

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER'S

Family

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ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR AREA RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES

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Center Welcomes New Board Members

Staci Hackett has been a neighbor to the Center since 1993 when she married her husband Matt. Matt is a longtime resident of this community and spent a lot of time hanging out at West Midland as a kid. He has always had good memories of the Center and his time spent here. Staci and Matt started their family in 2000 with a little girl named Eden. In 2002 they had a little boy named Clayton. Both children started childcare at West Midland at nine weeks of age.



Staci Hackett

Staci and her family have enjoyed being involved in the Childcare, Preschool, Summer and After School Programs. Staci has found each of these to be great programs and huge blessings for a working mom. As her chil-

dren have grown older, Staci has become more interested in doing her part for this community. She is truly hoping to help make a difference for families by being involved at West Midland Family Center. Her passions include her church, family and career and on any given day, we may find her working to keep all of them in balance. We're very happy that Staci has decided to add us to the mix!



Sue Rabbage has been with Comerica Bank for 30 years, starting there as a high school co-op. Sue has lived in the Midland area her whole life as has her husband Rick. Together, they have two sons, Arron, 18, who just graduated from Bullock Creek High School and Andrew, 16, who will be a junior at Bullock Creek in the fall. Over the years, Sue has volunteered for many different programs in the Midland community. She's been with Big Brothers/Big Sisters for eight years, was on the board of Midland Women's Bowling Association for two years, has been with the Junior Achievement second

grade program at Floyd Elementary for ten years, and the Bullock Area Business Association Treasurer for two years. Sue is very happy to be on the Board at West Midland because over the years, she has used the services and facilities on many occasions. She sees this as an ideal opportunity to do more for the



Sue Rabbage

Center. Sue's children attended the After School Program for several years and her son Andrew was a volunteer life guard during the summer of 2006. From her vantage point, Sue has seen first hand the difference the Center has on our community.

Thanks to The United Way of Midland County

As summer breezes in, West Midland is always a flurry of children. Over the last several years, we have held to a consistent enrollment of 250 children, but each year the waiting list has grown longer. This year, an increased allocation by The



Isabella and her water slide

United Way has allowed us to open our doors to 50 more children who may have gone unsupervised this summer. Instead, they will enjoy a

daily "dip" in the pool, they will meet new friends, experiment, learn about nature and so much more. They will giggle, run and shout all under the careful supervision of adults who care.



Here I come - Lucas, jumps into the pool

This wonderful outcome is just one of many that have been realized as a result of the generous United Way allocation. In this time of statewide budget cuts it is refreshing to know that the children of Midland County are well supported by a community that clearly cares for them.

SUMMER



Program visitor, Murphy the dog is part of the Dog Tales Program which encourages literacy among children

Eagle Scout Christian Allemang Provides Playground Upgrades

Attaining the rank of Eagle Scout is a difficult task accomplished by only a few determined young men. Christian Allemang is such a young man. His familiarity with WMFC and its services led Christian to choose the Center as beneficiary of the required community service project component. Brainstorming project options with Center Director Greg Dorrien came next. Numerous options were discussed before they decided on the importance of playground upgrades. As a result, Christian is responsible for putting in three park benches and adding a climber and binoculars

feature to the already existing playscape. All additions have been thoroughly enjoyed by parents and children alike.

Christian earned money to help offset the cost of the project by mowing lawns and collecting pop cans. He then donated these funds to help purchase project materials. Christian was also responsible for recruiting a work crew which he said was sometimes comprised of scouts and other friends.



Christian Allemang and one of the park benches he constructed.

Nature Preschool Seeks to Teach through the Natural Environment

Over the winter months, while the rest of the world was hibernating, staff members from Chippewa Nature Center (CNC) and West Midland Family Center were hard at work laying the groundwork for an exciting Nature Preschool program. This program will be held at CNC beginning in the fall of 2007.



Preschoolers explore the natural world.

Initial discussion began among CNC staff members several years ago. According to Rachael Larimore CNC's Director of Education, throughout nature center's nation-wide, the buzz has been about nature preschools and the importance of children getting outside. Children are limited in their access to free play. These days, children have fewer opportunities to experience nature and its many benefits. Larimore said "In 2005 Richard Louv's book, "LAST CHILD IN



Fawnda, Courtney and Jennifer look into the chicken coop.

THE WOODS SAVING OUR CHILDREN FROM NATURE – DEFICIT DISORDER," was published verifying our thoughts. "It was like the cherry on top ~ confirming everything we had known all along! Many theorists associate today's technology driven lifestyles to attention deficits and cite the restorative value of natural experiences. This is why outdoor exploration will be an integral component to Nature Preschool with CNC as the perfect venue for children to explore the natural world and West Midland Family Center, thrilled to be a part of this outdoor adventure.

Time children spend outdoors will be just as important to learning as the time spent in the classroom. Listening to animal

sounds, crickets and frogs will become a literacy module in which children gain phonological awareness. Sorting, classifying and graphing natural objects will develop math skills. In fact, the curriculum will incorporate the natural environment into all subject areas including literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts and technology.

There will be 18 *tuition-free* Michigan School Readiness Program slots and 18 *income-based* tuition slots within this 2.5-hour a day, four-day a week program. Any family that registers is able to apply for a scholarship or MSRP eligibility determination. Call, Chippewa Nature Center's Rachael Larimore at 631-0803 for further information.



Teacher, Marcy Young and Chelsea hunt for caterpillars.

THE GREAT LAKES LOONS BOOSTER CLUB'S

"Take Me Out To The Ballgame"

program assures that all families can get out to see a Loons ballgame.

How You can Help:

- Donate any season tickets that would otherwise go un-used
- Make a cash donation for "Peanuts or Cracker Jacks" so worthy families will have a bit of Loons money for souvenirs or snacks.

Contact: Darlene Smith at 835-2300, to learn how you can donate tickets or make a cash donation to this worthwhile project.

Angela Hayner Awarded Diane Dauer "Heart of the Center"

The Diane Dauer "Heart of the Center Award" was established this year to celebrate the unique qualities that Diane brought to the center. This honor will be given three times a year to a staff member who (among other things) cares deeply for others, puts others needs



Angela Hayner

before their own, who notices the good in others and demonstrates personal and professional integrity. Angela Hayner is just such a person and was recently honored with this award by her fellow employees.

To say that Angela consistently goes above and beyond what is expected of her is a simple view of her contributions. The reality is that when her eyes see need in a child, her heart responds. On her own time she mentors children and with

kindness and compassion, she helps them make choices that will positively impact their lives. She's been known to purchase items out of her own pocket for children in need and has taken children "under her wing" to help them through a difficult time.

Rest assured that no one will be "slipping through the cracks" on Angela's watch. We have a bit of a guardian angel here at WMFC and her name is Angela!

Terri Malek-Madani: New Dow College Opportunity Program Director

Terri grew up in Hemlock, Michigan and now calls Midland home. Upon graduating from high school, Terri joined the U.S. Navy where she received a scholarship and attended the University of Michigan. She was later commissioned as a Marine Corps officer. Terri has studied communication at Purdue University and raised two wonderful children who are both studying

at the University of South Dakota. Terri has lived all over the United States and has traveled abroad several times. Her varied life experiences make her an ideal role model for the young adults in COP: with Terri's assistance participants focus on making sound decisions regarding future goals. Terri is very excited about becoming a part of the West

Midland Family Center team and plans to be around for a very long time.

With 34 program participants it's a good thing!

Welcome aboard Terri.



Terri Malek-Madani

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