



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

Summer’s End Is Bittersweet... *Continued from page 1*

“The group leaders put a lot of time into planning activities for the children that were developmentally appropriate,” explained Gail Crosby, Summer Program Coordinator. “Activities that enhanced the children’s social, emotional and educational skills. It is always hard to say goodbye at the end of the summer,” continued Crosby, “many of the staff and children form very close relationships.”

Summer Program wasn’t the only activity that WMFC hosted for the West Midland community this summer. Mondays and Fridays were also filled with special activities.



Summer program leader
Trixie Onstott welcomes
students at the beginning
of the summer.

On Monday mornings WMFC hosted play groups for families with children ages birth to four years of age. The goals of the program were to give parents and children opportunities to socialize, interact positively and support one another, and to familiarize themselves with other agencies in the community.

WMFC collaborated with MSU Extension, Cancer Services and Mid Michigan Community Action Agency (MMCAA) to host special topic sessions. MSU Extension shared a nutrition presentation, read a story to the parents and children, and brought nutritious snacks for everyone to sample. Cancer Services talked to the parents about Sun Safety, and MMCAA facilitated a craft making session and promoted the Early Head Start program.

On Monday evenings families participated in Parent Enrichment Clubs such as “Artists Alive”, “Survivor West Midland”, “Healthy and Fit”, “Horsing Around” and “Nature’s Sandbox”.

Fridays were “Family Day” at the Center. Every Friday from 4-7 p.m. WMFC hosted a variety of different activities each planned around a different fun family theme. Friday themes included Baseball, Hawaiian Luau, and “Under the Sea”. All activities, including swimming in the swimming pool, were free of charge. “There was something for everyone,” explained WMFC Recreation Director Stacey Urbani. “Fridays were filled with activities that gave families the opportunity to spend fun quality time together.”



Children put the most unique things into their backpacks to take home at the end of the day! One group leader rescued this frog who was headed home with a child! Consensus was that the frog was happy to be returned to his own family in the creek!

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Summer’s End is Always Bittersweet



Another summer at WMFC comes to an end.

As summer ends and fall approaches, the prospect of going back to school, seeing friends, and meeting new teachers is always exciting and fun, but for the children and staff who spend their summer days at WMFC, the end of summer is always bittersweet.

From the first day of summer when the busses rolled into the parking lot packed with excited boys and girls, until the hot August day when all the busses were loaded up to take the children home, the Center was filled with busy feet and sounds of laughter.

Summer is a hectic time at the West Midland Family Center and this summer was no exception! One hundred-sixty-eight children of preschool to middle school age, representing 98 families, participated in this year’s six week summer program which began on June 18th and ended on August 2nd. Throughout the summer children of all ages spent their days making crafts, swimming in the pool, playing outside and making new friends.

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Michigan Baseball
Foundation Donates
New Equipment

WMFC recently upgraded its batting cage equipment thanks to a generous \$4,000 grant that was received from the Michigan Baseball Foundation. New flooring, cage, safety screens, batting cage equipment and a pitching machine were purchased.

“We have had a very successful batting cage program for the past 11 years,” explained former WMFC Recreation Director, Renee Allen. “Those who

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Jordin St. John proud fisherman!

WMFC Hosts
Family Camps At
Neyati

Gail Crosby, WMFC Program Director, has always dreamed of a family camp that she could throw all her energy, sweat and tears into. This summer her dreams became a reality when the West Midland Family Center hosted three family camps at Camp Neyati located on Crooked Lake, 55 miles northwest of Midland, Michigan. Little did Crosby know that the fulfillment of her dream would also be the fulfillment of the dreams of so many West Midland County families!

WMFC hosted three family camps on June 22-24th, August 5th-7th and August 7th-10th. A total of 47 families which included 226 individuals, participated in the three camps.

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WMFC Hosts Family Camps At Neyati ...Continued from page 1



When asked “What was the best part of family camp”, many children and parents alike responded, “Spending time together...”

The WMFC staff planned many activities and special events for the families including family scavenger hunts, fishing, boating, crafts, building “family cars”, family games, swimming, bonfires complete with S’mores and a “Drive in Movie” lakeside. Special collaborations with North Midland Family Center and Jeff Myers from Black Creek Sportsman’s Club, allowed for instruction in archery and marksmanship. In addition, MSU Extension hosted a Camp Neyati version of the Food Network Channel’s “Chopped”.

“The families just loved the additional activities that Jeff Myers, NMFC and MSU Extension facilitated for us,” commented Crosby.

Camp wasn’t all fun and games though. “At camp every family has a job to do,” explained Renee Young, Family Services Program Director. “A family with young children might be assigned to “Beach Patrol”, which meant keeping the beach front clean or a family with older children might be assigned to “Dynamic Dish Doers” which meant helping out with dishes or “Smokey Bear Patrol” which meant making sure that there was fire wood for the bonfire.”

Parents, children and staff alike enjoyed the family camp experience. “Many people in Midland County can’t relate to a family who is unable to take a family vacation. For many of these families the 3-4 days that they spent at family camp was the first vacation that they have had in a very long time...for some it was their very first family vacation ever,” explained Crosby.

“The overall fun we had...it was great,” commented one mother, “so many good memories...without this camp we wouldn’t have been able to afford a vacation...our last was three years ago... it means a lot...THANK YOU!”

“Thank you for helping me, as a single mom, make BOTH kids happy!”,

exclaimed another mother. “I truly appreciate it.”

The family camps were deemed a great success not only because of all the fun that everyone had, but because of the relationship building that took place. “Amidst all the fun and activities, the success is encompassed in the relationships that are built thorough the FUN that everyone experiences together,” explained Crosby, “What we do at West Midland starts first with building relationships with the people that we serve. Family Camp was a great way to do that.”



Canoeing was a family favorite at Family Camp.

Michigan Baseball Foundation Donates Equipment...Continued from page 1

have used our cage over the years have taken such good care of our equipment, but everything needs replacing sooner or later. It was wonderful to get the grant to do that this year!”

“The cage has served WMFC well over the years,” continued Allen. “It has given us a source of revenue and drawn new people to the Center. Most importantly, it has exposed less privileged children to the sports of baseball and softball, giving them a place to practice ball inside when the weather turns nasty. Children in this area don’t typically have

access to facilities like ours,” continued Allen. “Many times they don’t have a means of travel to get to a facility in town or, if they do, they don’t have the financial means to pay to use a batting cage. Having a facility like this is a huge plus for them.”

“Those who participated in Summer Family Fridays this summer, took full advantage of the new equipment,” commented Stacey Urbani, current WMFC Recreation Director. “Families spent hours hitting in the cage.”

This coming fall the batting cage will once again be a busy place. “We plan to use the batting cage in our After School Program and this winter we will continue to host free open batting cage hours for kids and adults. In September, we will start getting calls from area teams wanting to reserve time in the cage this winter,” continued Urbani. “I don’t see the demands on the cage slowing down any time soon!”

What did you like best about summer program?



“The teens dancing for everyone!”
-Sequest, age 17

“I like everything...”
-Zachery, age 10

“Going to the creek”
- Preston, age 9

“Hanging out with friends and staff.”
-Donnie, age 14

“Roller skating in the gym!”
-Caleb, age 11

“I love the kids...I get hugs and am told everyday they love me. I will never forget when one of my kids gave me a hug and a high five. He was so proud of himself because he finally learned how to hold a pencil and trace his whole name!”
-WMFC Staff Member

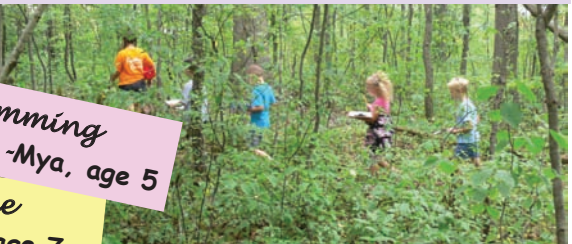
“Roasting marshmallows!”
-Carolyn, age 11

“I absolutely love the relationship that I have with my group. I thought it was cute when they all want to hold your hand and sit in your lap during group time...even when half the group throws water balloons at you!...I will definitely volunteer next year!”
-WMFC Teen Volunteer

“Going swimming, Doozies and hanging out with friends”
-Skyler, age 11

“I liked to play outside on the green monkey bars”
-Kayla, age 7

“Swimming! Swimming with my friends!”
-Mya, age 5



Other things you'd like to tell us about summer program?



“It was fun...I wish I could have been here all the time.”
-Emily, age 11

“It was awesome...”
~Skyler, age 11

“All the staff were awesome and cool.”
-Jazzmine, age 13

“WMFC is a great place. It was great to actually feel like I was making a difference.”
-WMFC Staff Member

“It was the best summer program that I ever went to...”
-Ashley, age 13

“We had good teachers! It is good that we get lunch.”
-Wyatt, age 6

“The kids smiling everyday and loving to be here convinced me that we NEED day camp.”
-Leadership Staff Member



“We had a bunch of fun together...and I wish I could stay here, but I can’t...maybe I can come next year...”
-Justin, age 7

“Spending the summer with ten 13-14 yr old girls can be intimidating. But this summer I feel has been amazing...I have bonded and made great relationships with my girls. We have had a lot of fun ...and I will never forget them.”
-WMFC Middle School Group Leader



“I really love WMFC...”
-Carolyn, age 11