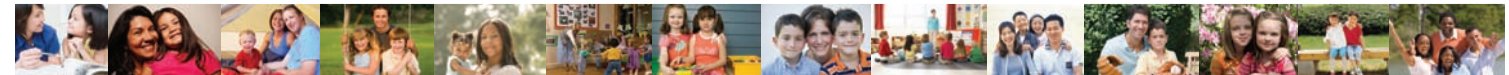


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WMFC and Gateway Celebrate 12 Year Partnership



WMFC Gateway Martial Arts Class

In 2002 Gateway Martial Arts approached the West Midland Family Center about the possibility of a partnership that would involve offering free adult and children's martial arts classes. Twelve years later that program, is staffed completely by volunteers, and is still going strong.

"The Gateway Fitness instructors are some of the most committed volunteers that WMFC has," commented Renee Allen, former Recreation Director. "Those folks are here every Tuesday evening at 6:00 p.m. year round, rain or shine, volunteering their time, teaching

martial arts **FREE** of charge, to both adults and children. When Brian McNeil approached me about a potential partnership," added Allen, "I never dreamed that it would work out in the amazing way that it has. Without a doubt the most instrumental person in making our partnership a success has been Carolyn Langlois," explained Allen. "Since the beginning, the classes at WMFC have been under her leadership."

In 2002, Langlois was a First Degree Black Belt. Since then, she has progressed through the ranks of black belt to achieve her Fifth Degree Black

Belt ranking in October 2012. There are many steps to earning a Fifth Degree Black Belt. Part of the requirements includes teaching classes for at least five years and having trained at least five students to a First Degree Black Belt level. As a result of Carolyn's commitment to the WMFC program, she easily met both requirements. In her years at WMFC,

Langlois has had five students earn a First Degree Black Belt; three of which went on to earn a Second Degree Black Belt. One of Langlois's former black belt students now leads his own classes in Sanford. For information about Gateway Martial Arts classes please contact Stacey Urbani at 989-832-3256 or see the Gateway Martial Arts website at: www.gatewaymartialarts.com/



Carolyn Langlois,
 Dedicated
 Volunteer



Snack time is learning time!

Quick Action Leads to New Opportunity

For years the West Midland Family Center (WMFC) and Chippewa Nature Center (CNC) partnered to support a Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) preschool class at CNC. WMFC wrote the original GSRP grant helping to establish the CNC classroom. In the spring of 2012, given an opportunity to write a grant independent of WMFC, CNC jumped at the chance. This was a strategic move benefitting Midland's entire early childhood community. CNC's grant award to fund an additional 18 children meant the original WMFC grant funds could be reverted from CNC back on site to WMFC. That's when the fun began! It all happened so quickly. In mid-August 2012, WMFC staff learned that CNC

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Zacharias Will be Missed

..... by Greg Dorrien, Executive Director

West Midland Family Center lost a dear friend on January 24, 2013. Winfred (Win) Zacharias served on the WMFC Board of Directors or as an **advisor** to that board for 27 years. Win helped me understand what it took to be thought of as a **professional**. He helped me develop presentation skills, showed me how to construct a narrative so that others would want to join in our cause, and always had a **kind** word when things seemed rough.

Win was there to help right from the beginning, at the former Greendale School which served as WMFC's first home. That was where Phyllis Breedlove, founding Executive Director, laid the ground-work for the WMFC we know today. However, over time it became apparent to Phyllis that WMFC had outgrown the old school, change was needed. Enter Win to help Phyllis take that next step toward the future. He was **instrumental** in the building project resulting in the construction of the new WMFC facility. Win joined the Board

of Directors in 1986 and became **President** of the board one year later. That's when he started calling in his fellow retirees of The Dow



Win Zacharias,
 Always ready with a smile!

Chemical Company (Orrin Barrett, Ed Wall, Dick Sinclair, and Tom Sinclair). Working with Steven Barstow (Building Committee Chair) the team quickly secured pledges of \$1.8 million from the five biggest foundations in Midland to build the 'new' 20,000 square foot West Midland Family Center. Win and his team also raised several hundred thousand dollars from smaller foundations, service clubs, businesses and churches for furnishings. We moved into

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The old Greendale School...home to WMFC for 19 years

QUICK ACTION LEADS TO NEW OPPORTUNITY...Continued from page 1

had received their preschool grant, meaning WMFC would be able to add another preschool classroom. This propelled WMFC preschool staff members into high gear. They had to hire a teacher and assistants while seeking 18 more four-year-old children not already in preschool.



Tiffany Gracias,
Preschool Teacher

Teacher Tiffany Gracias started her new job at WMFC one week prior to the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. In reflecting back to that time, Gracías said, “It was hectic, but the WMFC staff really pitched in to get things done. One Saturday, as my husband and I were setting up the classroom, a maintenance staff member was in my room waxing the floor. Other preschool staff members took on additional chores so maintenance staff could paint my classroom. It was remarkable how the staff rallied to make it happen. When it was all said and done we were good to go as scheduled.”

Another exciting twist came when the WMFC staff learned that another Midland GSRP had not enrolled to capacity. This situation left GSRP funding available and provided WMFC with the opportunity to expand the *new half-day* program into a *full-day* program. Again, Mrs. Gracías was presented with a last minute game changer, and again she and the rest of the preschool staff were up to the task of changing directions on a moment’s notice. “We talked to the parents and all but two families were excited about the full-day class,” explained Gracías, “We allowed those parents to keep their children on a half-day schedule. However, they soon saw the benefits of the full-day class, and within a month, both children were staying all day!

“This program has been great for the kids,” continued Gracías, “They are all doing very well. Their families are engaged and enjoying all the benefits that come from a WMFC preschool experience.” The new class provides so much more than just preschool to the families and children involved. Families with preschool students have access to a

well-established parent education and support network, a food pantry, clothing closet and counseling. They can also take advantage of the many family activities that WMFC hosts. **All Free of Charge!**

Although it was challenging to implement a last minute program, doing so not only positively effects today’s preschoolers and their families, but also those to come. A wise person once said, “when good fortune comes your way ...be prepared to do the work to make it happen.” The smiling faces of the children that fill the hallways is a daily reminder that the time and energy required to rise to a challenge is well worth the effort!



Associate Preschool
Teacher, Jen Germain

Zacharias Will be Missed ...Continued from page 1

the new facility in 1989. Most volunteers would have considered their work done -*Win was just getting started!*

As a man of **integrity, dedication** and **compassion** Win found favor with foundation personnel. Their belief in Win was affirmed when they learned the building project had finished on time, UNDER budget and that their unspent share would be returned to them promptly, ‘Unless you would rather we keep the funds and dedicate them to establish a new Facility Endowment fund.’ Each foundation stated that “No non-profit organization had ever offered to return unspent building funds.” They were pleased to have unspent funds used to start a Facility Endowment fund. What has this meant for our facil-

ity? For one thing, others have followed this lead and today the Facility Endowment has a balance of over \$435,000. In the past 24 years we have used approximately \$810,000 to maintain our facility keeping our building in a ‘like new’ condition. WMFC has never returned to the foundations or United Way for facility replacement needs because of Win’s **vision** to get a facility fund started...and due to the generosity of all those who have contributed in support of that fund.

By 2001, Win passed the Presidential torch to Bob Dostal, another great Dow Chemical Company retiree and long-time friend of Win’s. Bob Dostal has said on many occasions that the “**first class**” way Win handled the original building project made the 16,000 square

foot expansion project (which fell under Bob’s authority) a whole lot easier for everyone to support.

Giving - Another of Win’s strengths! Win would never ask someone to help without first having made his own contribution. Win was the **driving force** in creating the WMFC Legacy Society whose members have made a pledge to help WMFC through their will or life insurance policy. Win felt it was important to recognize those that were no longer with us because doing so assures that no one will forget them and their generosity.

You will always be remembered Win.

Hundreds in WMFC Community Helped Over the Holidays



Renee Young,
Family Services Director

Renee Young has noticed distinct differences between Holiday 2012 and previous years in the manner that donors were able to give and the requests made by individuals in need. For instance, according to Young “Many adults requested basic need items rather than individual gifts. Instead of asking for a DVD or clothes they asked for food, gas or help with heat.” “Also,” continued Young, “in 2012 the individuals who filled the green Sharing Tree tags

tended to give more than was requested. For example, the person filling the tag would not only purchase the first choice gift, but they often purchased the second choice gift as well. Another example we found quite often was when a mom requested a \$25.00 gift card, the person who filled the request would give the mom a \$50.00 gift card.”

At WMFC **808 individuals** were assisted over Holiday Season 2012, in the following ways:

- **Over 600 individuals** at WMFC were provided a gift through Sharing Tree.
- **\$38,556** is the estimated value of Sharing Tree gifts that were distributed in 2012 to WMFC families.
- **96 individuals or 22 families** were adopted by area families, service clubs, churches, and businesses.
- **113 individuals or 27 families** were provided Christmas gifts. Dow College Opportunity Program students shopped for them with donations given to WMFC for holiday help.
- **30 families** were provided with freshly cut Christmas trees.

• **3 families** were assisted with their rent, propane, water or electric bills.

• **40 families** were provided a holiday food basket. These baskets provided lunch and breakfast for their children over the holiday week as well as a nice meal for Christmas.

• **20 students** at the Academic and Career Education Academy were helped with food for the holiday break.

• **50 children** were provided with new winter coats, boots, gloves, hats and mittens.

Fulfilling Basic Needs took priority Things such as food, gas cards, and personal items were in high demand this Christmas season. For many reasons we saw greater urgency for essentials.

“The generosity demonstrated shows how great Midland County residents are about helping others in need,” exclaimed Young, “Because of their generosity, I am proud to say that, with all the donations we received, **NO CHILD** whose parent came through our doors requesting help for Christmas, went without,” concluded Young.

679 Volunteers Donate 13,641 Hours in 2012



Kurt Faust & Junior League member
Sara Voss volunteering in the kitchen

Volunteers are the heartbeat of West Midland Family Center. Without those who, year after year, donate their time, energy and talents, it would be impossible for WMFC to continue to achieve its mission of “enhancing the quality of life for area residents.”

This year, WMFC volunteers came from all walks of life. They were parents, teens, interns, students, senior citizens, community leaders and board members. They came from organizations such as the Saginaw Valley State University Nursing Students, WMFC Bingo Auxiliary, The Junior League of Saginaw Valley, Midland Missionary Youth, and the Friends of Whispering Pines. 679 volunteers linked arms with WMFC staff to serve those in need in west Midland County. In total, this dedicated group of volunteers gave 13,641 hours of their time to help further the mission of WMFC. According to Gail Crosby, Connect and Serve Coordinator, “The community of volunteers continues to

lend its support. With so many needs in our area, we are extremely thankful for the unending devotion of our volun-



Gail Crosby,
Connect and Serve
Coordinator

teers. Day in and day out, our volunteers provide help and support in every area of our organization. **We could not do what we do** without the dedication of our amazing volunteers.”