

# WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER'S

# Family

# F



# CUS

## SPECIAL DEDICATION EDITION

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 2 • 4011 W. Isabella Road • Shepherd, MI 48883 • (989) 832-3256 • June 21, 2001

## JUNE 21, 2001 – PHASE II OF A DREAM COME TRUE!



PHOTO BY JAN-MICHAEL STUMP

The people who made it happen. Major benefactors dedicate "Phase II of a Dream Come True." From the left: Joy Hutchison, The Dow Chemical Company Foundation; Esther Gerstacker, The Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation; Ranny Riecker, The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation; and Gene Yehle, The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation. Ann DeBoer, The Dow Corning Foundation, was unable to attend.

West Midland Family Center (WMFC) marked another significant milestone June 21 with ceremonies to celebrate the completion of an extensive expansion project. The \$2.8 million addition will nearly double the physical size of the Center.

### Benefactors

WMFC President Win Zacharias paid tribute to the major benefactors who made both the 12 year-old "current" building and the spectacular addition possible. "Without their commitment and contributions, our vision could never have become a reality... and we are eternally grateful."

Benefactors, patrons and the entire community joined in the celebration — "Cowboy Boots and Bathing Suits" — to commemorate the completion of the expansion project. The grounds were a flurry of activity with live bands, a Fife and Drum Corp, a poolside party, many games, a moon walk, a dunk tank...and master grill chefs serving all-American fare. Tours of the new facility were also conducted.

### Expansion

Included in the expansion are two large, colorful preschool rooms, a youth activity room, a

library, second gymnasium, a computer lab, renovated office space and an outdoor swimming pool. The additional space will allow WMFC to augment its well-established programs and offer new programs as well. For the first time, All-Day Preschool will be an option and expanded wrap around services will be available for families of preschool children, which will provide childcare options for siblings.

New preschool rooms open the way to move the preschool programs out of the existing childcare wing opening this entire wing for use by the childcare program. The addition of an activity room for younger children makes the "old" activity room available exclusively for teens, many of whom are actively involved in the renovation of that room.

The computer lab brings obvious benefits for the community. West Midland Childcare, Youth and Teen programs will use the lab to expand upon the educational components of their programs. Individuals without computer skills will be encouraged to learn new skills together. For many individuals who do not have a computer at home, the computer lab will be their connection

to all that computers and the Internet have to offer.

A second gymnasium will provide greater flexibility for scheduling activities and allow more programs to be offered. *And the pool!!!* What an outstanding addition! WMFC staff members have planned a summer of activities "drenched in" entertainment for kids of all ages. (See special Pool Program insert for details).

WMFC has made huge strides since 1974 when the West Midland Community Center was established. Who could have anticipated what the future held from its modest beginnings in a little red schoolhouse.

### Little Red Schoolhouse

Imagine a school building filled with children, learning, laughing, and playing, an older school building, circa 1931. Boys are playing baseball, girls are jumping rope, there are marble games and mumble-peg on the playground, and McGuffey's Readers at each desk. Money from the Oil City oil-boom has served to fund this school building for the area's children. Children go through this building and move on to Shepherd High School. In 1964, when Shepherd schools could no longer accept the children, this

See DEDICATION, Page 10

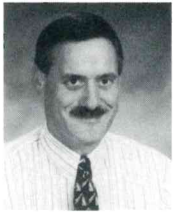


## ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS HONORED

### What Makes West Midland Family Center Go... PEOPLE!

West Midland Family Center recognizes all its many volunteers at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Volunteers are the cornerstone of what makes WMFC the special place it is.

Each year, three individuals are singled out for special recognition. Honorees for 2000 are: Jim Anderson, Phyllis Breedlove Friend of the Center; Judy Wirtz, Orrin Barrett Volunteer of the Year; and Dean Cooper, Stephen Barstow Youth Volunteer of the year.



**Jim Anderson**

Jim Anderson is a dedicated member and Vice President of the Board of Directors, and the driving force behind the collaboration between Bullock Creek Schools and West Midland Family Center. As principal of Floyd Elementary School for the past seven years, Jim has clearly demonstrated his support of WMFC's mission. It was with Jim's blessing that WMFC was able to "take over" Floyd school for two summers for the Summer Program. Jim's first and only response was to welcome us with open arms.

Jim is always willing to venture into the community to find innovative ways to serve the needs of children and families. Jim demonstrates that education is more than what happens in the classroom. He seeks to breakdown the barriers that prevent children from learning.

Beside his work at the Center, Jim is also a Colonel in the National Guard, a commitment that keeps him very busy. He enjoys fishing, hunting and being outdoors.

Anderson's extraordinary service, collaborative efforts, and his "out of the box" approach to educating at risk children, make Jim Anderson worthy of this award.

### Family Focus

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West Midland Family Center  
a 501C3 Non-Profit Organization  
4011 West Isabella Road  
Shepherd, Michigan 48883

Judy Wirtz began her years of volunteering as a parent of a preschool student 20 years ago. That initial experience opened the door to many other volunteer opportunities which Judy took on with uncommon enthusiasm. This involvement led her to the position of Site Manager for the Greendale Senior Diner's Center.

Over the years, Judy has quietly made her mark in numerous volunteer ventures. Many evenings Judy puts on her "volunteer hat" and is at the Center long after others have called it a day. Whether planning the food and entertainment for the Center's 25th Anniversary Celebration, or organizing precious storage space, Judy consistently goes beyond what others expect.

For the last four years, as volunteer Pantry Coordinator for the WMFC Emergency Food Pantry Network site, Judy spent countless hours keeping the Food Pantry site up and running.



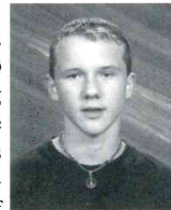
**Judy Wirtz**

Judy also spends many hours of her own time planning activities for the seniors who stop by at the Greendale Center. Judy's years of service and dedication to so many of the WMFC programs makes her most deserving of this honor.

Dean Cooper is not a typical teenager. As a member of the Teens In Training Program (T'NT), Dean has volunteered an average of 190 hours each summer for the past four summers. Dean is equally dedicated as a Students Performing Acts of Random Kindness (SPARK) volunteer.

As a T'NT member, Dean goes out of his way to better the lives of the young children who attend the Center's programs. He is devoted and caring and consistently puts the needs of others before his own. Dean

has a real sense of fairness and makes a special effort to promote this concept among his peers



**Dean Cooper**

See ACHIEVEMENT, Page 9

## WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER

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Kristen Wendling, Stephane Wirtz, Mike  
Zelinski  
Preschool Teachers ..... Elaine Fabinski,  
Wendy Plewa, Kate Woods  
Preschool Teacher Assistant .....Barb Simons  
Preschool Aides .....Missy Finney,  
Mary Beth Hintermeister, Van Drivers, Leslie  
Noykos, Gloria Onscott  
NEMSCA Head Start Ass't Teacher ....Jenny Ogg  
Child Care Director .....Ginger Yarch  
Child Care Aides .....Eileen Burch,  
Sheleigh Burton Anabelle Curtis, Jade Lalone  
Shelly Miller, Penny Owen, Eva Searfoss,  
Becky Sexton, Kirsten Wendling,  
Vonda Wendt, Keri Yarch  
Senior Program Staff .....Susan Wells  
Council On Aging Site Manager ....Judy Wirtz

## WMFC 2000 BENEFACTORS

Organization	Amount
Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation.....	1,500,000*
Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Foundation .....	1,500,000*
Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Foundation .....	1,000,000**
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation .....	750,000*
The Dow Chemical Company Foundation .....	240,000*
Charles J. Strosacker Foundation .....	220,000*
Dow Corning Foundation .....	90,000*
State of Michigan .....	413,599
United Way of Midland County .....	105,000
Rollin M Gerstacker Foundation .....	20,000
WMFC Auxiliary .....	9,500
Children's Trust Fund .....	6,037

\* 3-year grant pledge towards the Center's Building Expansion Project

Organization	Amount
Homer Township .....	6,250
Snow Machines, Inc .....	2,500
NE Michigan Community Service .....	4,840
Midland County Child Protection Council.....	500
First United Methodist Church.....	500
TOPs .....	100
Homer United Methodist Church .....	462
Midland Preschool.....	3,000
MCYAC .....	9,940
Comerica Bank .....	500
Midland Seventh Day Adventist Church.....	100

\*\*5 year matching grant pledge toward the WMFC Program Endowment Fund

### INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Julie Arbury, Amy Bailey, Diane DeMott, Bob & Mary Ann Dostal, Dana Gibbs, Norman Hozak, Robert Keil, Paul & Doris Lyons, Robert & Janet Miller, Scot & Sherri Pirie, John Reder, Richard Smith, Doak & Amy Stolz, Sue Thumma, JoAnn Winchester



## Neighborly Trucking Company Donates Pool Water

In keeping with the Center's philosophy of neighbor helping neighbor, Morval Lalone Inc., a trucking firm, purchased and transported water and filled the new swimming pool all at no charge to the Center. Blaine Johnston of Morval Lalone Inc. volunteered for three days making 10 trips to the Center to deliver approximately 48,000 gallons of water.

The children from the Center's Childcare program enjoyed watching Blaine and the "big water truck". Blaine even let them sit in the truck and honk the horn! We are grateful for the spirit of generosity demonstrated by Lalone Inc.

Morval Lalone Inc. is located at 1803 North Mission in Mt. Pleasant. It is a family owned business established in 1937.



*Congratulations*

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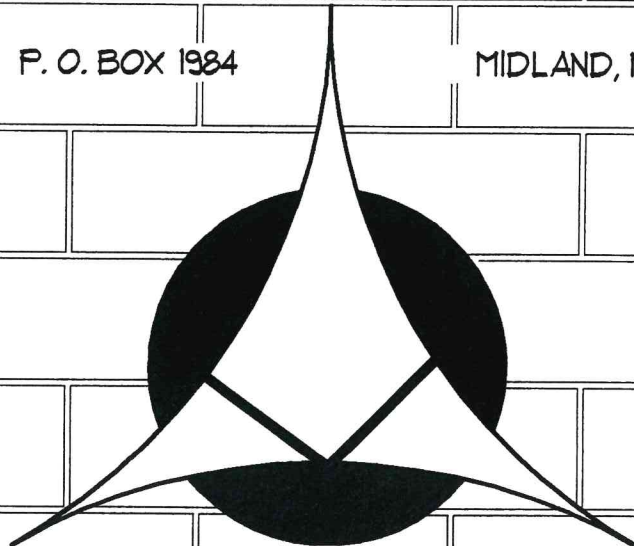
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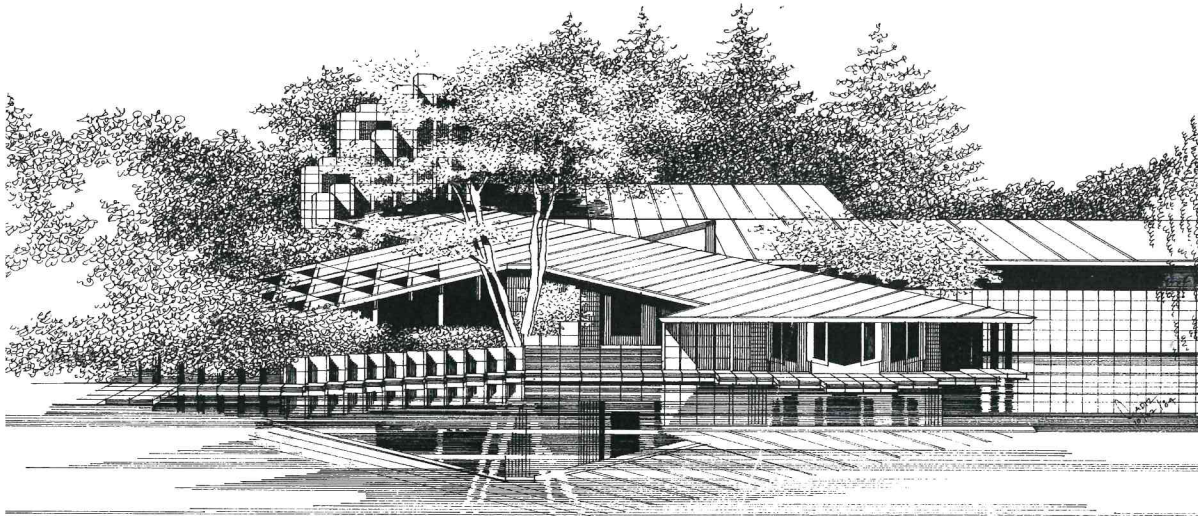
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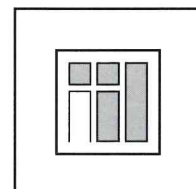
*Congratulations!  
“A Dream Come True”*

*Thank you for the opportunity to assist you in realizing  
your dream.*

*Best wishes for your continued success.*

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www.dhga.com  
office@dhga.com





## In the Beginning...

Then, in 1989, we dedicated the “new” West Midland Family Center. And then, in 2000, we started to build the “newest” West Midland Family Center. This page illustrates just a few of the steps it took to make this expansion project a reality.

PHOTOS BY JERRY SCHAAR

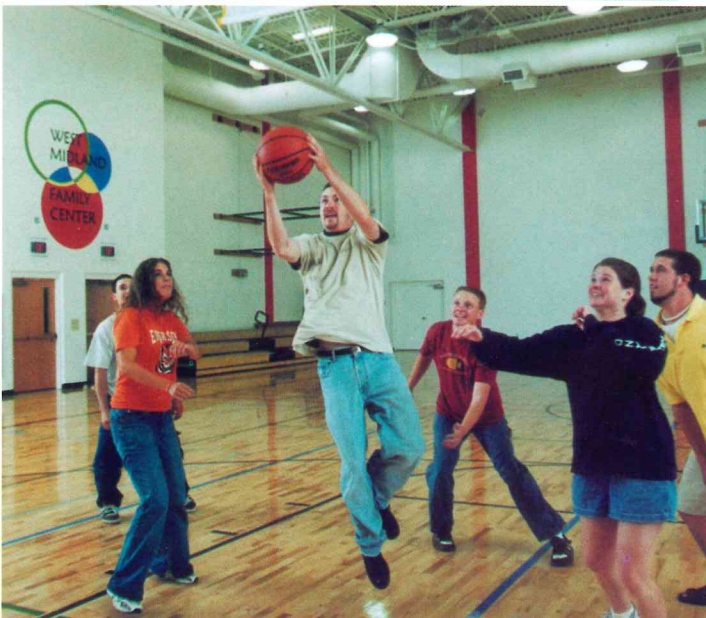




## The “newest” WMFC... inside and out

This aerial shot shows the growth of WMFC. The black roof and the blue water show the newest additions. The other photos illustrate the beauty and flexibility of the facility to accommodate a myriad of activities.

PHOTOS BY  
JAN-MICHAEL STUMP





# PRIDE...

**T**HREE Rivers Construction has always taken great pride in designing and producing quality on every project.

**W**E ARE Proud to have played a part in the major expansion project at West Midland Family Center.

**O**UR Sincere congratulations on the completion of a fantastic facility which will benefit the entire community.



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## Summer Fun in Sun for Dow COP Students

This summer will be filled with excitement for the students in the Dow College Opportunity Program.

Freshmen and Sophomore classes will be volunteering at a workcamp during the last week in June in Shepherd, working with 400+ teens from all over the nation to repair over 80 area homes! Later in the summer they will travel to Hiram College, Cedar Point and Sea World.

The Junior Class is taking their annual College Exploration Trip. They will be staying in college residence halls, eating meals in the cafeterias, going on campus tours, as well as visiting the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. Colleges on the tour include: Alma, Michigan State, University of Michigan, Spring Arbor, Olivete, and Purdue.

The Senior Class is celebrating their recent graduations and the new horizons in front of them on a trip to Virginia Beach, the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., and white water rafting in Pennsylvania. Congratulations to our graduates!

### Attention Class of 2005: Planning on College?

If you are going to be in 9th grade next fall and are interested in attending college, you should know about the Dow College Opportunity Program (COP)!

#### What are the benefits of Dow COP?

- Four years of activities and opportunities to help you be successful during your journey to college. Activities include academic support, travel, cultural exposure, volunteering, and social events, as well as a week-long trip each summer.
- Assistance in obtaining financial aid and scholarships.
- Once in college, continued support, guidance, and assistance in financial matters.
- In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the Program Director serves as a mentor for students. The Program Director makes home visits, attends extra-curricular events and parent-teacher conferences, visits students' homes, and provides special one-on-one attention.

#### You may apply if you meet the following criteria:

- A freshmen in fall 2001 at Meridian, Bullock Creek, Shepherd, or Coleman
- Interested in attending college
- Need financial assistance to attend college (Pell Grant Eligible)
- Have the academic abilities to be successful in college

If you are interested in being considered for the program, contact the Program Director, Lynn Heil, at the center or email her at DowCOP@aol.com. She will make contact during the summer months. In the fall, interested and qualified students will be invited to participate in the program during the first semester of their freshmen year. At semester end, the final selection process will be an application and interview.

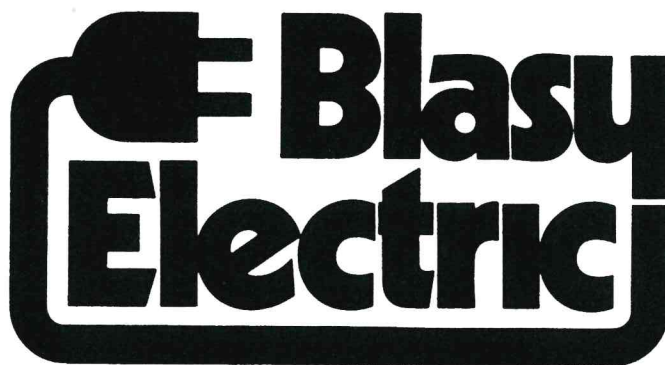


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# Summer Camps

Looking for something to do this summer? WMFC is offering a variety of camps for children who have completed grades Kindergarten through sixth. Choose from:

Roller Hockey	Basketball
Cheerleading	Wrestling
Gymnastics	Cooking
Book Club	Nature
Girl Scouts	

Camps will begin AFTER 3:30 p.m. For information regarding dates, time and registration fees contact Stephanie Wirtz at 832-3256.

## IT

Sitting in my seat,  
thinking that I had it beat,  
all of a sudden it sneaks up on me.  
Here's a hint, it isn't something you can see;  
However, the clues it leaves behind are visible  
by anyone at any time;  
The creativity that comes from the people it  
possesses  
can be worth more than a shiny new dime.  
The possessed are almost always in daydreams –  
nothing is what it seems  
This thing can make you think you're on  
vacation –  
you don't need an invitation  
Each time you can go to a different destination;  
the only problem is it can make it difficult  
for you to get your education  
This thing is your IMAGINATION!

*By RussAnn Ryckman, age 16*

## Achievement

*continued from page 2*

and younger children He has been known to spend one-on-one time with a newcomer until that person feels comfortable and at ease in new surroundings.

Dean is a special individual and an outstanding teenager. His thoughtful, considerate nature, and the great effort he puts forth in all he does makes him uniquely deserving of this recognition.

## TOLL-FREE NUMBER

If calling WMFC is long distance for you please use our new toll-free phone number: 1-877-631-WMFC (9632).



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# Dedication

*continued from page 1*

school was closed, and it's students absorbed into the Bullock Creek School district.

This was the Greendale Elementary School, first home of the West Midland Family Center. The doors were closed, and windows were boarded up. The building was left cold and vacant for 10 years. The community was left with no common place to gather for social, recreational or sports events.

## **West Midland Community Center**

Then, in 1974, forward-thinking community members came together to address the lack of a convening place for the residents of western Midland County. The Big Brothers organization was interested in locating a site for area teens to use. Consequently, the building and its surrounding three acres were sold by the Bullock Creek School district to Midland County.

Phyllis Breedlove, founder, first and long-time Director of WMFC, suggested that the school be renovated for use by all the community members, not just the teens. So was born the concept of West Midland Community Center.

From concept to dream come true, the building was transformed from schoolhouse to Community Center. With Phyllis Breedlove at the helm, members of the United Steelworkers of America Local 12075 volunteered their time, skills, tools, and brawn to turn this building around.

Area teenagers also added muscle to the project. By November, 1974, WMCC was offering night school classes, The Greendale Happy Diners had set up shop, youth and adult activities were in motion and Phyllis Breedlove was appointed the Center's first Director.

From 1974 until 1989, the schoolhouse turned Community Center served well the community of western Midland County. However after nearly 60 years, the building was tired and showing its age. At the same time, WMCC was growing and the need for

expansion was evident. A new building and an expansion of that brings us to the WMFC of today. Vision and dreams resulted in the plan for what was to become the expanded West Midland Family Center commemorated on June 21, 2001.



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