

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



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Poverty: A Helping Hand Is Always Needed And Appreciated

News Flash: Poverty exists in Midland County. Out of 56 preschoolers attending a WMFC preschool 23 were at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level which means that a family of four earns \$22,050 annually or \$424 a week. Eleven families were at 130% of the Federal Poverty Level which means that a family of four earns \$28,665 annually or \$552 weekly. Take a moment if you would and imagine paying rent, feeding your family, paying for a car and its associated costs, covering medical bills, paying for utilities and clothing. The list of needs is endless, however resources for the working poor are finite and the stress it creates can be high.

As a result, since January first of 2010 WMFC has helped 16 families pay their rent or mortgage, and 53 families pay their utilities. We have given out 84 gasoline cards. In 2010, 1661 individuals representing 474 families received food distributed at the center

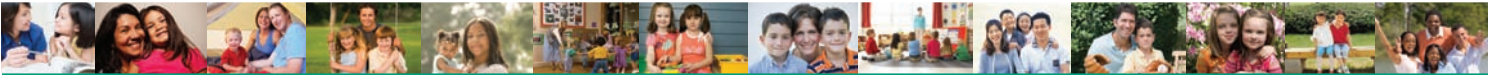
through the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry-Mobile Pantry. Through a program coordinated by the Department of Human Services, 57 WMFC families submitted requests for Thanksgiving Baskets, some of these requests will be denied. In reflecting back to the 2009 holiday season ~ WMFC supplied 140 food baskets. We helped 53 families with Christmas, 24 of whom were adopted by community members and local business organizations. We bought gifts for the children in the remaining families with donated funds.

This year as we look ahead to the holidays, we anticipate a serious void in the numbers of families we will be able to help. We have learned that a number of our local business supporters that have historically adopted 14 families among them have either closed or because of economic conditions are no longer able to help. So this year we could use your help.

If you find yourself in a place of having much to be thankful for this year, hold that blessing dear and then pass it on to bless another in some way. If you can help us make the difference such that no one goes without this year please contact Renee Young at 832-3256.



Forget-Me-Nots



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Carl Coon Becomes First Legacy Society Member

WMFC is in the early stages of a new program and we are inviting you to become a member.



Carl Coons - WMFC's first Family Legacy Society member.

In order to assure future services for the children and families with whom we work we have developed the *West Midland Family Legacy Society*: a program to benefit both you and WMFC. It's simple, as you go about making preparations for you future, remember West

Midland as part of your estate. Then, let us know that you have taken this step. Along with those of other like-minded individuals your name will become a permanent feature of our Wall of Honor. Your name will stand as an example to others in our community and your thoughtful contribution will live on as tribute to your good works.

In an impromptu interview, our first Family Legacy Society Member, Carl Coons, explains what motivated his bequest. Carl is a member of the WMFC Board and currently holds the position of Treasurer. Carl is a member of the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and is Chair of the Accounting and Budget Committee. Carl has been on the WMFC Board of Directors since 2006.

Please touch on the benefits you see of becoming a Legacy Society Member:



Personal benefits...The personal benefit to me is just knowing that after I am gone, I will still be contributing to the continued work of the West Midland Family Center and all the good that it does in this community.



Benefits for the center...The center benefits by receiving a lump sum payment that can be used to enhance their endowment funds. These funds generate income from investments that help to cover the cost to run the center that are not covered by funds received from the United Way or state and local foundation grants.



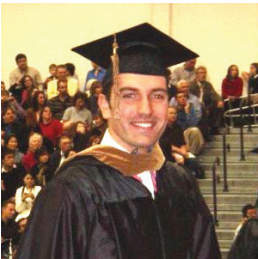
Discuss the steps you took to remember WMFC as part of your estate... It was really easy. I first met with my lawyers and established a will that stated that West Midland Family Center was one of the beneficiaries of my estate. The lawyers used their magic powers to translate that into legalese and pouf it was done. Depending on the complexity of the estate it may take more or less work on the lawyers part and one should always look to the estate tax ramifications (giving to charities can be a real benefit when the tax bill cometh.)



What thoughts do you have that might encourage others to become involved? In these trying times where state budgets are being cut back and the economy is not at its best, we as individuals must step up and help fill the gap that is being created to help those in our community that need it the most. This is very true when it comes to helping the youngest of our community that cannot fend for themselves. We have the ability to do it while we are living and we can also do it at the time of our passing.

Former Dow College Opportunity Student Now Dedicated to Serving on The COP Board

Ralph Griffith's life recently came full circle. Years ago Ralph was a high school student involved in what was then called the EAL/Dow College Opportunity Program (EAL/Dow COP). In the 1990's EAL was



DeVos School of Management Northwood University where he earned an MBA

a college assistance program that put impoverished high school students on the road to earning a college degree by helping them find ways to finance a college education. Today Ralph is a Dow COP Board Member.

"I don't remember how I found out about the program. Perhaps it was a school counselor who referred me or maybe my parents saw a flyer. I just remember going to the program interview in my Boy Scout uniform; it was the best clothing that I owned," Griffith continued. "Years later Tracy Meister (former COP Director) commented how they had to accept me into the program because they couldn't say 'no to someone wearing a Boy Scout uniform.'"

"The Program tried to build us into well rounded students. We spent weekends being tutored by Board members and college students. In turn, we spent time tutoring our peers and middle school students." "We also participated in a lot of volunteer



COP offered an introduction to life changing adventures, a custom that Ralph continues today. He is shown here in Amsterdam.

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activities and went on trips that proved life changing for us. “Our junior year we visited colleges, much like the COP students do today. During our senior year, we took a trip to Florida which was HUGE for us because many of us had never been on a vacation before and many of us had never been out of the state.” “My most memorable trip though, was our sophomore trip, when we hiked from Tahquamenon Falls to Grand Maris.”

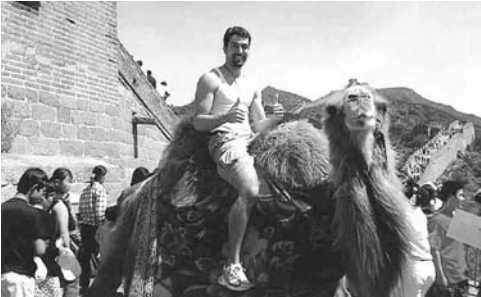
“COP was the start of a time of self-exploration for me. COP taught me life skills like problem solving and teamwork and prepared me for the future by showing me that there are different ways of doing things...of accomplishing the same task. COP opened my mind to accepting people’s differences. Today, these qualities are a hallmark of who I am and what I try to instill in the students that I work with.”

Asked what Ralph saw as COP’s strengths Ralph responded, “WMFC, the staff and

the Dow COP Board of Directors.” “COP being able to call WMFC “home” is very important,” explained Griffith, “and the people who “hold down the fort” like Greg, and the COP Directors (Tracy, Lynn and Terri) are the very backbone of COP.”

Ralph also credits the Dow COP Board of Directors with providing a crucial element to COP’s success. “The fact that some of the current board members were on the board when I graduated in 1999 is a testimony to their leadership, strategic vision and commitment to the program,” explained Griffith, “These people have dedicated their lives to this program!”

“I have an amazing opportunity to give back to a program that made me so much of who I am!” Griffith continued, “If I can give back just a small part of what they have given to me I would be very gratified,” exclaimed Griffith. “I’m excited to be in this position and I am looking forward to serving on the



As a college student Ralph studied abroad in China. Here he is shown at the Great Wall.

COP Board of Directors for many years to come.”

Besides serving on the COP Board of Directors, Griffith is currently a Professor of Management teaching full time, at Delta College. Always the student, Griffith is also working on completing his Ph.D. in Management/Entrepreneurship at Baker College.

From Preschool to Medical School: Brett Becomes A Doctor

The Groundwork For A Successful Educational Path, Starts Early In Life



The future doctor as we remember him.

sent Brett’s older sister, Amy to WMFC preschool, Brett’s mom, June was excited for Brett to have the same positive early educational experience. Brett adapted well to preschool and “graduated” very prepared for Kindergarten.

At the time, June and her husband, Mike both felt that a solid preschool experience would be beneficial to their children’s overall educational success. Looking back, June reflected, “We feel that having a preschool introduction to public education really helped both our children adapt to Kindergarten. Exposing them to other children and the challenges of socializing along with new environments and new ways of learning was a great first step to their success.” A sentiment confirmed by the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, the results of which are discussed below.

Although Brett enjoyed school, it wasn’t without challenges. When he was six, Brett was diagnosed with Systemic Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, a painful disease that caused interruptions in his education with periodic hospitalizations. Even with the

burden of health issues, Brett still managed to participate in band and tennis while in High School, and graduate valedictorian from Bullock Creek High School! Clearly, Brett was determined and focused and according to his mom, he always wanted to be a doctor. He completed his medical residency in family medicine in June of 2010 and will be joining a physicians group in California.

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study validates the Spitalone’s appreciation for early childhood education. This study, examines the lives of 123 persons who originally lived in the attendance area of the Ypsilanti (Michigan) school district’s Perry Elementary School. The study focused on children born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school. Children entered the study in five successive classes annually from the fall of 1962 to the fall of 1965. At the ages of three and four, children were randomly divided into two groups. One group received a high-quality preschool program and the other group received no preschool program. Data was collected on both groups annually from ages 3 through 11 and at ages 14, 15, 19, 27, and recently, 39-41.

The study shows that a high-quality program even for young children living in poverty, over their lifetimes, improves their educational performance, contributes to their economic development, helps prevent them from committing crimes, and provides a high return on taxpayer investment. The approximate average cost of the program, used in a cost-benefit analysis, was \$14,716 per participant over two years. For this cost, the program yielded benefits to the public

of \$105,324 per participant. These benefits came in the form of reduced justice system costs and court costs saved by potential victims of crimes- that did not occur, reduced welfare costs, decreases in educational costs as participants required fewer special education services, taking into consideration increased college costs for program participants as well as increased revenue produced by higher taxes as participants earned higher wages.



Dr. Brett Spitalone

parents, personal determination, available resources, such as, meaningful preschool programs and the dedication of our contributors all play a part in the success of those West Midland is dedicated to serve. Congratulations to Brett and to all those that played a part in this one very important success!

***High/Scope information adapted from: Benefits, Costs, and Explanation of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program. Lawrence J. Schweinhart, 2003**

Community Collaboration: The Best Way To Get A Lot Done

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” ~ Henry Ford

We would likely add that while a multitude may come together to create success, success is determined one individual at a time.



Larry Quinn - Catholic Family Services

We know that outcomes are better when we work together for a common goal; this is a universal thread that runs through all the programs operating at West Midland. Often joining the process in the grant development stage, our collaborative partners are an integral component to all we accomplish. Together with our staff, our funders, and our volunteers the people



Kendra Curtiss-Tomaski of the ESA leads a group of parents during our Capable Kids program



Miss Melina from Kinder Kare provides child care on site at WMFC

and organizations we collaborate with make possible the programs we offer for the most important component of all... our patrons. Without each of these pieces we could not provide the high quality services that we do today. For instance our partner Catholic Family Services provides the services of Larry Quinn LPC who comes to our Center twice weekly and provides counseling services to the individuals that frequent our programs. When a WMFC staff member is working with an individual in need of this type of service it is comforting to know that person will receive services at no cost to them or WMFC on site, in a location with which they are already comfortable.

Over the years, we have worked with countless organizations to stretch funding, enhance services and serve greater numbers. The Bullock Creek School District (BCSD) has partnered with us in everything from holding Floyd School open house events at WMFC, to opening Floyd Elementary for WMFC’s Play with a Purpose early childhood summer program. BCSD



Lynsey Crego Bullock Creek School teacher helped out with after school program

Mark Your Calendar for WMFC’s Thanks for Giving Celebration

This year WMFC’s “Thanks for Giving Celebration,” will be held on Thursday, November 18, 2010 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.

Awards bestowed will be:

- *Orrin Barrett Volunteer of the Year*
- *Phyllis Breedlove Friend of the Center*
- *Steven Barstow Youth Volunteer of the Year.*

Please join us on the 18th of November to honor these and the hundreds of other volunteers who provide thousands of hours of meaningful work at the Center. We couldn’t accomplish our mission without them.

After the recognition ceremony, dinner will be served 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

is an integral component to the programs that we offer at WMFC. Chippewa Nature Center leaves open nine spaces for “our” children to attend their nature preschool. The Educational Services Agency (ESA) manages a grant that allows WMFC to provide preschool services at Bullock Creek Elementary. We have relationships with organizations i.e., The Rock to Education Training Center to Michigan Child Care Centers, Inc. dba Kinder Kare which provides child care on site. Gateway Martial Arts provides free martial arts classes for our community at the Center because we let them use our space for free. Literacy Council, Legacy Center, Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, The Success by Six Collaborative, Senior Services-Midland County Council on Aging, Hidden Harvest, North Midland and Railway Family Centers and so many others have a place at our table. We are thankful for what they bring because our patrons are the beneficiaries. Individual success is always multiplied by the numbers they have in support of them.

