

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER Family Focus

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 3

Thriving, Giving, Growing...Together

Late Fall 2019

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Bigger, Better, Longer!

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation has set a new standard for encouraging others to contribute to the financial strength of **West Midland Family Center (WMFC)**, so that the Center can continue to serve the community better each year. New for 2019, The Foundation's Board of Trustees has increased its three-year \$300,000 challenge grant to a five-year \$750,000 challenge grant. "That's potentially a \$450,000 increase (150%) over the previous challenge grant that ran from 2016-2018 said **Greg Dorrien, WMFC Executive Director** "...so **Bigger, Better, Longer** is a very apt description of the change."

The challenge grant was awarded with two different components. Each year of

the grant, the first \$100,000 in contributions will be matched \$1 for \$1 by The Foundation. The remaining \$50,000 each year will be a \$1 for \$1 match for contributions received from new funding sources, or for increases to gifts from existing sources (with the difference in the previous gift and increased gift being matched).

"The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation has a 33-year history of supporting the West Midland Family Center and the transformative work that they do in the community. The Board of Trustees is pleased to continue their

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Philanthropic Giving Transcends Cultural and Occupational Status

Sitting Bull is the most widely known Medicine Man of his generation. He became famous (or infamous depending on who you're talking to) by being on

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Ben Dollard Chooses Lifestyle of Service

Some people volunteer, others make volunteering their lifestyle. **Ben Dollard's** involvement at the **West Midland Family Center (WMFC)** became his lifestyle some 23 (yes, 23!) years ago.

"I moved to **Midland** in 1992 after graduating from **Alma College** as a young financial advisor. That was when I started building my practice **Benjamin R. Dollard - Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.,**" commented Dollard. "I really enjoy helping people become confident about their financial futures. Retirement can be emotionally draining if not planned" explained Dollard. "But finances are just one part...another

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Sitting Bull and William "Buffalo Bill" Cody

Being Prepared and Fast Action Saves Life at WMFC

Over the past 19 years, **WMFC Aquatic Director and Safety Officer Renee Allen** has trained hundreds of **West Midland Family Center (WMFC)** employees. As an **American Red Cross, American Safety and Health Institute** and **American Heart Association Instructor** Allen trains and certifies staff in CPR/AED, First Aid, Lifeguarding and emergency responsiveness. Allen never could have imagined the crucial role those trainings would play this past fall.



Renee Allen meets Duane Barnard who is thankful to be alive, thanks to WMFC Emergency Responders

"I will never forget September 12, 2019," stated Allen. "It was a beautiful warm, sunny day. If you would have told me that we were about to face an emergency situation at the Center, I probably wouldn't have believed you," confessed Allen. "I was in a staff meeting when a coworker ran into the room yelling that a man had collapsed out front."

Moments earlier **Duane Barnard** had stopped by the Center to pick up some produce that was available to the community. As Duane lifted a crate, he collapsed unresponsive. "The last thing I remember is lifting up a crate of peppers," said Barnard.

Diane Shank, a WMFC volunteer, was standing next to Barnard and broke his fall before immediately calling 911. Diane had the 911 dispatcher on the phone when **WMFC Staff Member Kristin Cronkright** arrived on the scene.

"I checked for responsiveness and was about to drop to my knees to start CPR when **Mike (Sobolewski – WMFC Dow College Opportunity Director)** and Renee rushed outside," explained Cronkright. As the pair tried to rouse Barnard, **WMFC Office Manager Missy Finney** grabbed the AED, took it outside and handed it to staff member **Joy LeViere** who was standing by to assist Sobolewski and Allen.

"We have quite a number of **WMFC Emergency Responders**," explained LeViere, "who are trained to respond to emergencies. It really paid off."

"I was completely unaware that I had a heart issue until September 12th," shared Barnard with WMFC Staff at a recent staff meeting. "I'm so glad it happened here at the Center. I've seen people collapse in other places and witnessed those people taken out on stretchers with sheets over their faces because they didn't make it. The doctors told me that I was the luckiest man in the Tri Cities that day. Because of the training that you all have, I'm alive today. I owe all of you so much. There are just no words that I have to express my gratitude," struggled Barnard, "...without what you did, I wouldn't be standing here today. Keep teaching those CPR classes," Barnard advised Allen. "I'm **living** proof that CPR can be the difference between life and death."

According to the **American Heart Association (AHA)**, every year in the United States, approximately 383,000 Sudden Cardiac Arrests (SCA) happen outside of the hospital, 88% of which occur at home. Studies show that SCA survival rates drop 10% as each minute passes without defibrillation. While the national SCA survival rate is 5-10%, according to the

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association, studies have shown that defibrillation within 3 minutes raises the survival rate to 74%. Timing is everything.

"The AED and having the 911 dispatcher on speaker phone were invaluable and made all the difference in the eventual outcome. Without the AED, I'm not sure if Duane would have survived," stated Allen. "Safety and being prepared is a priority at WMFC. We constantly practice our Emergency Action Plans and that day it really paid off. I'm thankful for, and so very proud of, my WMFC coworkers. They stepped up, remained calm and worked as a team to help. Their teamwork made the difference between life and death."

Bigger, Better, Longer!

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support through this five-year matching grant," said **Ruth Alden Doan, president of The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation**.

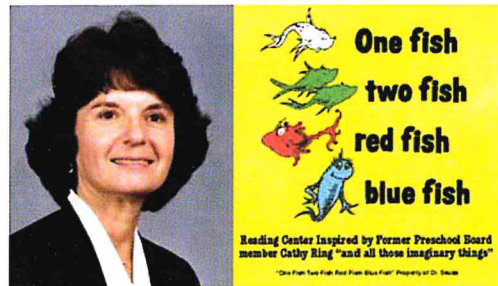
"The decline in child poverty rates in **Midland County's Greendale Township** over the last 30 years* is testament to West Midland Family Center's long term success" said Dorrien. "The Foundation has played the leading role in all of the major advances the Center has made including the "new" building in 1989, each major expansion of the facility, the establishment of matching grants that originally built the endowment fund and these current challenge grants that enable development of services and programs vital to the West Midland community. Over the Center's entire history The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation has led with over \$8.9 million in donations. Without the leadership of The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation we'd likely still be in the old schoolhouse building," concluded Dorrien.

*U.S. Census Midland County Greendale Township 1990, 2000, 2010

Cathy Ring Continues to Help Local Children Read and Grow

"Cathy Ring found reading as the surest way to help develop the mind and prepare for lifelong learning," said her husband **Jerry Ring**. An organization known as **Midland Preschool Centers** began opening preschool classrooms in the city in the 1960's, long before some states even had public school kindergarten classes. They were all well ahead of their time.

"In 1975 they established their first out county preschool program at what was then called **West Midland Coun-**



Cathy Ring believed that learning to read at a young age set the stage for a lifetime of learning.

ty **Community Center** and really helped set the stage for the terrific growth in facilities and programs that has occurred since," said **Greg Dorrien, WMFC Executive Director**. "I met Cathy in 1987 when I joined their Board and she encouraged us to always think bigger about what the Center might grow into. Apparently her vision wasn't limited to just child development. In the 1980s she bought a small amount of stock that grew into a large gift supporting our early reading program. This gift now benefits the 156 children annually enrolled in our nine preschool classrooms at five locations," added Dorrien.

Each classroom now has a reading center with a comfortable "living room style" chair and ottoman, and a library book display in the shape of a tree. In addition, outdoors at each location, there is a fun reading hut where multiple children can read and discuss the all-weather books provid-



Lucille and Maddie are reading in the preschool approved manner while Jace prefers his own method.

ed. Best of all there is a new book mailed home each month and an endowment to keep the program going for all future classroom children.

"West Midland's children and families are blessed to have had Cathy and now Jerry, along with sons Craig and Mark unite with so many others devoted to their well-being. Investing together, they will impact generations," concluded Dorrien.

Ben Dollard Chooses Lifestyle of Service...continued from page 1

struggle can be what do with all that extra time? I believe, at least for myself, that volunteering and giving are a wonderful way to fill in those hours previously spent working."

"In 1996 I was approached by **Charles Infante** to serve as the **Dow College Opportunity Program (COP)** financial expert to help direct policy to insure that COP remained solvent and continued to meet the needs of future students. A year later **Past WMFC Board of Director President Bob Dostal** invited me to join the **WMFC Investment and Accounting & Budget Committees**. Currently I have dual roles as the **WMFC Board of Directors President** and as a COP committee member."

Dollard's long history with WMFC doesn't look to end any time soon. "The WMFC community and dedicat-

ed staff keeps me coming back to WMFC," explained Dollard. "It really is the staff that makes a difference in so many lives every day. Their tireless devotion to the community is truly an inspiration with a capital 'I'. I enjoy contributing to an organization which is well run, willing to adapt to changing needs, and isn't afraid to be bold in its vision. WMFC is always looking inward trying to continuously improve the programs it offers. As long as there is a need, I will invest in WMFC so that WMFC continues to be that beacon of hope for the residents of their community."

"I'm obviously very passionate about getting involved in community. Procrastination is an obstacle. So, I'd encourage everyone to pick up the phone today and call WMFC (989-832-3256) or another great charity in

our community," concluded Dollard. "It will be one of the best decisions that you'll ever make."

Dollard is married to Kelly, who was born and raised in Midland and is a dental hygienist for two local dentists. Dollard's daughter, **Maddie**, is a senior at **Midland High School** and Kelly's daughter, **Emily**, is working as a registered nurse locally.



Ben and Kelly Dollard



WMFC President Ben Dollard finds out how stressful it is to live in poverty through his participation in a poverty simulation exercise held at WMFC.

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Philanthropic Giving

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the winning side in *The Battle of Little Big Horn*, also known as *Custer's Last Stand* in 1876. A short nine years later his public persona grew larger as he became friends with an old enemy known as *William "Buffalo Bill" Cody*. They toured Europe and the United States in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

"Sitting Bull found it astounding that a culture that calls itself civilized abused its children and allowed people to go homeless and hungry on city streets. The wealth he amassed as an entertainer was given away to the urban poor and those on the reservation in need..." wrote *Carole Levine, NativeVue, Native American Times, Scene 4 Magazine*. Sitting Bull saw people in need and went beyond his call as an entertainer using his finances to make life better for others.

West Midland Family Center staff members are in many ways like Sitting Bull. Our efforts to help others occur during our daily work but annually we also take the time to give to the *United Way of Midland County* and/or the *United Way of Gratiot/Isabella County*. "As a group the West Midland Family Center Employees' Campaign pledged \$19,274.10 which represents a 25.8% increase over last

year's record giving level," said Greg Dorrien Executive Director.

"WMFC and our community has been the recipient of an outpouring of support from the philanthropic community these many years; like Sitting Bull, our employees go beyond their call by providing financial support to the community at large," concluded Dorrien.

Hearts of the Center

Dow College Opportunity Program Assistant Kelsey Miller and *WMFC Chief Financial Officer Jason Green* were recently named as recipients of the *Diane Dauer Heart of the Center Award*. The award is given to employees who best exemplify the caring, loving and giving nature of the late Diane Dauer. Congratulations Kelsey and Jason!



Kelsey Miller and Jason Green