

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER'S

Family

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ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR AREA RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES

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Thanks Barnes and Nobel Patrons

West Midland Family Center recently received an outstanding gift: one that was neither requested nor expected. Director of Programs Gail Crosby was contacted in November by Molly Stewart from the Midland Barnes and Nobel Book Store who inquired if we would like to participate in their Holiday Book Drive. Barnes and Noble staff members asked each customer if they would consider purchasing a book to be donated to the kids of WMFC. States Crosby, "We were thrilled to have been selected for the Holiday Book Drive and began right away to brainstorm how to best utilize the books to benefit our community."



Thatcher enjoying a new book.

WMFC staff members went about compiling a literary wish list never really dreaming that so many of these wishes would come true. From cardboard ABC- books to the ABC's of Parenting WMFC received 1,087 cherished books! This extraordinary number was only fifty shy of receiving the greatest number of books in a Barnes and Nobel corporate contest. This is an outstanding accomplishment that illustrates the generosity of the Midland community and makes those of us at the Center so very proud to have been a part of such an awesome program.

Like a child awaiting Santa Claus, staff members eagerly looked forward to each delivery of books. Throughout the month of December and into January an occasional resounding, "Gail's back and she has more books!" would ring out. Thus prompting folks to take a break to treasure the moment while taking a quick look through the boxes. The books will be used as reference materials in our lending library, as educational resources in our programs from preschool to computer lab. These donations are the basis for the upcoming "Charlotte's Web Event" which will occur on March 15, 2007 (see page three for details).



Matthew, Eileen & Mackenzie searching for Waldo.



Thank-you Barnes and Nobel!!

Thank you Barnes and Nobel for including WMFC in this stellar community effort. The benefits will grow for years to come because, ultimately, the books will be used to enhance the love of reading and literacy among all our patrons. We are so very grateful.

Wintertime Fun for All!

Take the winter chill off and become involved in your community at the same time. This winter West Midland is again ablaze with activity. Having wrapped up an outstanding 2006 we now set forth to make 2007 even more fun. Wander in and check out the action.

Rest assured you'll find something of interest whether structured or drop-in programs, special events, learning opportunities or leisure pursuits. You'll hit upon lots of hustle and bustle at the Center to distract you from the winter doldrums.

A Christmas Story WMFC Style

There are a multitude of activities that occur at West Midland each December to assure that no family goes without during the holidays. December 2006 was an ideal illustration of the way West Midland celebrates the spirit of the season. Using cash donations, WMFC staff and volunteers shopped for 41 WMFC families who were either not registered for the Sharing Tree program, had extenuating family circumstances requiring greater intervention than what gifts could bring or had been "adopted" by donors. Among these 41 families there were 122 children. Six additional families were assisted by holiday funds that allowed them to fill a propane tank or avoid eviction. All six of these families have agreed to attend an upcoming budgeting, financial management class to help them better manage their money and move toward financial independence.

Approximately 80 additional children benefited from A Shoe Box Christmas. This was a new holiday program sponsored by the Midland Postal Employees. Shoeboxes filled with toys,

school supplies, hygiene items and more were wrapped and handed out to children from low-income families in the WMFC community who needed extra support. Special thanks to Tony Box who organized this effort and all the Midland Post Office workers who helped make a difference in a child's life.



An entire gymnasium of generosity.

WMFC was as always very involved in the community wide Sharing Tree program. This is a program that actually starts in September with the family information and screening process and ends in mid-December when the families pick up their gifts. In the months in between thousands of volunteer hours are dedicated county wide to assure that everyone has something for Christmas. In 2006, 20 volunteers assisted West Midland through this process. At West Midland, 691 individuals (323 children ~ 368 adults) from 201 families were assisted.

What to do After School

Every weekday, approximately 60 youth from kindergarten to eighth grade descend upon WMFC to participate in our After School activities. As you can see by the following photos, everyone has a good time.....but there is always room for more. You'll always find a helping hand at the Center.



Isaac and Veronica create a magical LEGO Castle.



Capture the flag anyone?



Casey helps Tim with homework.



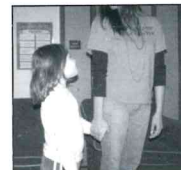
Bryce and Caden in the computer lab.



Face Painting for all.



Mackayla - Artist in training.



You'll always find a helping hand at the center.

Notice: Young Minds at Work...Children Learn Through Play

West Midland Family Center provides numerous avenues to educate young children and is "home" to 54 preschoolers, a Kinder Kare Childcare Center serving children ages 2 weeks to 12 years and an Early Head Start program, which provides home visitation and center-based programming for children from birth until their third birthday.



Nole and Journie "play" with puppets.

Most people do not realize that one of the most important concepts of developmentally appropriate instruction in early childhood education is "play." According to WMFC preschool teacher Wendy Plewa, "Playing is very important and is the way in which young children learn best". Melina VanConant Site Director for Kinder Kare adds, "Carefully selected toys can help facilitate children's learning.

For example, they end up doing math and learning patterns while playing with puzzles or blocks". Careful interaction by teaching staff reinforces the learning process.

The classroom is made up of learning "centers" for a very specific reason. "Children in the dramatic play area aren't just



Alana does dishes while Sierra sweeps & Zachary works his puzzle.

having fun they are learning how to care for a home and a family someday," shared Plewa. Kinder Kare's early preschool program operates in much the same manner as other preschools with free play, group and circle times all adding to a child's learning experience.

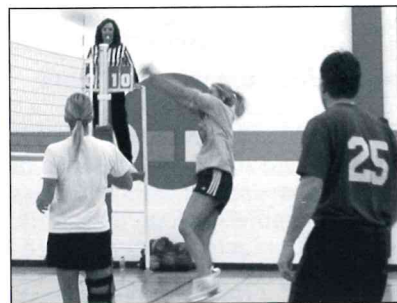
So the next time you visit an early childhood classroom don't be fooled. As you witness young children apparently at play, please remember that you are witnessing the phenomena of early childhood education: children learning by doing what they most enjoy. At the same time, they are hard at work gaining developmentally appropriate skills.



Austin working in the kitchen.

Recreation at the Center - A BIG Deal As Usual!

WMFC's recreation programs are alive with action and doing very well! In a year when we thought we might see minimal participation among our young basketball enthusiasts (due to a well received sports facility in Midland), WMFC basketball activity is on the upswing. Monday's and Wednesday's typically see 25 or more basketball players on a drop-in basis. Tuesday nights we welcome nine teams, 90 men with all their associated gusto, for basketball league play.

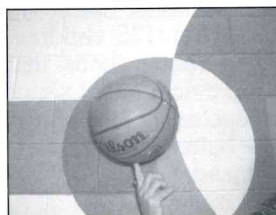


Co-ed Volleyball...for One and All.

In addition to the booming Basketball program, WMFC is in the midst of a very busy volleyball season, which includes drop-in volleyball and a six-team co-ed volleyball league. An exciting development this year is that our league champion will represent WMFC at the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association State



Men's basketball is a SLAM DUNK!



Join in the Game!

Co-ed Volleyball Tournament in March. Also in March comes the addition of a new women's spring league to our established volleyball program. Recreation options are flourishing and include, karate classes on Tuesday evenings, a fitness room and batting cage rentals for those of you who survive winter by looking forward to spring.

So come on in and join the fun.....

“Charlotte & Wilbur” to Celebrate Reading with Children and Families

Calling all lovers of animals and children. On March 15, 2007 from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. the story of Charlotte’s Web will come to life at WMFC with an evening of interactive family activities based on the exploits of Charlotte and her gang of characters. Each participating family will receive one copy of the children’s book classic and a pass to attend the special showing of “Charlotte’s Web” to be held at the Bullock Creek High School

Auditorium on March 23, 2007. This fun-filled reading party is held in conjunction with Bullock Creek schools with thanks to Barnes and Nobel and their many generous “Charlotte’s Web” book donors.



West Midland Family Faces



Mike

Mike Burkett ~ Around the Center Mike is considered a “sight for sore eyes” because... he just drops in to be helpful! And when he does he is always willing to lend a hand with whatever task needs to be tackled: mail-

ings, filling the pop cooler or helping someone bring in donations for the clothing room. Mike has even been known to fill in for Santa when he gets too busy! Mike is always quick with a comment that is sure to make you giggle! He is a welcomed sight even when the errands have been run and all the tasks are taken care of because, the resulting conversation is good and his smile is contagious.



Dan

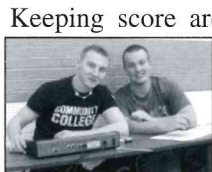
Dan Parker ~ is officially retired and yet works full time doing volunteer computer work for organizations like WMFC: a total of 15 agencies within the Midland and Saginaw areas benefit from Dan’s volunteer contributions. Dan created the data base called “Team Tracks” by which we maintain registration data for all kids in grades

K-12 that are in any of our programs. We have 3,600 kids entered in the database that we’ve been using for three years. Dan also created our “Friends” database, which is used to track donations, and recently created our Food Inventory database that will help us to fully account for every item sold. His services are invaluable and his time is greatly appreciated.



Tony & Mike

Recreation Officials ~ Referees, Tony Lechner and Mike Allen are a rare commodity. High school basketball and other league play conflict with our schedule making it hard to find qualified referees. Thanks to Tony and Mike who stepped in last year and decided to returned this year. They have been well received by the league members and are helping to make WMFC the best league in our community.



Mike & Michael

Keeping score are Mike Thompson and Michael Allen. Mike Thomas previously worked as a scorekeeper and we are grateful for his return. We are thankful for

Mike’s experience and the knowledge that he brings to the game. This is Michael Allen’s first year as a league scorekeeper but his knowledge of basketball and his passion for all sports makes him an ideal basketball staff member.

Jennifer Limon ~ works for MSU Cooperative Extension and yet has become a welcome and sought after feature of West Midland Family Center’s Moment Making Monday education classes. Jennifer has been coming to the Center every Monday

night for the last three years to teach our Nutrition and Food classes. These classes have benefited hundreds of parents eager to learn the techniques for properly preparing nutritious meals for their family while making financial ends meet. Even though this is her job at MSU, she goes beyond what is expected of her. She is always willing to stick around after class and talk to parents answering their questions and providing additional insight on their particular situation.



Jennifer

NOTICE ~ COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Start eating your spinach!

WMFC’s FIRST BLOOD DRIVE OF 2007

Friday, March 16 12 Noon - 6 p.m.

Look for the Mid-Michigan Blood Center’s “Blood Mobile” in the North Parking Lot OR Schedule in advance by calling 832-3256

Remember it’s about LIFE!

For the Young at Heart:

If you are among the “over 50” crowd and look forward to socializing with your peers, the Senior Services Midland County Council on Aging Greendale Dining site at WMFC is the place to be. Lunch is served at noon with reservations required by 9:00 a.m. Daily activities include:
 Cards, board games, walking in the gym. Tuesdays there is Texas Hold ‘em. Monday through Thursday there are “Aerobics with Susan.” On Thursday a TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) group

meets at 10:00 a.m. and crocheting with Effie on Friday ~ beginners and experienced level. Many seniors also avail themselves of the free computer /Internet classes and our fitness facilities.



Sandy and Gene...
familiar faces.

Make plans to attend the following special events:

FEBRUARY

February 28	Over the Hill Gang	11:00 a.m.
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MARCH

March 14:	ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARTY	11:00 a.m.
	JRB Country	

March 28:	Sunshine String Band	11:00 a.m.
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APRIL

April 12	EASTER DINNER	1:00 a.m.
	JRB Country	

April 18	Volunteer luncheon	11:00.a.m.
	Over the Hill Gang	

MAY

May 9	Mother’s Day Dinner and Dance	11:00 a.m.
	JRB Country	

May 17	Senior Prom Evening Dinner and Dance	
	beginning at 4:00 p.m.	
	Purchase tickets at the Greendale Senior	
	Center Tickets on sale April 15-May 14	

May 23	Memorial Day Dinner and Dance	11:00 a.m.
	Sunshine String Band	

U.S. POSTAGE

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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