

WEST MIDLAND FAMILY CENTER Family Focus

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 1

Thriving, Giving, Growing...Together

Winter 2021

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Agency Collaboration in the Age of COVID

Kristen Cronkright is a **WMFC Welcome Center** staff member. She also works as a **Community Resource Advocate** for **2-1-1 of Northeastern Michigan (2-1-1)**, which is an information and referral agency. 2-1-1 has a comprehensive data base of information with thousands of health and human services agencies that is used to connect individuals with the help they seek. Why is this interesting you might ask? It's not that Cronkright has two jobs, it's *why she has two jobs* that's especially interesting.

Greg Dorrien, WMFC Executive Director, reflected, "In December, I received a call from **Sarah Kile, Executive Director of 2-1-1**. Kile was inquiring if we had a staff member who may have had

hours cut due to COVID-19. Kile explained that 2-1-1 is always overwhelmed with calls in January," continued Dorrien. "This year they were expecting even greater need because of COVID-19 and because people are struggling with long-term effects of the floods. Kile was looking to share a staff person...part-time here, part-time there. I loved the idea and it didn't take long for me to think of Cronkright. She began her 2-1-1 training program in early December and got on the phones a month later."

Kile was anticipating an overwhelming January, but with the COVID-19 vaccine roll out underway and the general public having lots of questions, the overwhelming month turned into the unprecedented month. How unprecedented?

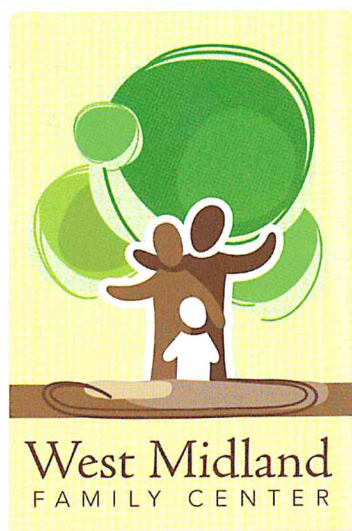
They handled one month's worth of calls in the first two days alone. The increased call volume is directly related to the pandemic and the various issues it has created.

"Nothing surprising about that," says Cronkright. "At the WMFC Welcome Center I take a lot of calls from people looking for help,

...continued on page 2



Kristen is thankful for the collaborative partnership between WMFC and 211.



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Agency Collaboration in the Age of COVIDcontinued from page 1

but the difference is that here in Midland County, the call usually ends with a referral to an agency or multiple agencies that can help the caller whereas, in some of the 23 counties that 2-1-1 of Northeast Michigan serves, there are little to no local referring agencies to help the caller. While I've always loved it here in Midland County," continued Cronkright, "since working for 2-1-1, I have an entirely new appreciation for how fortunate we are to

live in a community dedicated to helping each other succeed."

"It's difficult and intense work. We hear a lot of sad stories. On the flip-side it's very rewarding knowing that you have helped someone," commented Cronkright. "I'm enjoying the challenge, learning new things and meeting new people. At the same time, I love the community interactions that I have at the WMFC Welcome Center. They are

two very different jobs and I am so happy for the opportunity to experience both."



Get Connected. Get Help.™

Childcare and Preschool Students Fairing Well Throughout Pandemic

It is often said that kids in child care, pass around disease like collection plates. With a world-wide pandemic coming to town we too feared that child care and preschool would simply have to be closed.

Turns out, when best practice procedures are closely followed (face covering, hand washing, group size management, and thoughtful planning of activities), children are less likely than their adult family members to spread COVID-19 (according to the Center for Disease Control). **Fred Yonoski, Midland County Health Department Director** says, "We're still not seeing a great deal of in-school transmission. The vast majority is brought into schools from outside."

"That has been our experience as well," concurred **Greg Dorrien, WMFC Executive Director**. "WMFC currently has a total of 182 children in our childcare and preschool programs and so far, only one child has been diagnosed with COVID-19. The few times

the Center has had to quarantine anyone else was because a family member or staff member was confirmed positive, not the child in care. While we've always said the safest

place for the child is at home, research may well find that the safest place for a child is in a high-quality child care or school setting," concluded Dorrien.



A "new kid" recently joined the Monkey Preschool Classroom! Ethyn made sure that Bucky the goat had a great time on the playground during his first day of school.

2020/'21 Financial Donors (through February 10, 2021)

A

Anonymous Donations Received by 73 People (Some given In Honor/Memory of)

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- In memory of Orrin Barrett
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 - In memory of Ames David Westphal
 John and Pat Zimmerman



The following people have included WMFC in their estate plan (will, life insurance or living trust) or have already fulfilled their Legacy Society gift.

Orrin and Eleanor Barrett*
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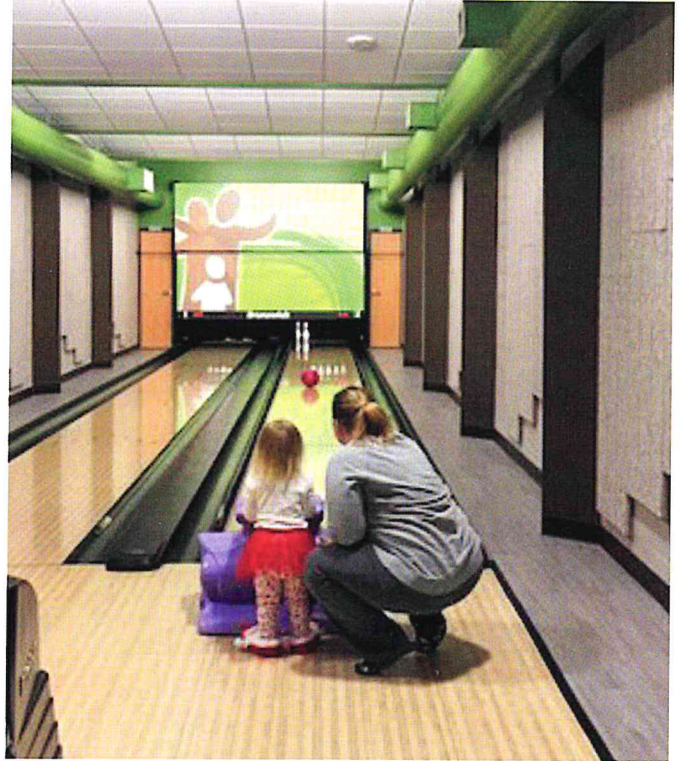
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Bowling Center Strikes a Cord with WMFC Children

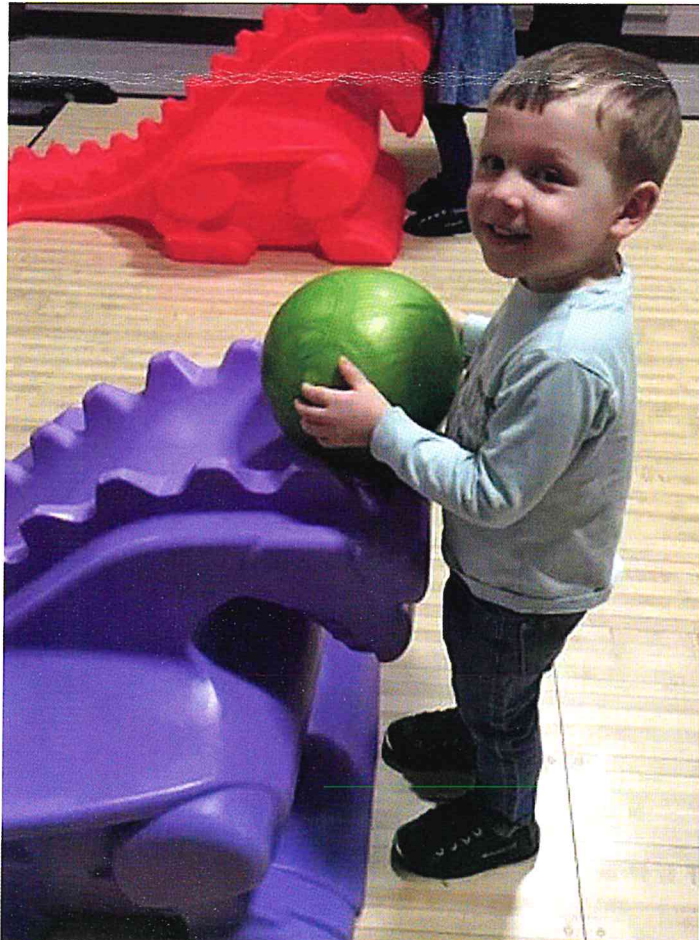
WMFC is now gearing up to reopen the bowling center, having closed due to COVID-19. After 11 months of “silence in the lanes” we are getting prepared and making ready. That said, as with all things *West Midland*, we plan to do this right! The *State of Michigan* and the Midland community are gradually opening up and we plan a gradual roll out as well. We have established a carefully thought out two-phase reopening plan.

Phase One began with “our” child-care children and preschoolers who we are so grateful to have back “home.” Normally, (yea normal!) the bowling center is used daily by children enrolled in our early childhood and elementary school programs. This provides them a unique opportunity to engage in physical

activity. While child-care has been open all along, the bowling center remained closed for safety sake. This wonderful experience is now available to them with all the proper precautions in place (cleaning, disinfecting, face coverings and a two-hour break between groups). Our recreation director has been working with our preschool, childcare and after school program leaders to schedule times for in-house students to bowl. The children have been loving every minute of it!



Bowling is a great activity for all ages!



The WMFC Bowling Center has fun for everyone!

On to Phase Two, which.....comes later. This phase is all about opening the bowling center for general public use, and we are so looking forward to that day! Once comfortable that Phase One has been successful, we will (again gradually) invite the community to reserve the bowling center, one family group at a time. There will of course be appropriate precautions and guidelines to be followed. Some will be familiar, for instance no food in the bowling center, and some will be new safeguards in place due to COVID as in only one family group at a time.

The bowling center is an awesome facility which contains some very unique features including a string pulley system for setting up pins for the many games that can be played. There are SIX different games to choose from including *Ten Pin Bowling*, *EZ bowling*, *Creature Feature*, *Horse*, *My Shot* and *Angry Birds*. So much fun to be had! We are excited to have the bowling center full of people again, throwing strikes and gutters and laughing out loud. So be patient with us and we'll keep you posted. When we take the time to get this right we will be more successful and before you know it we will be together, bowling, playing basketball, softball, or cards. Gathering for a laugh.

If you have questions regarding the *WMFC Bowling Center* reopening phases, the new policies or anything else activity related, please contact, *WMFC Recreation Director, Chelsea Davis* at (989) 832-3256.



When asked the question "what do you want to be when you grow up?" this preschooler gave a response that would have made Peter Pan proud!

2021

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Meet Amy McGinnis, Board Member and So Much More!

Amy McGinnis teaches Human Resources, Communication, and Management at *Central Michigan University (CMU)*. She helps coordinate the Human Resources undergraduate program and advises the student chapter of the *Society for Human Resource Management*. One of her favorite classes is *Women in Management*.

A graduate of her hometown high school in *Monroe, Michigan*, Amy went on to attend *Alma College* attaining a BA in English in Political Science, then *Michigan State University* (MA English), and CMU (Ed.D. [Doctor of education] in higher education leadership). Amy was living in *Mt. Pleasant* when she first met her husband Eric (on her birthday)! Her "little brother" and his wife were attending *Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU)* where Eric was working. They arranged the date knowing that Amy and Eric were the ideal match. Amy and Eric were married one year later on Amy's grandparents 56th wedding anniversary. Amy and Eric now have two great children Emma (16), who attends *Midland High School* and Zach (14) who attends *North-east Middle School*. Amy's hobbies include her daily Pilates 'fix,' doing puzzles, bike

riding, (the occasional) Netflix bingeing and having game night with her family.

Amy appreciates the many ways that WMFC serves the community. "West Midland works with families to grow stronger and support each other in difficult times. They help families with basic needs in tough times and provide food distributions, childcare, preschool and even a college opportunity program. It's amazing the number of services provided and the consideration they put into their work."

The *WMFC Board of Directors* and staff are grateful for Amy's professional expertise and kindness that she shares in large quantities. Welcome *a-board* Amy!



Eric, Amy, Zach and Emma McGinnis