before, but since most had never been backpacking there was a general nervousness about no showers and no toilets. The students quickly adjusted and found that swimming in Lake Michigan was refreshing.

Hikes averaged about five miles. Some campsites the students found had such beautiful views of Lake Michigan and the sand dunes that they decided to stay there more than one night. As a result those days were filled with beach walks, reading, and playing Frisbee in Lake Michigan.

It was easy to see the students' self-confidence grow as they became more and more self-reliant throughout the trip. Backpackers often feel a sense of empowerment because they find it very satisfying to be independent and to be able to provide for themselves.

The Dow College Opportunity Program is designed to support students on their journeys to, and through college with four years of high school activities and trips. Students interested in the Dow College Opportunity Program who are beginning their freshman year at Bullock Creek, Coleman, Meridian or Shepherd High Schools may be invited to participate in the Dow COP Enrichment Experience – a way to sample the program and, upon completion, apply for permanent membership. Interested students should contact, Lynn Hell at (989) 832-3256.

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COP Boys' Backpacking Trip to North Manitou Island. (L-R) Josh Groulx, Bart Heil, Lynn Heil, Duane Bingham, Bret O'Keefe, Brian Powers, Ryan Payne

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Organization	Amount
The Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Family Foundation.....	\$1,500,000
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.....	750,000
The Dow Chemical Company Foundation.....	240,000
Charles J. Strosacker Foundation.....	220,000
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Organization	Amount	Organization	Amount
The Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Foundation.....	\$1,000,000*	Yost Enterprises.....	3,000
United Way of Midland County.....	210,000	Greendale Township.....	2,500
Alden & Vada B. Dow Family Foundation.....	73,317	Snow Machines, Inc.....	2,500
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Midland Area Community Foundation.....	41,150	The Herbert & Junia Doan Foundation.....	1,000
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The Dow Chemical Company Foundation.....	10,000	Sunrise Optimist Club.....	500
Homer Township.....	6,250	Humanities.....	250
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NE Michigan Arts Council.....	4,000	TOPS.....	100
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*Five year matching grant pledge toward the WMFC Program Endowment Fund
** Includes Midland County Youth Action

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Pool Staff Wraps up Another Safe, Fun-filled Summer

In keeping with the high standards for pool safety set by Aquatics Director Renee Allen and WMFC administration, the summer began with a comprehensive safety training session. For the second year in a row, WMFC lifeguards, local emergency responders and firefighters met at WMFC to share rescue response training, knowledge and techniques.

The WMFC lifeguards and community rescue personnel "walked through" many different scenarios to become familiar with one another's procedures. As a result of these trainings, a jointly agreed upon Emergency Response Action Plan has been established. We are grateful for the cooperation we have had from the Lee Township Fire Department and thankful for their concern for the safety of WMFC patrons.

A new opportunity arose this summer for youth ages 10-14 with the addition of the GUARD START program. This nationally acclaimed RED CROSS program introduces young people to the responsibility of pool safety and maintenance as well as individual leadership skills. The program encourages participants to recognize the advantages of a lifeguard job, while teaching them and their younger peers to become positive role models and mentors. This year, eight students were given an opportunity to join and all successfully completed the GUARD START program. After they submitted an application, they were interviewed, then invited to participate in the GUARD START program.

Every day the students had one hour of class time. They learned everything from CPR and rescue breathing, to making better choices and being a team player. GUARD START team members were valuable assistants as they worked alongside pool and recreational staff with the younger children. Three times during the week, GUARD START participants received lessons in pool skills such as, swimming strokes, reaching assists and survival floating. To the credit of pool staff and GUARD START participants, this program was a great success! The GUARD START students received praise from many summer program staff members, and were considered valuable role models. As a result of their experiences many children are already talking about joining GUARD START next summer!

Once again this year, the major aquatic highlight was a week of Wacky Water Olympics! Children, separated by grade level, were divided into groups for team contests and individual competitions. All teams received prizes for their efforts. Individual contests included: handstand, breath holding and the cannonball splash (everyone's favorite)!

In the individual contests, six individual winners were determined for each event in each grade category. Winners received ribbons and stood for pictures on the "Olympic Podium." The pictures were then displayed on the "Olympic Wall of Fame" in the WMFC lobby. The Wacky Water Olympics is a shining example of WMFC staff going the distance to provide experiences that are fun, exciting AND confidence enhancing.



L-R Katie Doman, Jim Bade Jr., Jason Brown, Molly Lien, Troy DeShano, Layne Amrozowicz (on support board) preparing for an emergency.



Testing the waters. Lifeguard Molly Lien and Lindsey Allen, Guardstart participant, testing the pool for water purity.



A.J. and Logan Spencer "shooting hoops" during T'NT swim time.

Professionals Make Programs Work

Lynn Heil has been the director of the Dow College Opportunity Program since January 2001. She loves the contact with the students



Lynn Heil

and watching their growth—especially on summer trips and at cultural events. Before working at the West Midland Family Center, she taught English, Spanish and Theater at Kearsley High School in Flint and at The Leelanau School in Glen Arbor.

Lynn is a graduate of Western Michigan University and is working on her graduate studies at Central Michigan University. She lives in Midland with her husband, Bart and their six cats. In her spare time she enjoys reading, riding her motorcycle, and traveling.

Renee Allen has been with the WMFC for 15 months as Aquatics/Recreation Director. She enjoys working at the Center because of the many opportunities she has for creative expression. Before coming to the Center, Renee worked with the Midland County Literacy Council, Midland Dolphins and the Midland Public Schools as a teacher and coach.



Renee Allen

Renee has a vast array of interests, but closest to her heart is her family; husband Mike, and children Michael and Lindsey. Renee has served on her son's hockey league board of directors, coached her daughters swim team and has been the "team mom" for Michael and Lindsey's numerous sports teams.

Clearly, not one to stand around and let the grass grow under her feet, Renee brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the WMFC!

Adventures

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bers were rewarded for their outstanding citizenship with weekly field trips. They went to Central Michigan University to the rock-climbing wall; they went bowling, played golf, and went to Anderson Water Park in Saginaw, to name a few. They topped off their summer with a trip to Michigan Adventure in Muskegon.

The "T'NT" group members are high school-aged teens, who worked exclusively as assistant summer program Group Leaders. They were mentors and role models to younger summer program participants.

During the course of any given day these teens were jumped on, hugged, hollered at and confided-in by the children in their charge. In return the teens demonstrated patience, maturity and caring. "T'NT" members each contributed approximately 70 hours of their time serving others. The mentorship role they played is integral to the success of the WMFC summer program.

Like "Do Crew", "T'NT" members took field trips as compensation for their contributions. Among this summer's excursions were, a Lansing Lugnuts game, "inner-tubing" on the Chippewa River, a trip to a Lake Michigan beach, and the IMAX Theater, in Grand Rapids. Their summer's highlight was the annual trip to Cedar Point.

Friend Of The Center Award Recipient Responds

Ginger Yarch, one of this year's "Friend of the Center" award recipients, had these thoughts she wanted to share with our readers:

"Thank you to all.

It is a great honor and privilege to be one of this year's recipients of the Friend of the Center Award. I would like to thank my co-workers and friends who nominated me. I would also like to thank my family for all their love and support."

VOLUNTEERS

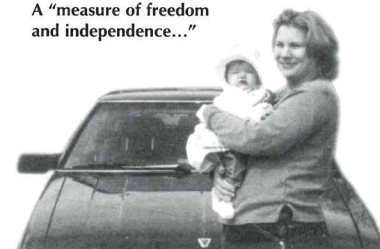
We always need more VOLUNTEERS at WMFC.
Please call 832-3256 and find out how YOU CAN HELP!

TOLL-FREE NUMBER

If calling WMFC is long distance for you, you may use our new toll-free number:
1-877-631-9632

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:
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