

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER'S **FAMILY FOCUS**

NEWS FROM WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER

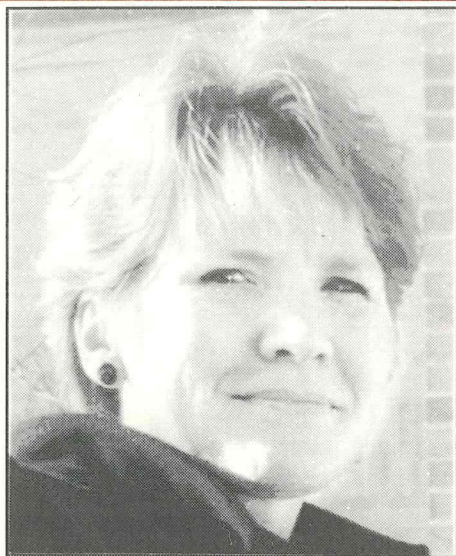


Vol. 6, Number 1

4011 West Isabella Road, Shepherd, Michigan 48883

832-3256

Winter, 1995



Gail Crosby

Crosby New Director of WMFC Programs

Gail Crosby, a veteran of the West Midland Family Center, was named its new director of programs Dec. 2.

She has been a staff person at the center for more than six years and has been responsible for many projects and programs during that time.

Crosby originally joined our staff in October 1988 as a preschool aide and has held several positions since then, including receptionist, youth supervisor and Bookworm Buddies program coordinator. Since 1990, Crosby has been the center's child and family programs director.

During this time, Crosby has been instrumental in developing the highly successful West Midland Preschool. She always has been a highly motivated and dedicated member of our staff and is looking forward to the responsibilities of her new position.

(See "Crosby," page 4)

Winter Programs

Inside the Winter, 1995 West Midland Family Center newsletter is a four-page pullout section outlining youth, adult, community and senior activities through April.

Bob Dostal New WMFC President

Robert L. (Bob) Dostal has been elected president of West Midland Family Center. Dostal, who has been a member of the Board of Directors for the past year, and earlier an active volunteer, replaces Ralph E. Wirtz, who is stepping down after two terms as president.

Officers re-elected for 1995 include: Joe Dufort, vice president; Jim Burlingame, secretary and Dick Furlow, treasurer.

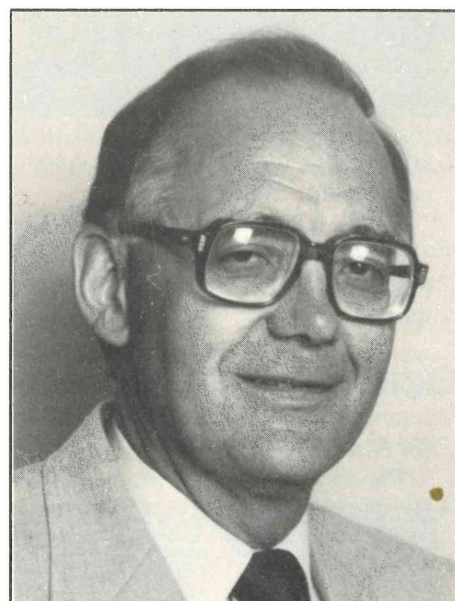
Elected to second terms as directors were Burlingame, Furlow, Linda Kellogg and Wirtz (See page 2 for a list of officers and directors.)

Committee assignments and chairpersons will be announced at a later date.

Dostal retired from The Dow Chemical Co. in 1993 after a distinguished 38-year career. For four years prior to his retirement, he served as Corporate Director of Safety, Environmental Affairs, Security and Loss Prevention.

Previous positions include: Manufacturing Technical Director, U.S. Area Operations; General Manager, Western Division; Director, Health and Environmental Science Laboratory and several positions in manufacturing in the Michigan Division from 1955-1980.

Commenting on his election, Dostal said: "When I retired in 1993, I explored several venues for volunteer work where I could use my experience, both professional and personal ... and WMFC seemed to be a perfect fit. It's a great opportunity to



Bob Dostal

work with young people and, hopefully, expand their horizons and their opportunities. This, of course, means working with entire families.

"While my background in industry should prove valuable, personal experience should prove even more beneficial. Mary Ann, my wife of 42 years, and I have eight children and 11 grandchildren, with the youngest twins still in college. I really believe I know something about working

See, Dostal, page 2

Dow Foundation Honors Challenge Pledge

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation honored the first half of their \$600,000 Challenge Grant pledge to the West Midland Family Center Programs Endowment Fund by donating 4,400 shares of Dow Chemical Co. stock on Dec. 30.

The stock had a value of \$300,025 at the close of the business day.

Executive Director Greg Dorrien was very pleased to receive the first half of the pledge one year ahead of schedule. "For 1995 it will mean that we will be able to

work individually with at-risk youth and families in distress," Dorrien said.

He also complimented former board president Win Zacharias, who has worked tirelessly on the WMFC Fundraising Committee to help meet the Dow Foundation challenge.

An endowment fund is one in which the original value of the gift is never spent. It is held permanently and invested. The earnings from the fund are used to provide for program activities annually.

See Page 2 for list of donors

WMFC Library Owes a Lot to Volunteers, Donations

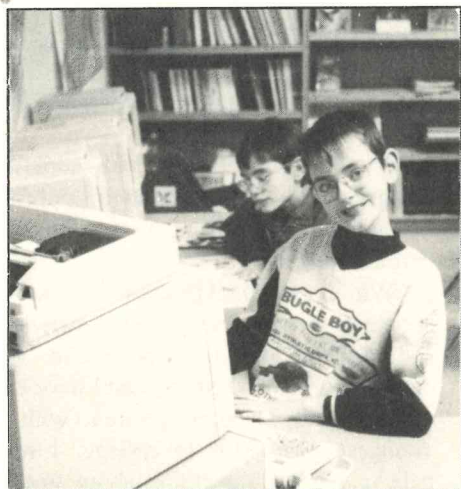
West Midland Family Center has a wonderful library filled with resources for all age groups. It has more than 3,000 titles ranging from best-selling fiction to self-help reference books.

Now, the library is mostly used by elementary-age children, but there is something for everyone.

We have general interest material suitable for seniors now that the long winter evenings have begun. The library has a large collection of books for parents to share with young children, as well as non-fiction and reference material for youth of all ages for homework. Also, computers are available free.

Recent additions include a collection of educational videos and cartoons that parents can sign out for their children. The library subscribes to several periodicals which will be of interest to readers of all ages, including National Geographic, International Wildlife, Sports Illustrated for Kids and Smithsonian World.

The WMFC library is maintained by the



Brothers Jeff and Steve Allen enjoy the computers.

kindness of an endowment fund from the late Richard Sinclair, donations from the Grace A. Dow Library and public contributions.

As always, resources are limited, and donated books, supplies, computer equipment and volunteers are always welcome.

The collection has been managed for the past two years by volunteer librarian Georgia Handt. Georgia is a retired Grace A. Dow librarian and an invaluable resource for the library who always is willing to suggest appropriate reading material.



Margaret Knadler enjoys the children of the West Midland Preschool, and they in turn enjoy having Margaret as a special volunteer.

Margaret — A Cherished WMFC Volunteer

For the past three months, West Midland Preschool has been blessed by the presence of a very special volunteer.

Margaret Knadler is a developmentally disabled volunteer whose visits to the morning Preschool every Wednesday are a highlight for both her and the children. Arnold Center facilitator Kris Gibson helps Margaret in her task.

In the past few months, Margaret has participated in many of the regular activities that our children enjoy, including small-group play times, circle time, sing alongs and the Christmas party.

Margaret says she looks forward to her visits. She said she "really likes being around the little ones."

Preschool Teacher Elaine Fabinski says that Margaret loves the children and has

become a real asset to the staff. Elaine says that the children are always very comfortable around her. Margaret has shown the children the specially designed van that she travels in, and has demonstrated the van's electronic ramp for her wheelchair. Margaret has helped the children become very accepting and comfortable around people with physical and mental challenges. In fact, Margaret's visits have been so well received that a second Arnold Center volunteer will visit the afternoon Preschool class in January.

West Midland Family Center Board of Directors

President.....	Bob Dostal
V. President.....	Joe Dufort
Secretary.....	Jim Burlingame
Treasurer.....	Dick Furlow
Directors.....	Orrin Barrett
	Chuck Infante
	Linda Kellogg
	Jim LaBean
	Joe Vanderkelen
	Ralph E. Wirtz
	Sue Thumma
Legal advisor.....	Tom Misner

Challenge Grant Donations

Mrs. Dorothy Arbury.....	\$206,900
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.....	40,000
Vada B. Dow Trust.....	30,000
Barstow Foundation.....	25,000
Herbert & Junia Doan Foundation.....	3,000
Comerica Bank.....	1,000
Consumers Power Co.....	1,000
Win Zacharias.....	1,000
Anonymous gift.....	200

Dostal ...

Continued from page 1

with kids."

Dostal also expressed a desire to focus on improving programs and participation for area senior citizens and development of a closer working relationship with the Council on Aging. "I guess I qualify here, too, because I am one."

Staff

Executive Director.....	Greg Dorrien
Program Director.....	Gail Crosby
Office Manager.....	Kahren O'Brien
Maintenance Supervisor.....	Gerald Burkett
Youth & Teen Prog.....	Jennifer Holcomb
EAL Director.....	Tracy Meister
Night Supervisor.....	Diane Dauer
Preschool teacher.....	Elaine Fabinski
Receptionist.....	Judy Wirtz

The Sharing Tree ... the Spirit of Giving Alive and Well

The generosity of Midland County residents has shone through again this year to make sure that everyone's Christmas tree had presents under it. As in past years, the Sharing Tree program has had a huge impact on making Christmas a happier time for those less fortunate.

More than 850 presents valued at more than \$17,000 have been distributed through WMFC alone this year as part of the Sharing Tree program. This highly successful program is run by the Voluntary Action Center, a United Way agency. The increased number of donations have meant that the Center has been able to distribute over a third more gifts than last year.

This year, West Midland residents who missed the Sharing Tree deadline were able to benefit from the kindness of numerous individuals, churches, businesses and



The presents, 850 of them, to be distributed filled the dining room. The voluntary Action Center, a United Way agency, coordinates the Share Tree program.

organizations.

We helped about forty families who otherwise would have slipped through the cracks. Not only were we able to get them

presents, in some cases we even provided the tree to put them under thanks to generous donations of Christmas trees by the Midland Jaycees and Target.

West Midland Family Center Helps Build Strong Families

As any parent will tell you, raising a young child can be an extremely rewarding experience. However, the challenges of parenthood can also be a little overwhelming.

At West Midland, young parents who would like a helping hand can turn to a support group here. For the past three years, Lois Burton has coordinated the Building Strong Families program. She provides in-home support for new parents and parents of preschool-aged children, as well as operating three weekly support groups for parents at the center.

Lois is presently providing support for 31 local families. "The program can be adapted to meet the needs of each individual family," says Burton. Services the program can provide include: parenting skills, stress management and referrals. Many of

the participants are single parents who enjoy having an avenue to share ideas and concerns with others in similar situations. Lois says "some parents just need somewhere to turn and someone to show them what services are available to them."

Some participants join for a short period during a particularly difficult time. Others have had long-term issues to deal with and have worked through the program to overcome a variety of difficulties.

Some parents have benefited from the stress and time-management sessions, which have helped to improve their relationships with their spouses. Occasionally, a participant may need more intensive help. Lois recalls one parent who was unemployed and in an abusive relationship when she entered the program. Now she is raising successfully her

children alone while attending college full time. Lois says "when this parent first joined the program I met with her three times a week. Now we just touch base once every couple of months."

Lois will provide home visit support for a parent if necessary, or participants can attend one of three weekly support group meetings — Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. and Thursdays from 9:15 to 11:15 a.m. and 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. These support-group sessions include presentations on such topics as child discipline and single parenting as well as providing time for discussion.

If you are interested in participating in the Building Strong Families, contact Lois Burton at 832-3256. She also can provide training for anyone interested in volunteering with participating families.

Calendar of Events

January 25.....	Meijer Community Party	March 24	Just Do It "Mystery Night"
January 25.....	Health Department Immunizations	March 27-31	Spring Break Week
February	Just Do It "SweetHeart Dance"	April 8	WM Preschool Open House
February 14	6th Annual All Star Basketball Game	April 9	WMFC Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
February 17	Family Day	April 14	Good Friday (Building Closed)
February 22	Health Department Immunizations	April 15	Spring "Egg"Stravaganza
March 11	Sunrise Optimist's Bowling Challenge	April 16	Easter (Building Closed)
March 17	Family Day	April 20	April Talent Fest
March 17	St. Patrick's Day Dinner	April 22	Teens In Training Open House
March 22	Health Department Immunizations	April 26	Health Department Immunizations

WMFC a Busy Place for the Truly 'Young at Heart'

West Midland Family Center has much to offer seniors who wish to maintain an active lifestyle. From fitness to reading to social activities, WMFC has something for everyone over the age of 60.

Every weekday at noon, the Midland County Council on Aging provides a wonderfully nutritious meal in the dining room. The Greendale Happy Diners are a diverse group who enjoy a variety of activities as well as the delicious food. In the past, noon-time activities such as bingo, card tournaments, bus trips, live entertainment and even a karaoke afternoon are enjoyed.

Recently the Diners hosted the preschool for Grandparents' Day. Thirteen of the Preschool children joined their grandparents and teachers in a fun-filled lunchtime.

For those who feel the need to exercise early, WMFC offers free access to our fitness room between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. each day. The equipment is easy to use and helps increase flexibility and muscle tone.

For those who prefer to chat and exercise, WMFC offers the morning Walking Club between 8:30 and 11 a.m. The gym is reserved for walkers who can enjoy a daily stroll in the cozy environment while meeting old and new friends or listening to tunes. With the Walking Club, winter snow and cold are no excuse for our active seniors.

When they have completed their morning fitness regime and enjoyed their midday meal, West Midland seniors can often be found browsing through our library. It offers many books and magazines, which are perfect for the long winter evenings or suitable for sharing with grandchildren.



Granddaughter Kristina Bennett enjoys Grandparents' Day with her grandparents' Mary and Russell McLean.

Finally, regular visitors often see tasks around the Center being cheerfully undertaken by a group of graying workers. WMFC benefits in many ways from the skills provided by many retiree volunteers — in the library, fitness room, bingo and on the board of directors. As with any non-

profit agency, WMFC couldn't operate without the talents of our wonderful volunteers.

On any given day, active seniors can be found participating in any of a dozen different activities, proving that WMFC is a very active place for youngsters of all ages.

Crosby New Programs Director...

(Continued from page 1)

Crosby feels that her biggest asset is her close ties to the West Midland Community. When asked what she sees as her biggest challenge, she responded: "I hope to promote a greater emphasis on generating programs that help strengthen ties within the family."

With Gail's influence, we all look forward

to some exciting changes around WMFC in the near future!

Gail replaces Lisa Panepento as director of programs. The Center said goodbye to Lisa when she accepted the position of athletic director with the St. Charles School District. All of us here at WMFC wish Lisa the best of luck with her future endeavors.



Non profit organization

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MIDLAND, MI
PERMIT #153

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER
4011 WEST ISABELLA ROAD
SHEPHERD, MICHIGAN 48863