WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER

Family Focus

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 1

Thriving, Giving, Growing ... Together

Winter 2016

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Students Use STEM to Save Mankind

Throughout the past year West Midland Family Center has teamed up with Engineering for Kids to provide stimulating and fun STEM (Science,



Blake and Dakota use STEM skills and teamwork to build and program a Lego Dancing Bird.

Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) activities. Pre-K through 2nd grade students joined together to build flying birds, drumming monkeys and other LegoTM friends in a junior robotics class. The students learned how to program and manipulate the movements of all of the wild animals they created using laptops.

Students in the 3rd - 8th grade, participated in a different STEM activity and used **MinecraftTM Software** to

...continued on page 2

Help From the Prose

...by Greg Dorrien, Executive Director

I wasn't a bright child. Besides low grades, my report cards usually bore the dreaded numbered comment... "talks in class." I explained to my



Greg Dorrien
Executive Director

parents "that's one of those good marks, like good citizenship!" They weren't buying it. Apparently, I displayed the same behavior at church, the dinner table or almost anywhere

adults deemed that kids should be seen, but not heard. My older and much brighter brother Gary then clued me in: "Greg, in class don't say it out loud, just pass a note to your friends."

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WMFC preschoolers often teach volunteers like Jeremy Screws how to paint masterpieces.

Oil City Couple Fills Many Volunteer Roles

Tammy Reamsma Screws moved to Oil City in 1993 when she was in 7th grade and her father was named the Senior Pastor of the Oil City Assembly of God Church. She attended Bullock Creek Public Schools and graduated salutatorian of her class in 1999. Tammy's husband Jeremy Screws was born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana.

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Dow COP Blasts Into New Year with the Selection of the Class of 2019

It is full steam ahead for the **Dow College Opportunity Program** (**Dow COP**) with the selection of the **Class of 2019**! Six more high school freshman have become permanent members of the long-term Dow COP mentoring program. There are now 28 high school students and 22 college students in the program.

During the year, Dow COP freshmen and sophomore students work on developing communication teamwork skills while participating in personal growth experiences. Juniors research, visit and explore different college campuses. They also explore the many varied opportunities that are available in the surrounding communities where each college is located all while trying to determine what is the best fit for them. These experiences help students become more confident in the school that they ultimately choose.

Seniors spend the year searching for college scholarships while fundraising for their New Horizons Summer Trip. These student-planned senior trips help students to develop many skills such as budgeting, compromise, time management, research and exploration. After many group discussions, and debating many different major cities, the Class of 2016 unanimously decided on New Orleans as their destination of choice.

In addition, Dow COP high school students greatly impact their communities through a variety of volunteer experiences throughout the year. In 2015, Dow COP students dedicated over 650 hours helping others throughout **Midland and Isabella Counties**, as well as in other areas around the state.

Dow COP college students are making waves at colleges and universities all across the state. From Michigan Technological University to the University of Michigan, COP students are actively giving, contributing and engaging in campus life and in their communities in ways that are making a difference. As they progress toward their ultimate goal of graduating college and starting a career in a profession

they have chosen they are reminders to us all that our futures are mostly of our own makings.

Through their many varied experiences in the Dow College Opportunity Program, both high school and college students learn that they have what it takes to accomplish any task that is set in front of them!



As an alternative to Spring Break, Dow COP Grand Valley State University Student Jessica, volunteered to groom trails and help out in local parks in Texas.

Students Use STEM to Save Mankind ...continued from page 1

travel into the future. By utilizing different engineering principles, the students solved a series of challenges in their created virtual world.

Some of the things that the students created in their virtual world were rockets to the moon and a city on an island. In this activity, the city

STEM

Science • Technology • Engineering • Math

on an island was ultimately used to save Earth from a chain of natural disasters that threatened the existence of all of mankind. To save the Earth, students used STEM principles to work through all kinds of different disasters. In the end, the students were successful in making their virtual world a safe place for all of humanity.

As a result of WMFC's partnership with Engineering for Kids, WMFC was able to provide after school program students with an exciting learning experience that was hands-on, STEM enriched and educational!

In the months ahead, WMFC



staff members will continue to plan STEM activities for the WMFC After School Program to challenge students in new and inventive ways that are mentally simulating and fun.

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Oil City Couple Fills Many Volunteer Roles ...continued from page 1

Jeremy and Tammy Screws first started volunteering together at the West Midland Family Center (WMFC) in 2003 when they volunteered to chaperone a Dow College Opportunity Program (Dow COP) work camp in Coleman. Tammy was very familiar with Dow COP and WMFC having been a student in Dow COP when she was in high school.

"Jeremy and I met at Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Texas. We graduated on May 2, 2003 and were married on May 3, 2003. We moved to Oil City a few weeks later and both starting working at Oil City Assembly of God Church on June 1, 2003. In July 2003 the then Dow COP Director, Lynn Heil called to ask us for a "big favor"... she needed chaperones for a Dow COP event and we said yes. Little did my new husband know that it was only the beginning of a life of volunteering at WMFC!"

"As a COP student I grew up at the Center and volunteered at the WMFC Welcome Center while in high school. I was familiar with the WMFC mission and saw first-hand how valuable WMFC's work was in West Midland County. I also saw all the ways that the people in our community relied on WMFC. When I moved back home after college, I knew that I wanted to continue to be a part of that," explained Tammy. Thirteen years later Jeremy and Tammy are continuing to give back to their community in their various volunteering roles at WMFC.

Since volunteering for the COP Work Camp with Jeremy, Tammy has gone on to fill many volunteer roles at WMFC. As a young mom, she volunteered in her daughters' preschool classroom which led to her attending the **WMFC Playgroup** with her son. Attending playgroup led to Tammy volunteering in the playgroup, which ultimately led to her taking over the supervision of playgroup in 2014. Today Tammy continues to supervise the playgroup every Friday from 10:00 -11:30 a.m.

Together, Tammy and Jeremy have volunteered extensively in the

WMFC Family Service Department. In particular, they help with many of the parent date night events. Their involvement in date nights eventually led to Jeremy becoming the official deejay for all the date night events.

Like Tammy, over the years, Jeremy has filled many volunteer roles at WMFC. He has helped with food

...continued on page 8



Jeremy and his son James, tumble on the gym mats during the WMFC Playgroup Spring Fling Event.

Help From the Prose ...continued from page 1

Looking back now, out of this mischievous written form of classroom behavior, several positive outcomes have occurred for both of us. Gary went on to teach and author 16 books including *Social Ethics in the Making* (not sure if as a professor he justifies the skirting of the "no talking in class" rule). My prose, on the other hand is meant for heartfelt notes in green ink on the bottom of WMFC request for help letters.

This year those letters, (and their accompanied green notes) were

written to 973 individuals and, so far, WMFC has received donations from 394. That is a return rate of 40% for a direct mail campaign. The industry standard for a direct mail campaign is a 3% return. The total amount contributed was \$162,631 which was up by \$22,472 over last year's campaign...and of course the best part of all this is that **The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation** matches every dollar up to \$300,000 until 2018. It isn't too late to help out and join the

long list of those who have helped (see pages 3-6)...or you can join the list of 56 people who have helped anonymously. As always, it is the children, families, and senior citizens who benefit from the outpouring of love that local citizen's annually display at year-end. Thank you for answering our written plea for support, even when the penmanship was only fair to Midland, and some of the prepositional phrases were of the type some English Majors get mad at!

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER P.O. Box 1985

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Midland Kiwanis Club member John Anderson (saxophone) and Bill Heeschen (piano) share their love of music.

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Oil City Couple Fills Many Volunteer Roles

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distributions, he has donated blood at the WMFC Blood Drives and he has helped with WMFC special events such as the WMFC 40th Anniversary Celebration.

When asked why he volunteers, Jeremy said, "To quote Winston Churchill, 'You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.' It's important

to me to make a difference in my community and I find one way that I can do this is by giving to those I meet at WMFC. My wife and I love being a part of the Oil City and West Midland Family Center community! God willing, we are not going anywhere for a long time."

Jeremy and Tammy Screws serve as role models to all those who are interested getting involved at WMFC. We thank this fine couple for their continued leadership in the Oil City Community.



Jeremy and Tammy currently reside in Oil City where Jeremy is the Senior Pastor, and Tammy is the Discipleship Coordinator, at the Oil City Assembly of God Church. The couple has three wonderful children aged 9, 6 and 3 who are also making memories, and making a difference, at WMFC.