



WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER
4011 W. Isabella Road
Shepherd, MI 48883

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West Midland Family Center's Family FOCUS

Enhancing the Quality of Life for Area Residents of all ages

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 2 • 4011 W. Isabella Rd. • Shepherd, MI 48883 • wmfc.org • (989) 832-3256 • Holiday 2009

WMFC's Thanks for Giving Celebration - November 19

This year WMFC's "Thanks for Giving Celebration," will be held on Thursday, November 19, 2009 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. It is a fitting start to the holiday season.

The evening will begin with a ceremony to recognize the special volunteers that have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to furthering the WMFC mission. 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. To find out whom the honorees are, please join us on the 19th of November.

Together, each of these individuals along with the hundreds of other volunteers provides thousands of hours of meaningful work at the Center. We couldn't accomplish our mission without them.

After the recognition ceremony, dinner will be provided from 6:15 – 7:15 p.m. Beginning at 2:30 p.m. and running until 7:30 p.m. there will be a blood drive from the Michigan Community Blood Centers. Concurrent with all other events will be a giant inflatable obstacle course, crafts, games and agency

representation from a variety of Midland County human services organizations providing information and activities for all.



Lilly hangs food for our animal friends on the West Midland Family Center Giving Tree.

Letter from Carman

Hi my name is Carman Toner and I've been involved with CK* for 3 years. I first got involved when my children got started in the summer and after school program. My kids love everyone at the center. I may have had a slight hesitation the first time I attended CK but once I did attend everyone there was very nice and made me feel welcome. There are so many benefits to your family such as many ways to spend time together and all the games and communication. It makes your family stronger. I'm very grateful for that. It has made my 4-year-old a stronger kid. She likes to play with all of the educational toys I bring home. I like the new ways they teach me to deal with my children's behavior. I really love the class, I recommend it to everyone. I wouldn't stop going for any reason at all.

* Capable Kids (CK) is a parent education program held at WMFC and funded by the Children's Trust Fund of Michigan.



Carman's Capable Kids

What Goes Around Comes Around - The Ripple Effect at WMFC

The Midland Community Foundation recently provided an opportunity for citizens of Midland to witness the effects of philanthropy in our community. This event was called The Ripple Effect, which we all know speaks to the far reaching impact even one kind deed can have.

At the Center we are privileged to witness this so-called ripple effect all the time. Recently it came to us in a uniquely tangible form:

It all began in 2004, when Norman and Nancy Ott donated a 1995 Dodge Neon to our vehicle donation program. After screening eligible applicants the Ott's vehicle was given to Laura Merritt (then a DOW College Opportunity Program



2004-Laura Merritt received a donated vehicle, easing her transition to college



2009-Laura purchases a brand new vehicle of her own

student attending Delta College). Laura used this car, which reliably carried her back and forth from Delta then to Adrian College where Laura graduated, receiving a B.S. in English. Laura was hired right out of college and is currently working for a consolidated school district in "the thumb." She works with high school students as they make plans for their future. Among those that opt for an academic future many will be the first in their family to attend college. In a perfect turn of fate Laura helps these students find scholarships, and fill out college applications so they will have the highest likelihood of succeeding in their dreams. To further establish this change of fate Laura recently purchased her own Ford vehicle. The vehicle that once was used to promote independence for a young woman has done its job however, knowing the value it still holds, the vehicle was donated back to WMFC.

What would have happened if Laura hadn't received the donated vehicle? Would she have been able to complete her education? When asked, her mother Shawna, thought maybe not. "At the time, I was a single

mom with five kids (one a foreign exchange student). The only vehicle available for Laura at the time was an old van that I felt was unsafe. I don't know what we would have done without the donation. Getting that car was the perfect solution and has made all the difference for Laura." In donating the car back to WMFC, Laura widens the "the ripple" that has so positively impacted her life. The keys have been passed on to DeVante Mitchell. DeVante, a current DOW COP member, is a senior at Coleman High School and will attend Delta College upon graduation. An athlete, DeVante plans to pursue a career in Physical Therapy. He is from a closely-knit family that values and models involvement in community and church. DeVante and his family have been strong supporters of the COP for the past four years.



The Ripple Effect in action-DeVante receives a "new" vehicle to ease his transition to college

Behind Every Donor

Behind every donor lies motivation: motivation to give back, motivation to respond to need, motivation to do the right thing. What motivates you to take action? Following are quotes from just a few of our most steadfast donors as to the motivation for their giving.



Bill Schmidt

“What’s not to like about giving to and volunteering at WMFC? It’s local, well run, doing really good work—especially with kids, improving their lives, raising their potentials—and your efforts are always truly appreciated.”

Just One More Way To Give

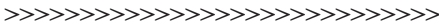
Ours is a unique community enhanced by cultural, historic and environmental, sights to see, sporting events to attend with indoor, outdoor and civic activities too numerous to count. These many opportunities can sometimes serve to make our busy lives even busier. Busy lives, paired with the generous spirit we see demonstrated daily, are two of the reasons that WMFC receives hundreds of ticket donations each year.

These tickets are generously donated to the WMFC with the knowledge that we seek out individuals or families that will reap the most benefit. Clearly, struggling families cannot afford to pay the price of entertainment. Donated tickets provide such families or individuals the opportunity to experience an array of possibilities otherwise unattainable. Such experiences open hearts and minds to new things and provides wholesome family together time. From Loons tickets, to the Orchestra, Rotary Pancake supper or Literacy Council’s Dessert Party, to special events, Music Society, River Days meal tickets, Kiwanis Travelogues to movie passes or Tiger’s games, and university sporting events, West Midland has received them all. We would like to thank the hundreds of people that thought to donate a meaningful activity to an appreciative family and encourage others to do the same. However, it seems that no one says thank-you quite like a beneficiary.



Win Zacharias

“I have given through the years to WMFC because of the visible needs in the community at all age levels and the dedicated and devoted Leadership, Staff and Volunteers who are committed to upgrading life for all!!”



Nate Ohle

“WMFC holds a special place for me, it literally changed me and my life’s purpose. WMFC does so much for the community. It literally reaches the entire family on a personal level, and makes every person that comes through the door feel important. There is not a better place I can imagine to give back to.”

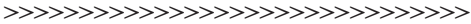


E. J. Herst



Jill Derry

“WMFC makes our neighborhood stronger; we feel they effectively use their resources to make the people in our community better parents, students, citizens. Theirs is a dedicated staff that truly cares about everyone who walks through their doors.”



Bob Dostal

“Practicing Stewardship by providing financial assistance to WMFC to allow the staff and volunteers to utilize their Time and Talent to help the needy helps satisfy our role in life.”

Fitness Across the Programs

The fitness agenda at WMFC has many faces. Each program approaches physical activity in a way that is most meaningful to the designated population. There are however a few commonalities. Fitness activities are always fun, always get people moving and always promote a more healthful lifestyle. The following is a snapshot of fitness activities that are woven into everyday occurrence at The Center

Preschool: Preschool teacher, Wendy Plewa, incorporates Pilates and other movement breaks periodically throughout each day to create an appreciation for fitness among



Focus...Now stretch!

our youngest citizens. Pilates exercise uses controlled movements and breathing to help focus and develop core muscles. Wendy said, “Pilates has proven to be very helpful in directing all that special energy preschoolers produce. It really facilitates relaxation which helps the children not only to focus, but helps to sooth and calm down their inner being as well. They’ve had fun discussing the Pilates movements and the importance of being fit.”

After School Program, Elementary and Teens: Our After School Program follows the Conscious Discipline (CD) curriculum,



Mercedize playing Scooter Safari

which contends that routine helps kids feel safe, and that there are four components to routines. Included among these components are activities to disengage the stress response. Gross motor activities involve the group of large muscles that control the head, shoulders, arms, back, abdomen and feet and help to disengage the stress response. Healthy gross motor skills facilitate the proper development of fine motor skills.

So each day in After School Program finds young children engaged in such activities as Duck-Duck-Goose, Scooter Safari, fort building, or stretching. All of these activities keep children moving, and fit while actively enhancing their gross motor development. The focus for the teens is more about getting them moving and engaged. Each week the teens are offered a menu of physical fitness options. From these, the teens vote for the fitness activities which most appeal to them. Among the activities they have chosen are football, ultimate Frisbee, broomball and outdoor shelter building. The goal is to get the teens moving, break the technical gadget habit and help them discover activities they love that bring them a mind, body, spirit connection.

Seniors: Currently the seniors are engaged in a Wii bowling tournament. There are four; four-person teams each with two alternates. This fitness activity is designed to enhance movement and provide opportunities for social interaction. Greendale Site Director, Tammy Jerome stated that several of the participants have significantly improved their scores. Seniors also participate in Low Impact Physical Activity (LIPA). LIPA focuses in on bone strength, walking and stretching. This group is lead by Silvana Spindler and assisted by Susan Wells. Silvana has a degree in Physical Education and is volunteering her time to provide this exercise program. Beginning Line Dancing instruction is held at 10:30-11:30 a.m. on Mondays. For details about these programs contact Tammy at 832-3256.

Staff Fitness Challenge: Each September begins a new fitness challenge for the staff at WMFC, spearheaded by Aquatics



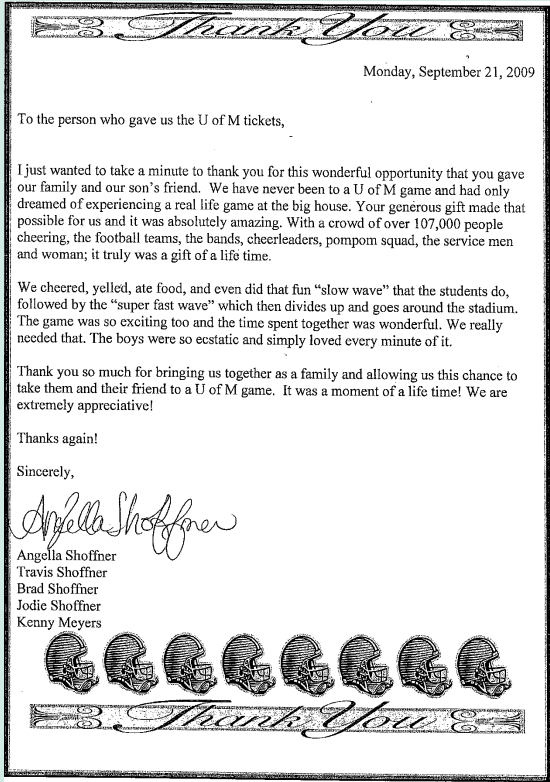
Matt, Joey and Elijah hauling logs to build an outdoor shelter

and Recreation Director Renee Allen. ‘The Challenge’ provides good-natured competition among staff members and just

the motivation needed to stay fit through the long Michigan winter. Independently or with others, staff members participate in fitness activities, record time spent engaged in an activity and report their time each month. Participants become eligible for a prize drawing for that occurs at ‘The Challenge’ wrap-up in the spring. All prizes are participant donated. Speaking to the benefits of this program, staff member Lois Burton said, “I was amazed how much better I felt after participating. I simply walked on every break I had and it really made a difference. My blood pressure dropped making me feel calmer and healthier. It’s a great thing to do.”



Effie, Wii controller at the ready, throws a strike!



Thank You From The Shoffner Family



The Shoffner family at U of M Stadium