

# FAMILY FOCUS

Enhancing the Quality of Life for Area Residents of All Ages



VOL. 6, NUMBER 4 • 4011 WEST ISABELLA ROAD, SHEPHERD, MICHIGAN 48883 • 832-3256 • WINTER, 1995-96

## A MESSAGE

### From Our President

As 1995 draws to a close we would like to commend the staff for a job well done. 1995 has seen a number of new personnel, new responsibilities, and new and enhanced programs. It has been a very successful year.



BOB DOSTAL

As we look ahead, mission of "enhancing the quality of life for area residents of all ages" has never been more of a challenge. Your Board of Directors is constantly looking to improve their effectiveness in helping the staff provide those services and facilities to satisfy the needs of the community.

The significant shift on the horizon regarding the government funding of programs foretells of changes we will have to make to maintain our effectiveness. We will have to reevaluate how we play our role in the effective utilization of tax dollars entrusted to us. This will be an exciting challenge.

The development of long range plans to ensure we have a strategy in place to satisfy the needs of the community from pre-school to seniors is a must. Your staff has devoted considerable effort to this task and the Board is now working with them on the feasibility. We welcome your input.

Thank you for all of the support and participation you have given us over the years.

**Bob Dostal, President**  
**Board of Directors, WMFC**

## Bingo Volunteers Do Great Things for WMFC



The WMFC Auxiliary helped fund the Center's new Bell Tower. Among those attending the dedication were, left to right, Phyllis Breedlove, Jim Burlingame, Laura Gayle Welch, Loren Warner and Judy Wirtz.

By **KAHREN O'BRIEN**  
Office Manager

West Midland Family Center's Bingo Committee elected a new chairperson in September. Gene Dauer, a long time Center volunteer and Bingo Committee member, stepped into the chairperson's position vacated by Don Warner. Gene has been an instrumental supporter of the Bingo Committee for some time and we are sure he will do a great job as chairperson.

The Center staff and volunteers would like to express their sincere thanks to Don for the fine job he has done in the last two year's as chairperson. Don will continue to support the Bingo by

volunteering once a month. At the present time, WMFC's Bingo Committee consists of Donna Hackett, Judy Heim, Larry Kokx, Carol Moore, Chuck Norisez, Kim Parrish and chairperson Gene Dauer. This dedicated group of volunteers continue to work together operating one of the most successful and well run bingo programs in the area. Attendance at the Saturday night event continues to be high.

WMFC's Bingo is sponsored by the West Midland Auxiliary, and uses its profits to support activities and programs at the Center. The first \$24,500 raised goes to support the Center's

**See GREAT THINGS, Page 3**

## Individual Contributions Make a BIG Difference in Programming

While West Midland Family Center relies heavily on the generous support of United Way donations, we still couldn't provide such a variety of great programs and services without the help of donations from individuals and private groups. These donations often allow us to introduce new or special activities and programs, or to purchase additional equipment for existing program areas.

Some recent examples of how Center users have benefited from such donations include: a \$2,500 gift from David and Marcia Barstow, which has allowed us to introduce the Class

Act" after school tutoring program. Remax Real Estate has donated funds to purchase a ping pong table for our youth activity room. First United Methodist Church, Kiwassee Kiwanis, Midland Kiwanis and Gordonville United Methodist Church have all contributed this year to our highly successful Educational Assistance Ltd. (EAL) program. EAL gives

support and tutoring for local teens throughout their high school careers and provides scholarships for program graduates who go on to college.

### SEE COMPLETE LISTING, PAGE 3

These are just a few of the many contributions that we have received from the members of our community this year. Regardless of the size of the gift, each donation helps to make our Center just a little more special. On behalf of all Center users we would like to thank the groups and individuals who have made contributions since January.

### Winter Programs

The special 6-page insert in this issue contains the complete schedule for Winter Programs. Please remove and retain for future reference.



# Increased Participation Projected in '96 for Building Strong Families

By GAIL CROSBY  
Director of Programs.

1995 has been a terrific year, but 1996 looks like it's going to be even more exciting for WMFC's Building Strong Families program. This program has been instrumental in improving and restoring many families in the western part of Midland County. Lois Burton, coordinator of the program is a person on the move. You may find her in a variety of roles ranging from sharing child raising ideas, to acting as an advocate in court for a parent in danger of losing custody of their children.

Lois is a special friend to many families, but especially to those who have no one else to turn to. She is the bridge between families in need and the community. This means helping parents make contact with doctors, schools, legal assistance, the Department of Social Services and a host of agencies ready to serve the needs of families. Often, Lois's role is to make a referral or assist in a first meeting between a parent and a service provider. However, some parents need encouragement and support in dealing with situations which are often intimidating or threatening for young and inexperienced parents. Lois is often able to act as a translator or intermediary between professionals such as doctors and lawyers and the parents she serves.

Raising children is a tough job for any parent, but when food is scarce or you cannot scrape enough together for rent, "good" parenting sometimes takes a back seat to survival. Building Strong Families and WMFC know that families have to take care of their basic needs before parenting issues can be addressed.

Building Strong Families offers four different Center based parenting programs and regular home visits. Child care, transportation and snacks are also a part of the program. B.S.F. is a beacon for those parents most in need in our community. However, one program, with even one very dedicated staff person can only do so much. As a community, we have opportunities to do much more. We can reach out to a neighbor in need: offer support to a young mother who just needs another adult to share experiences with, volunteer to help provide childcare, offer rides to the grocery store or the Center, or just stop by and talk to those you know are lonely. We can only become a healthy community if we are willing to help those most in need.

Despite the ongoing need in our community, there are several reasons to celebrate as 1996 approaches. First, more and more parents are accessing Lois and the education and service offered by her program. Second, the Children's

# What a Year – 1995 Will Be Hard to Top!!

By GREG DORRIEN  
Executive Director

What a year! 1995 has seen tremendous program growth which has been met enthusiastically by area residents. We've secured funding to take Lois Burton, our **Building Strong Families** Coordinator, from 13 hours a week to



full time. We'll now be serving approximately 75 families a year, up from 20, with child abuse prevention services delivered in the privacy of their own home. (See related story)

**Summer Youth Program** - Lots of great changes including:

**Transportation**, in conjunction with the Midland/Bullock Creek Adult Education Consortium, we provided rides to the Center and weekly field trips for over 1,700 youth participants thanks to the generous support of the Strosacker Foundation.

**Free Breakfast and Lunches** were made available to all area children this summer thanks to a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture. In total, WMFC served over 3,750 meals to children this summer.

**Computer Camp at Floyd Elementary School** was a very popular addition this summer. Our kids were able to access Floyd's state of the art computer lab during Technology Week. As a result of this summer's success, we are going to be adding a weeknight computer program for families at Floyd starting in 1996. WMFC is able to offer both programs thanks to the support of Floyd's Principal, Jim Anderson and the school's Computer Lab Supervisor Nicki Reinke.

**Chippewa Nature Center** brought their excellent outdoor education program to our Center for a week this August. This was a wonderful addition to our summer program and was made possible through the hard work of Susan Abbott-Schmidt and her CNC staff.

**Teens In Training (T'NT)** leader Jennifer Holcomb has gone from directing this teen leadership group as a summer only program to

a year round-program. The T'NT program aggressively recruits teens to volunteer their time at the Center and in the community. The program's participants help other youth and assist Center staff in the delivery of youth activities. The program's ultimate objectives are to develop youth self-reliance and self-esteem.

As you can see the Center is constantly improving its services and not at the expense of our other fine programs. At the same time we want to hear your ideas for program improvements. 1995 may be a hard one to top,

## WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President .....Bob Dostal  
Vice President.....Joe Dufort  
Secretary .....Jim Burlingame  
Treasurer.....Dick Furlow  
Directors: Jim Anderson, Chuck Infante, Linda Kellogg, Jim LaBean, Sue Thumma, Joe Vanderkelen, Ralph E. Wirtz.  
Legal Advisor.....Tom Misner

### STAFF

Executive Director .....Greg Dorrien  
Program Director.....Gail Crosby  
Office Manager.....Kahren O'Brien  
New Initiatives .....Alan Oman  
Teen Programs .....Jennifer Holcomb  
Youth Programs.....Wyndy Johnson  
EAL Director.....Tracy Meister  
Preschool Teacher.....Elaine Fabinski  
BSF Coordinator .....Lois Burton  
BSF Assistant .....Kathy Boulis  
Night Supervisor .....Diane Dauer  
Seniors Coordinator .....Susan Wells  
Maintenance Staff.....Barry Lenski  
Preschool Aides .....Barb Simons  
Ginger Yarch  
Receptionists.....Diane DeMott  
Kathy Roberts  
Barb Simons

### YOUTH STAFF

Bree Burton, Becky Campbell, Sherry Farison, Rhonda Lefler, Rich Little, Linda Nieman, Janet Parks, Renee Shaugher, Charlie Wilkins.

### T'NT JR. STAFF

Steven Allen, Annette Bird, Jessica Booth, Christal Boyd, Maria Burnett, Tana Durham, Jason Holmes, Jim Kowalski, Josh Lee, Tasha Norris, Jessica Parks, Amber Phillips, Angela Phillips, Ashley Phillips, Melinda Ryckman, Tanya Sersaw, Yolanda Sersaw, Kellee Shirely, Janeen Simons, Kelley Smith, Vicki Starks, Joy Thompson, Chandra Tolman, Ken Walter, Ann Webster.

Trust Fund and the Midland Child Protection Council have each contributed funds to the program which has allowed the Center to increase Lois's time in the program from 13 hours per week to 35. Finally, we see more and more signs in our community of individuals and families reaching out to support one another. This is perhaps the best reason to celebrate in the new year.

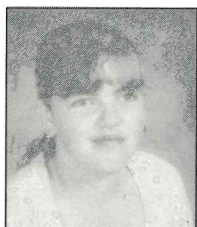
If you are interested in being part of the Building Strong Families Program, either as a participant or as a volunteer, please contact the Center and ask for Lois.



# Teen Volunteers Perform Vital Role at West Midland

By JESSICA BOOTH

Teens In Training (T'NT) is a program for students in grades 6 through 12. The program is divided into two groups, Junior T'NT for grades 6 through 8 and Senior T'NT for grades 9 through 12. Both groups do volunteer activities and take part in trainings at the Center but Juniors have some different volunteer jobs from Seniors. The same is expected from all of them though: to give all they've got and nothing less.



JESSICA BOOTH

All T'NT members volunteer at least 10 hours every month. There are plenty of jobs that need to be done so there is no problem getting your 10 hours in. T'NT members get credit for every hour volunteered. These credits can be used by members for field trips, center activities, trainings such as First Aid, CPR, etc.

T'NT has an Executive Committee made up of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Elections were held on the first Friday of October. They will be held every year on that date. The results of our first election were:

**President: Kelley Smith**

**Vice President: Maria Burnett**

**Secretary: Vicki Starks**

**Treasurer: Jessica Booth**

Right now there are several regular volunteer jobs that T'NT can do: Club Assistant, Class Act Helper, Fabulous Friday Helper, Van Cleaner, Teen Night Front Desk Clerk, Teen Night D.J., Teen Night Security, Gym Helper and Activity Room and Concessions Helper. There are also many other odd jobs that we can do around the Center.

You have just read the basic idea of what T'NT is like. We volunteer, we have fun, and most of all we like it. Not only does volunteering help in leadership skills but it also looks good on college and job applications.

## GREAT THINGS

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youth programs. Additional support provided by the Auxiliary finances equipment or projects that the Center would not normally be able to fund. Next time you are at the Center, take a look at some of the special projects that our Auxiliary have helped fund. These include: The new Bell Tower (see picture), part of the Arbory/Breedlove Garden, support for the Building Strong Families program, the cargo net and climbing ropes in the gym and numerous items for our children and youth programs. We all owe them our sincerest gratitude.



Beasts and Beauties, all decked out for Hallowe'en, were; left to right: Ann Webster, Tim Brooks, Kelley Smith, Jennifer Holcomb, Joy Thompson, Jim Kowalski and Chandra Tolman.

## 1995 Donations Through October

Donor:	Amount:	Program Area:
Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Found.	\$300,025	Program Endowment Fund
United Way of Midland County	152,000	Program Operations
State of Michigan	108,000	At Risk Preschool
Midland Foundation	24,185	EAL Program
Bastow Foundation	22,000	Program Endowment Fund
Children's Trust Fund	13,253	Building Strong Families
Dow Chemical	10,000	Unrestricted
Rollin Gerstacker Foundation	10,000	Program Endowment Fund
Alden and Vada Dow Foundation	10,000	Program Endowment Fund
United States Dept. of Agriculture	7,241	Summer Food Program
Dow Corning	5,000	EAL Program
Hudson's	4,500	Teens In Training
Midland Child Protection Council	3,200	Building Strong Families
Charles Strosacker Foundation	2,500	Unrestricted
David and Marcia Barstow	2,500	Class Act Tutoring Program
Sunrise Optimists	2,000	Summer Program
Charles Strosacker Foundation	1,698	Summer Transportation
Snow Machines	1,500	Building Strong Families
Anonymous Donor	1,000	Bell Tower
West Midland Auxiliary	1,000	Bell Tower
Mid-State Substance Abuse	1,000	Substance Abuse Education
Comerica Bank	1,000	Program Endowment Fund
Bob Keil	1,000	Program Endowment Fund
Win Zacharias	1,000	Program Endowment Fund
Midland County	805	Tobacco Education
Remax Real Estate	658	Ping Pong Table
1st. United Methodist Church	500	Unrestricted
Kiwasee Kiwanis	500	EAL-Tutoring
Midland Kiwanis	500	EAL
Midland Kiwanis	250	Youth Programs
Faith United Methodist Church	300	EAL-Summer Trips
Chuck Infante	200	Unrestricted
Dr. & Mrs. Hale	150	Summer Programs
Gordonville United Methodist Church	100	EAL-Summer Trips
Wilbur & Elaine McLaren	100	Unrestricted
TOPS	100	Youth Programs
Alan Oman	75	Unrestricted
Bay Valley Oil	50	Summer Program Field Trips
Capital Area United Way	44	Unrestricted
Vernon Harry	45	Senior's Programs
Chapter EPO Sisterhood	25	Unrestricted
Preschool Donors	625	Preschool Program
Misc. Donors Under \$25	740	Unrestricted



# Every Day a Busy Day at WMFC for Greendale Happy Diners

By JUDY WIRTZ  
Greendale Site Director  
Midland County Council on Aging

The Greendale Happy Diners would like to invite everyone that is 60 years old or older, or who is the spouse of someone over 60 to join us for a great meal and fellowship. Meals for senior citizens are on a suggested donation scale with the average donation being \$1.25. Those under 60 are welcome to enjoy the meals as well at a cost of \$4.00. Get a group of friends together and join us weekdays at West Midland Family Center. You can call in your reservations by phoning 832-8683.

In addition to great food and good friends, we have monthly activities which are fun for everyone. These include:

The Dime-A-Dip fundraiser. You can bring a dessert or come in and try a new one. Ten cents a serving is not a bad price. Money raised from the fundraiser goes to help families in need during the holidays, to purchase items for the kitchen and to help fund special events activities.

Birthdays and Anniversaries are celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month -we have cake and ice cream. Each person that is celebrating a birthday or anniversary will receive a special gift. Make sure you join us during our celebration. "Aged to Perfection" is our motto!

We have Morning Movies on the first and third Friday of the month. The movies we run are the older classics and western music videos. Our movies start at 10:30am, so get your coffee and settle in for a good show.

As well as social programs, we also have health related programs put on by Midland County Health Department, the Visiting Nurses Support Services and West Midland Family Center. The Health Department holds a Blood Pressure Clinic on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 9am-Noon. This is a walk in program; no appointment is necessary.

A Footcare Clinic is offered from 9am-noon on the fourth Thursday of every month. This valuable program is provided by the Visiting Nurses Support Services and an appointment can be made by calling 832-8683. There is a fee for this program.

Every morning seniors are welcome to use the WMFC fitness room from 9:30-11:30am at no cost. In addition, every Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:30am, the Center's Susan Wells leads an armchair aerobics class. Susan also organizes daily games, cards, crafts and a walking club for seniors. Come out and meet Susan, get involved in planned activities or just share a morning coffee with her.

We normally have Music on Tuesdays which starts at 11am. Some of our regular entertainers include: "Mr. 'Z'" (Ron Zitta); "German Boy" (Gabe Dirk); A trio with Scottie MacLaren, Bill Gray and Bob Evans; "Wild Bill" Bill Pickens; Murel Tedham and Bob Tatu; and the "Happy Fellars" - Vernon Harry and Darryl



Griggs. New musicians are always welcome.

We also have a variety of Speakers who come out to our site. If you have any ideas about topics you would like to hear about or if you would like to make a presentation to our "Diners" call Judy at 832-8683.

In addition to our regular lunch program, we also hold a number of Special Events. These include: Evening Meals, which are a special evening meal with music and lighting to dance by, and the atmosphere is great! We try to hold an evening meal around most holidays. Sunday Dinners are held throughout the Winter months on the first Sunday of the month. Please make reservations ahead of time for the 1:00pm Sunday meal service.

In January, February and March we will be sending a special invitation to seniors living in the neighboring townships to join us for special Open House Weeks. The Greendale Happy Diners will host a different group each month.

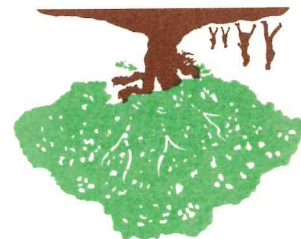
In January, we will be inviting Lee Township residents for the week of January 15-19. During the week of February 12-16 we will host Mt. Haley township residents and March 11-15 will be the turn for seniors in Greendale township. Watch for your invitations.

Something new for our site this year will be a monthly newsletter. This will provide the latest in happenings for all seniors as well as a calendar of upcoming activities. Call Judy to reserve your very own copy.

As you can see, WMFC hosts a great variety of seniors activities each month thanks to the fantastic work of the Diners themselves and the Council On Aging Staff. If you are interested in joining us for the fun and excitement, just drop by the Center or give Judy a call.

*Nothing is more embarrassing than watching the boss do something you told him couldn't be done.*

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