

# Family Focus

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER

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## In This Issue

WMFC Acknowledges Gifts....1

WMFC Invests in Senior Citizens.....1

Marcy Young's Work Life Comes Full Circle.....2

Large Bearded Man to Visit....3

Diane Dauer Heart of Center Award Recipients.....4

Thriving,  
Giving,  
Growing...  
Together



## WMFC Acknowledges Gifts of Time and Treasure

West Midland Family Center (WMFC) is honored to have earned the support of so many generous donors over the years. Funding for non-profit organizations is never a given, particularly during times of global inflation. Rising costs of living, coupled with increased supply costs, can cause donors to pause from contributing much needed funds. Some opt to hold onto funds until the economy turns around, while others choose to continue giving despite economic uncertainty.

Throughout 2022, a number of organizations supported WMFC not only financially, but with gifts of time and talent. Whether hard-earned time or hard-earned dollars, WMFC programs are made better as a result of the efforts of community groups and donors.

Among the many financial supporters, the **Midland Kiwanis Foundation** graciously donated \$25,000 toward tuition scholarships for the WMFC 3's Preschool Program. They also donated \$2,500 in support of preschool field trips and \$6,000 toward the expansion of the WMFC Preschool Outdoor Learning Area. In addition, they volunteered many hours to help build and install the new outdoor learning features.

In the early fall, the **United Way of Gratiot and Isabella Counties** presented a \$7,500 check to WMFC's Shepherd Community Preschool Staff and the WMFC Family Services Department in support of the **Born to Thrive** program to help Shepherd preschool families.

...continued on page 3



Annie Sanders, (far right), United Way of Gratiot and Isabella Counties Executive Director, presents a really big check in support of the Born to Thrive program at WMFC's Shepherd Preschool site.

## WMFC Invests in Senior Citizens

WMFC has just completed a much-needed kitchen renovation.

"I give tours of WMFC all the time...but it's been years since I've been proud to show off the senior center kitchen," commented **Greg Dorrien, WMFC Executive Director**. "Cabinetry in the circa 1989 kitchen was made of laminated particle board. Ten years ago when it started separating at the seams I should

have made sure it was replaced. The new kitchen is made with stainless steel and should last several lifetimes," explained Dorrien.

"We are extremely grateful to West Midland Family Center for their incredible partnership and dedication to serving all ages in West Midland County!" exclaimed **Charlie Schwedler, Senior Services Executive**

...continued on page 2



## Marcy Young's Work Life Comes Full Circle

**Marcy Young** has recently been named the **WMFC Children's Programs/Licensing Director**. Young is a familiar face at WMFC. Her varied experiences in early childhood and education have provided her with a valuable skill set that makes her a perfect fit for her new role at WMFC.

"In 2006, I was hired by WMFC as an associate teacher for the preschool program," explained Young. "At the conclusion of my first year, WMFC expanded the preschool program to include a classroom at **Bullock Creek Elementary**. I was hired as the lead teacher for the **Bullock Creek Community Preschool** where I eventually became site director," continued Young. "I taught at Bullock Creek for six years before I learned that our **Regional Preschool Partnership (RPP)** was looking to fill an **Early Childhood Specialist (ECS)** role."

"For seven years I worked as an ECS, supporting teaching teams and administrators in early childhood programs across four counties. Our goal was to provide high-quality preschool with fidelity to the **Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)** model. I achieved my master's degree in early childhood education before my ECS position was eliminated in 2019. I then returned to the classroom as a GSRP teacher at the **Meridian Early Childhood Center** where I taught for the last three years before life brought me full circle back to WMFC this year. Envisioning myself returning to West Midland was easy," commented Young. "I hadn't forgotten what an impactful organization WMFC was nor the amazing people I'd worked with in the past. I think that my experiences since I last worked at WMFC have uniquely shaped me for this new role."

"Having taught in two different GSRP's I know our state-funded program model very well. I've also gained an even better understanding of the challenge's educators face and the dedication needed to be an educator."

"My immediate goals for the WMFC Preschool Program are to build back some of the elements that were lost during the pandemic such as consistent in-person school, visiting and learning about our community through field trips, welcoming volunteers and offering family engagement opportunities. This will be a slow but steady process."

"Normally, anytime we fill an important position at WMFC, I have a few sleepless nights wondering if the new person is going to fit in comfortably with the rest of the team," explained **Greg Dorrien, WMFC Executive Director**, "but since I had those worries 15 years ago with Marcy, I already knew she'd fit right in. I just couldn't be happier that she returned to lead our largest department," continued Dorrien. "Marcy's implementation of our first off-site preschool program at Bullock Creek Elementary School way back in the day helped give us confidence to know we could do additional off-site programs successfully."



*Marcy Young*

## WMFC Invests in Senior Citizens...continued from page 1



*Myra Walls, Greendale Senior Center Director, stands in the newly transformed kitchen at WMFC.*

**Director.** "The completion of the renovated kitchen is just another example of our great partnership and mutual commitment to older adults. We cannot wait to resume cooking our meals at WMFC and continue to grow the number of older adults who join us for great meals along with lots of fun and activities!"

"The total project cost \$278,000 which included changes to the HVAC system for the dining room and associated roof top equipment," explained Dorrien. "**Three Rivers Corporation** did a great job keeping the project within budget. They did an even better job of keeping after supply chain vendors so we'd end up with a fully functioning kitchen that passes all the rigorous health department inspections."

"I'd like to thank **Earl Soules** for making my life easier by volunteering to be our Project Manager," concluded Dorrien. "It's the same role he preformed for us during the 2017 building expansion project that took up two full years of his life. Earl, I won't ask you to do it again...at least not until next spring!"



## WMFC Acknowledges Gifts of Time and Treasure...continued from page 1



*WMFC Executive Director Greg Dorrien receives donation check from Julie Prout, Former Director of Central Michigan Girls on the Run.*

*Central Michigan Girls on the Run* program voted to disband, but not before investing \$3,000 in local youth programs at WMFC.

*First United Methodist Church* extended their support of helping families in need by gifting another \$2,000 recently.

Gifts of time and talents are crucial to the ongoing success of WMFC's mission. This past year volunteers from the *Homer United Methodist Church* helped with surplus food and produce distributions. "I don't know what we'd do without them," stated *Helen Roth, WMFC Connect and Serve Volunteer Coordinator*. "Early this year, they answered the call and stepped up when we really needed them. Since then they consistently show up to help."

Additionally, volunteers from *Isabella Bank and Trust* helped WMFC with several projects, including prepping picnic tables for staining, spreading new mulch on the playground for safety, and packaging food for a surplus food distribution. The *United Way of Midland County* also helped throughout the year by coordinating volunteers from *Dow Inc.* to help with numerous projects.

As we close out 2022 and move into the new year, WMFC looks forward to continuing partnerships with our current donors and volunteers. We'd also like to welcome aboard others...those who want to join us in our mission to "enhance the quality of life for each generation by providing growth and achievement opportunities within a caring environment."

## Large Generous Bearded Man from North Pole to Visit WMFC

On *Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>*, WMFC is inviting everyone of any age to join us for a dinner including tasty soups and finger sandwiches. There will also be a hot chocolate bar, cookie decorating, ornament making, and lots of games to play with a chance to win prizes. Additionally, WMFC will be welcoming a very special guest who will make an exclusive stop to surprise all the girls and boys at WMFC. Santa Claus will arrive at 5:30 p.m. to visit with children of all ages, pose for pictures and listen to Christmas wishes.

Santa and the WMFC Staff Members have been looking forward to this visit since the last Soup with Santa event in December of 2019. So, don't forget to mark your calendars and plan to attend this very special family event. **REGISTRATION is REQUIRED.** Please call (989) 832-3256 to reserve your spot.



*The annual Soup with Santa event was a highlight of the Christmas season for many WMFC families since its debut in 2019. To the delight of many, this event returns to WMFC in December 2022.*





**WMFC Fall 3 on 3 Basketball League Champions.** (L to R) Kyle Showmin, Chuck Isham, Alan Vasquez and Rashaun Redstar.

## 2022 Board of Directors

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## Diane Dauer Heart of The Center Award Recipients

Each year, at the **WMFC Annual Professional Development and Safety Day** WMFC awards the **Diane Dauer Heart of the Center Award** to two employees who best exemplify the loving, caring and compassionate character traits of the late Diane Dauer. This year's recipients were **Leigha McLaughlin, WMFC Out of School Time Supervisor** and **Tangi Oswald, WMFC Lead Preschool Teacher**.

**Janae Manie, WMFC Lead Preschool Teacher** (and 2020 recipient), shared a few words about each recipients' dedication to the children in their care and the positive effects they have on their fellow staff members. The annual ceremony occurred with 72 cheering staff members in attendance.

"I was truly surprised when Janae presented me with the **Diane Dauer Heart of the Center Award**," shared McLaughlin. "Janae has always been someone I've looked up to so having her present me with the award meant so much to me."

"I'm honored to be recognized but I strongly believe that we wouldn't be what we are today without every single member of the WMFC team," shared McLaughlin. "WMFC operates as one united force when it comes to serving our families and I am honored to be a part of it. I appreciate the help and support that everyone has given me in my transition from Lead Teacher to



**Tangi Oswald (left) and Leigha McLaughlin (right)** receive **Diane Dauer Heart of the Center Award**

Out of School Time Supervisor."

**Tangi Oswald** has been working as a lead preschool teacher at WMFC for 11 years. "I was so surprised and honored to receive this incredible award. I'm very grateful for the support and kindness I receive here at West Midland Family Center. Thank you for selecting me to receive the **Diane Dauer Heart of the Center Award**," said Oswald.