

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER
P.O. Box 1985
Midland MI 48641-1985



West Midland Family Center...
Always Making The Difference.

Thanks For Giving Celebration - November 17, 2011



There is something for everyone at our
Thanks For Giving Celebration.

This year WMFC's *Thanks for Giving Celebration*, will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2011 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. This annual event was established as a tribute to, and celebration of, our volunteers, donors and all those who play an integral role at the Center, including the families we serve. *Thanks for Giving Celebration* is a fitting start to the holiday season.

This year's event will take place during *National Family Week*. In the past, *National Family Week* was celebrated at three different sites throughout Midland County. This year all involved Midland County non-profit organizations will combine their efforts and celebrate *National Family Week* at the West Midland Family Center as part of WMFC's *Thanks for Giving Celebration*.

The evening will begin with a ceremony to recognize the special volunteers that have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to furthering the WMFC mis-

sion. Recipients receive one of the following awards: *Orrin Barrett - Volunteer of the Year, Phyllis Breedlove - Friend of the Center, or the Steven Barstow - Youth Volunteer of the Year*. Two awards will also be given to two professional community members in honor of *National Family Week*.

After the recognition ceremony, a dinner catered by Northwood University, will be served from 6:15-7:15 p.m. Beginning at 2:30 p.m. and running until 8:00 p.m. there will be a blood drive from the Michigan Community Blood Centers. Concurrent with all other events will be a variety of different games, crafts and agency representation from a variety of Midland County human services organizations providing information and activities for all.

Please join us on the 17th of November to honor those who provide thousands of hours of meaningful work. We couldn't accomplish our mission without them.

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MIDLAND, MI
PERMIT NO. 153



VOLUME 22, NUMBER 2 • P.O. Box 1985 • Midland, MI 48641-1985 • www.wmfc.org • (989) 832-3256 • Fall 2011

WMFC - Helping Families Face the Challenge of Difficult Times

Many of you in the readership of our Family Focus may be wondering how WMFC and the community it serves are coping with the difficult financial times this country and our community are facing. To provide a perspective on this we submit the following:

Unfortunately, we do not have control over the U.S. economy—only our response to it. West Midland's Family Services staff members and partners are seeing the detrimental effects that the economy is having on local families. Working together with community partners like Catholic Family Services and the United Way of Midland County, we continue to reach out a helping hand to individuals and families in poverty.

"The poor are becoming progressively poorer. Subsidies that poor people receive remain relatively fixed while the cost of living goes up-- generated primarily by higher energy costs, which impacts


housing," shared Larry Quinn, LPC of Catholic Family Services who counsels community members at WMFC. "With the economy holding poverty-level people down, it becomes increasingly more difficult for them to rise socially through the traditional ladders of better education and employment."

"Over the past 10 years, people living in poverty are finding it increasingly more difficult to find respite. They struggle with a sense of not having a future and there are fewer "safety nets" available to allow them to climb out of poverty. We learn how to be adults from our parents. If our parents instill a sense of having no future, they pass along this sense of hopelessness to their own children," concluded Quinn.

Without intervention, some studies show, each subsequent generation's dysfunctions become stronger and more deeply embedded. In addition, staff

has also witnessed a shift in the level of security for middle income families. "When families are faced with long term unemployment, it is devastating. These are not people that understand the system. They have never had to ask for help and don't know where to turn," commented Renee Young, WMFC Family Services Director. "We're seeing a rise in prescription drug use across all ages, greater need for mental health services

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Larry Quinn, LPC of Catholic Family Services ,
counsels community members at WMFC

WMFC Hosts Flag Planting at Parkapalooza Event



Flags with ribbons that included the names of
those who have served or are currently serving.

Parkapalooza is a fun filled annual end of the summer family event at Sanford Lake Park that is sponsored by the Midland County Parks and Recreation Department. *Parkapalooza* features different community organizations sponsoring family activities as well as a number of different bands that play music from a beachside stage throughout the day. This year WMFC staff members contributed to the fun event by providing wholesome family activities which included "Make it Take It" crafts, family games, a Spiderman Bounce House and a large inflatable obstacle course.

flags and ribbons for a flag planting activity. *Parkapalooza* attendees were given the opportunity of planting a flag in honor of a service person. A

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WMFC Activity Tent offered family games,
"Make It, Take It" crafts, a beach photo
opp and a treasure hunt.

Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation Funds Renovation



Mrs. Varner ends the morning with a special story everyday.

“The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation recently helped make area families who have three-year-old children. The Foundation provided all the capital costs to renovate the existing room we had into a room that is appropriate to handle a classroom of three year olds and the Foundation also helped us with the renovation of the kitchen that was in the old room. The kitchen serves sixty meals a day during the school year and over 200 a day during the summer,” said Greg Dorrien, Executive Director.

“We’re also very fortunate to have been able to get grants to help families who needed scholarships to attend the program through the Midland County Educational Services Association and St. John’s Episcopal Church. The cost to

attend the program is \$1,600 per student, so most of our families would have great difficulty funding this kind of opportunity for their children. We’re all very fortunate to live in a community where people do for their neighbor whenever they can,” concluded Dorrien.

“This is a great opportunity“, exclaimed new preschool teacher Stephanie Varner.” This new program will get the children excited for school. It will also give them tools to be successful in school and in life. The addition of the threes program makes WMFC a more rounded facility by providing quality experiences from early on in life. It will allow the children to learn and grow into better adjusted and well rounded students. The love and friendships they will receive will hopefully give them a feeling of great self worth and enjoyment.”

The three-year-old classroom has three main goals this year:

- #1 **Learn Social Skills** - that will help them in all future academics. They will be given an opportunity to interact with others and learn about the lives and feelings of others. Learning how to name and manage their emotions will allow them to be more successful in relationships and also in their overall well being.
- #2 **Establish an Academic Base** - this

will jumpstart their school experience. Learning patterning is a forefront to learning math. Colors teach them about their environment and art. Singing teaches rhyming and counting, and is a way to learn brand new concepts.

- #3 **Have Fun** “I want this experience to be one that gets them excited to learn and excited to go to school. I love seeing kids smiling faces on the other side of the classroom door each day. That just adds enthusiasm to whatever we are learning about that day. I think that a love for school at the beginning leads to school success and enjoyment later on. It certainly can create lifelong learners,” concluded Varner.



Preschool Assistant Gabby reads to Rebekah, a West Midland 3 year old “friend”.

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and people seeking help at younger and younger ages. In addition, we are seeing more homeless families with nowhere to turn because their extended family is in a similar situation.”

Since 1974, West Midland Family Center has been committed to serving the individuals and families in the west end of the county. As the needs change, so do our programs and services. We continue to provide help for struggling families, and work collaboratively with other community agencies to meet the ever-changing needs. We offer hope in the face of hopelessness and understand that change requires working with the entire family. With of the incredible support of our donors and partners, we are there to provide mentors, counseling services, basic food assistance, emergency rent

assistance, home heating assistance, preschool, education programs and so much more. While communities may not have control over our country’s economy, the WMFC strives to provide a ray of hope and a glimpse of a better future for our neighbors in need - one person and one family at a time.



Renee Young, WMFC Family Services Director



Air Force

Ron Breterity - 15 years
Oscar Hidalgo - 4 years
John Kraft - 20 years
Randy Long - 20 + years
Rob Long - 4 years
Richard March - 4 years
William Pelkam - 8 years
Cain Piotrowski - 4 years
Junior Reed - 30 years
Kirk Shauger - 6 years
Elmer Treppa - 4 years, WWII
Allen Warren - 4 years

Marines

Robert Beck - 4 years
Andrew Best - Currently Serving
CPL Brad Campbell - 5 years
Justin Devendorf - 6 years
Michael Dobzhensky
Jimmy Franis - 6 years
Adam Fruk - 6 years
Joshua Fruk - 6 years
Nicholas Hickens - Currently serving
Gale Klingensmith
Tyler LaRue - 2 years
Stephan C. Lynk
Gunar Makek-Madani - 6 years
Terri Malek-Madani - 4 years
Marine Corp
Dan Moore - 8 years
Dave Reichle
Rick Robison - 4 years
1st Lt Jason Roenicke - serving
Ben Rosek - 2 years
Wayne Sasse
Mike Vancil - 2 years
Bradley Wells - 6 years, still serving
Lisa Wohlford
David Zimmer - 2 years

Navy

Shawn Akers - 10+ years
Roberts Andrews - 8 years
Bob Burgess - 5 years
Richard Caven
Stan Closs
Ken Cunningham - 3 years
Sherry Cunningham - 3 years
Jed Johansen - 18 years
William H. Lasota Jr. - 2 x 6 years
Bob Michael
Paul G. Mureiko - 4 years
Ralph Rogers
Todd Seaver - 4 years
Joe Sharpe - 2 years, still serving
HN Aaron Ullom

9/11 Victims

All 9/11 Victims
Gregory Richards - Twin Towers

Please understand that all requests were handwritten and many requests had incomplete or no contact information. As a result, WMFC was unable to verify information if there was a question regarding accuracy. WMFC has taken the utmost care in transcribing the information that was provided to us to insure that the information presented is, to the best of our knowledge, correct.



Army

27th Brigade Combat
Dakota Adams - 2 years
PFC Jordon Amrozowicz - 2 years
Eugene Andres - 4 years
Jeremy Baker - 8 years
Wayne T. Ballard
Virgil H. Banaszak - 6 years
Edward Barnett
Nick Bank, Currently serving
Erik Barton - 19 years (still serving)
Kara Barton - 2 years
Darren Benson - 8 years
Peter Bergeron - 25 years
Kyle Berlin - 2 years
Dave Bernreuter
Eugene J. Bower
Uncle Fred Brown
Nathan Brown - Died in combat
Jerry Burton - Korean War
Toy Burton - 4 years
Lawrence Carpenter - 8 years
Rich Clipper - Iraq now
Dave Colburn - 4 years
Nicholas Collins - 4 years
Shane Duff - Not available
Steven Eastman - 20 years
James Favar - 10+ years
James Favarquon - 10+ years
Chris Fither - 4 years
Donald Fracis - Korean War
David Frazer
Chester Geno
Jim Gibson - 4 years
Robert Green - 4 years
Archie Hall
Dean Hufnagle - 10 years - SF
Justin Jay - 6 years
Floyd L. Jeske - 4 years
Darrin Johns - 4 years
George Kennedy - WWI
Bob Kimmel - 20 years
Aaron Kuehne - NG
Daniel Kuehne - NG
Stan Laskowski - 2 years
Jeremiah Last - 10 years
Christopher Lisee
Andy and Aaron Little
Clifford March - 4 years
Ed Martin - 4 years
Donald MacGregor - WWI
Steve McLane
Delton E. Miller
Donavon Herman Miller - 4 years
Jim Morgan
Terry Muszynski - 30 years
Robert Nash - Korean and WWII
Mark Pearsey - Veteran
Darby Quinn
Eugene Rau
Jacob N. Richards - Currently Serving

Army

Alan Ritter
Troy Robertson - 22 years
Robert Ross - 8 years
Jesse Sanchez - WWII
Frederick Schneider - 2 years
Wallace Scott
Mike Sequin - 6 years
Uncle Shaffer
Glenn Sharpe - 4 years, WWII Medic
John Shier - 2 years
Adam Smith - 2 years
Chad Sneller - 18 years
Jeff Snellenbergen - 4 years
Tommy Southwick
Clarence Stillwell - 2 years
Robert D. Styn - 6 years
Mike Succiliano - 20 years
Harry Sweetman - 10+ years
Tom Talbot - Vietnam
Benjamin Tomczak
Mike Uvanni - Died in combat
Ron Vanderstart - 7+ years
Paul Van Wert - 4 years
Lawrence Vinson - 6 years
Mike Vinson - 20 years
Vern Vinson - 20 years
Trisha Watt - 20 years
Sgt. Brad Wentz
Joel Wirtz
Wm. Wirtz - WWI
Brandon Young
Jacob Zarazna - 2 years

National Guard

Chance Augustine - 3 years
Rollie Bingham - 6 years
Andrew Rassmussen - 10 years
Tim Shumake - 10+ years
Nick Tucker - 7+ years
Joe Weisdiser - 10+ years

Firefighters

Robin Crook - 19 years
Ronald Schofield

Police

Jeremy Dixon - 12 years
Chad Early - 10 years
Russel Pahssen - 11 years
Patty Ulman - 12 years

Others That Were Honored (Incomplete Information)

All Heroes, All Service People
American Soldiers, Violet Arnold
Cousin Doug, Sandra Criollos
Don Clark, Walt Jean - Air Corp
Lynn, Laverne “Bud” Miller
Frank Morgan, Clif Sharp



Never Forget

WMFC Hosts Planting

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list of the service members who were honored in the flag planting activity are included in this issue of the Family Focus. The list includes the name, number of years of service and the area in which the person served, or is currently serving. See a complete list on page 3.