

Beacon of Hope

~News~

WHAT'S INSIDE

Family Care Makes Dream..... 2
 MCC Summer Camp 2
 Community Comments..... 3
 Faith in Action..... 4
 Volunteer Voice..... 5
 Thank You Wal-Mart..... 5
 Upcoming Events..... 6



moving people beyond the challenges of poverty
 Issue 2, Volume 1, November 2008

Discovering Our Way Forward

by JanMarie Lambert, Executive Director

people succeed and excel! It is very exciting for us and empowering for them.

Every question, every hand reached out, every smile of acceptance, helps each of us discover our way forward. The talented, committed staff of MCC offers this respect and empowerment to our community and each other on a daily basis. Whether we are working with a student after school, training a young person in employment or serving a meal to one of

our seniors, we are building the path for people to move beyond the challenges of poverty.

I challenge each of you to ponder for a moment what it would mean in your life if you made a plan to discover your

way forward. Whatever your life circumstances, whatever your goals, MCC invites you to join us as we strive to meet our mission. Your commitment and support will help MCC to discover our way forward!

Come Meet our New Executive Director!

Holiday Open House

December 16, 2008

11 am to 1 pm

2137 W. Greenfield Ave., Milwaukee



JanMarie Lambert,
Executive Director

Many of us are familiar with the phrase “pay it forward”. Well, here at Milwaukee Christian Center, we are discovering our way forward! This is an exciting time for us! I am pleased to join

the Milwaukee Christian Center at this time as the new Executive Director!

The new strategic plan developed by the Board and staff will guide us in the areas that MCC will focus on in the near future to help us discover our way forward!

As MCC continues our work to make our community one of wholeness, respect, and opportunity, we hope that you will join us as we move forward! In this time of increasing economic uncertainty, spreading violence and lack of community building, MCC offers hope. No one of us can change or fix everything but together, we can overcome the challenges and barriers that face us in our neighborhood. One of the great gifts in life is when you give away what you have been given, it multiplies! This benefits you as the giver as well as the ones who receive. As MCC strives to meet our mission and vision, every day we see

Milwaukee Christian Center is excited to announce that JanMarie Lambert is the agency’s new Executive Director. A native mid-westerner, Ms. Lambert has a long history volunteering and working in non-profits and brings a passion and commitment to serving families and communities. She served as Administrator of Intervention Services at Wisconsin Community Services prior to joining MCC.

Executive Director
JanMarie Lambert
645-5350 ext. 108

Associate Executive Director & Youth Programs
Emilio Lopez
645-5350 ext. 107

Director of Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP)
Michael Van Alstine
643-7704

Development Director
Jeri Jende
645-5350 ext. 105

Senior Adults Program Director
Kelly Conte-Nuemann
645-5350 ext. 109

Emergency Food Pantry Coordinator / Facilities Manager
Barbara Ray-Velazquez
645-5350 ext. 118

Volunteer Coordinator
Amanda Heiring
645-5350 ext. 103



MCC believes all people deserve to be treated with compassion and respect. We exist to move people beyond the challenges of poverty through life-affirming programs and supportive services.

Family Care Makes Rose's Dream a Reality

by Kelly Conte-Neumann



Kelly Conte-Neumann,
Senior Adults Program
Director/Family Care
Manager

Eighty-eight year old Rose always said, "I love my house, and I hope I never have to leave." Thanks to MCC and Family Care, Rose's dream is a reality. Kelly Conte-Neumann, Senior Adults Program Director/Family Care Manager, stated, "The Milwaukee Christian Center has been involved with Milwaukee County Department of Aging's Family Care Program for the past 6 years, and we currently serve over 80 elderly individuals." Family Care is a "way for people who need long term care services to get them when and where they are needed." To become a member, you must be at least

60 years old and be financially and functionally eligible.

After a person enrolls in Family Care, he or she is assigned to a Care Management Team offered at MCC. The team consists of a care manager and a registered

nurse. The team works closely with the person to try to meet their long term care needs. Rose's Care Management Team worked with her to develop a plan of care which consisted of daily assistance due to her multitude of health issues. While her son is at work, a caregiver comes to the home and prepares her meals, reminds her to take her medications, and assists her with a bath. She also enjoys the companionship that her aide offers her, "we have such a nice time together, and I would never be able to be home alone without her help." Rose's emotional health has also improved since she has the daily socialization with her caregiver. Her caregiver updates the physician or family with any changes or concerns. This close monitoring has resulted in fewer hospitalizations.

Rose contacts her Care Management Team with any questions or issues that arise, and home visits are scheduled every 3 months or more often if needed. Rose relies on her team for emotional support and for their experience in the health care system. "My son has peace of mind knowing I am well taken care of."

MCC Summer Day Camp 2008 *by Summer Camp participants*

A total of 170 kids, ages 6-13, enjoyed a wonderful summer filled with a wide variety of supervised activities at the Kosciuszko Community Center, and Doerfler and Forest Home Elementary Schools. The children and teens enjoyed field trips, recreational activities, swimming, educational enrichment activities, arts and crafts, and environmental projects. The Summer Day Camp not only offered area youth a safe place, but provided 34 youth, ages 14-20 with summer jobs! Here's what the kid's had to say:

"I like the camp because the field trips are fun. I like to go swimming and go down the slides. When we went to the museum, it was fun because there were cool things! Camp is very fun!" Paola Medina (Age 8)



"I like the Milwaukee Christian Center because of all of the fun activities we do like swimming, dodgeball, field trips, and tennis. I love swimming with my friends but I don't like sunburn. My favorite pools are Kozy, McCarty, and Cool Waters. Dodgeball is so

cool. I'm so good at dodging the balls. I always hear the balls swoosh past. If I am wearing shorts, the ball hits my leg and leaves a mark. The field trips are cool. Cool Waters, the Museum, and the hike at the lake were my favorite so far. My favorite part of the Museum was the Streets of Old Milwaukee. They opened a theater there. Tennis is cool, too. I hate it when it is really hot, but I like it when it's cool. I can hit the ball really hard. After that, we read in the shade. This is why I like the Milwaukee Christian Center." George Medrek (age 10)



"My favorite part of the camp is the field trips because you get to be active. My favorite field trip so far is McCarty Park. But I know what my most favorite field trip is going to be and it begins with the letter "S" —you guessed it—it's the State Fair! And that's why I like Kozy! Alex White (Age 9)

Community Comments: Fresh Starts and Second Chances

by Leo Ries



Leo Ries, Executive Director of LISC in Milwaukee.

Ceremonies to mark the completion of new, affordable houses in Milwaukee's struggling neighborhoods typically center on the buildings themselves, and for good reason. New houses in places that haven't attracted significant investment in the past are often a signal that conditions are taking a turn for the better.

But the recent dedication by the Milwaukee Christian Center Youth Build Program of a new house on the south

side came with a different, but equally important, message. The program, a Wisconsin Fresh Start initiative, provides educational, vocational and life skills training to low-income, at-risk youth and young adults, ages 18 – 24, by building affordable, energy-efficient housing which is then sold low- or moderate-income families.



Milwaukee Christian Center's Youthbuild crew

Many of the young men who, through the program, built the house attended the ceremony. They talked about their past problems with the law; how in some cases their probation officers urged them to enter the Youth Build program, and how they resisted. But they also talked about what an impact the program made on them; how it set their lives on a new course. Some of them are now considering careers in the construction industry.

Listening to their remarks and watching the young people interacting, it occurred to me that if I saw these kids on a street corner, I might feel threatened and uncomfortable. As with all young people, they were boisterous and loud, "high fiving" each other as they teased Michelle Bria (executive director of Journey House), who is helping them get their GED (graduation equivalency diploma).

But when I listened to what they were saying, it was clear they were struggling to overcome a difficult past, hoping for a better future and grateful to have found each other and a program that presented a new, and more positive path through life.

Leaving the event, I told Mike Van Alstine, the program's director, that the youths' comments were really inspiring and heartfelt.

"Well, Leo," he said. "It's about more than just building houses, you know."

He's right.

LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) is a national non-profit intermediary that provides financial and technical assistance to community-based organizations, public agencies and private (for-profit) entities focused on the redevelopment of urban neighborhoods and rural communities. The organization, founded in 1979, works in metropolitan areas throughout the nation to assist its various partners in the development of affordable multi-family and senior housing, homeownership opportunities, commercial enterprises, community facilities and various community-building programs such as employment, day care, health care and open space.



**We give thanks for your partnership
and support this past year.
May your family and friends have a
blessed Holiday Season!
MCC Board of Directors and Staff**

Words to Live By

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

~ Albert Schweitzer

Faith *in* Action by Jeri Jende

"I must say that I have seen Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare; and have noticed a hundred instances in which they hardly ever failed to lend faithful support to one another."

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote Democracy, In America almost 170 years ago. When he wrote the above comment, he wasn't just talking about people helping people; he was talking about people making sacrifices for the betterment of the public welfare; the betterment of the community. His observation is just as relevant today as it was then.

Non-profit organizations exist to make the world a better place, providing a wide variety of services such as housing, health care, literacy classes, or food for the hungry. Whatever the mission, we all—as a community—benefit from their work. The Milwaukee Christian Center benefits the south side of Milwaukee by providing life-affirming programs and supportive services focused on helping people move beyond the challenges of poverty to strengthen not only individual lives, but also our south side community.

Last year MCC provided food for over 5,200 individuals; offered academic, recreational and leadership activities for 1,200 youth; helped 266 senior adults maintain their independence within the community; provided academic and vocational training to 39 Youthbuild participants; and provided affordable housing, home rehab & repair, graffiti removal services, and wheelchair lift and ramp installation through our Neighborhood Improvement Project. Americans as a whole are generous people; national figures estimate that individuals account for 75 to 80 percent of all giving. But, during economically challenging times such as we are currently experiencing, people's general fear of not having enough prevents us from acting on our values. Brent Kessel, author of *It's Not About the Money* recently stated in an interview, acts of generosity can help us feel content with what we have. "The irony is...you can't be giving money away and feel like you don't have enough," he says. "The act itself changes the message you tell yourself."

The Milwaukee Christian Center is here, just as it has been for the past 87 years, ready to make a difference in our community. During these tough economic times, I am asking you to make sacrifices for the betterment of our community. Now more than ever, I am asking you for your financial support and partnership. Give boldly...Just think for a moment, what would our community be like without MCC? With gratitude,

Jeri Jende, Development Director

P.S. You now can donate on-line at www.mccwi.org



Your gifts provide a safe place for kids like Brenda Deverney (L), Tyree Fleming, and Lisa Ho.



Support MCC Now, Just by Searching the Web!

1) Type www.goodsearch.com into your browser window. 2) Type Milwaukee Christian Center into the "enter your charity here . . ." box. Click verify. 3) Type your keyword into the Yahoo! search box. Click search.

Milwaukee Christian Center is now your default charity so you don't need to type it in each time. Remember to use this search engine for all your searching needs! You can download a GoodSearch toolbar for easy access by following the links on their website.

Volunteer's *Voice*



Ardys Listug, Tutor, Kids Place program

*Ardys Listug helping her students,
Antonnasia Tatum (L) and
Anna Rivera (R) with their
school work.*

How did you first become involved with the Milwaukee Christian Center?

The former executive director is a member of my church, so when I was looking for a volunteer position, I contacted the Milwaukee Christian Center. Initially, I thought I wanted to work with adults in the ESL program, but then I decided to work with the younger children in Kid's Place program as a tutor.

What inspires you to help others?

I am a retired school teacher, so I've always enjoyed working with the younger children. They are so open and willing to learn. It's been fun getting to know them!

What advice do you have for potential volunteers?

My advice for anyone interested in tutoring the children is to be open to different methods of teaching and learning. Teaching methodology has changed from the way I was taught, especially with regard to math, so it's an opportunity for me to learn along with the kids. Also, potential volunteers need to be aware of the family situations and cultural backgrounds of the children they work with.

What is your favorite part of volunteering?

My favorite part of volunteering is helping the children with their school work, especially reading and spelling assignments. The kids are capable and bright; they're eager to learn.

Do you have a memorable experience you'd like to share?

I enjoyed the experience of being filmed with my student, Angel, for the MCC video this past summer. I'm always surprised at what the kids know. The children seem more sophisticated and knowledgeable at an earlier age than before, and they tend to understand their assignments. And I'm always pleased the children thank me for helping them with their school work.

What do you hope to gain from volunteering?

I experience a sense of personal satisfaction from helping the children with their education. The students really appreciate the attention they receive from an adult and, I feel they look forward to working with me too.

What are your hopes for MCC's future?

MCC is definitely filling a need in the community by providing a safe place for the children to learn and grow, so I hope they continue their work with the younger children.

Thank You to Wal-Mart!

by Jeri Jende



Lisa Nelson (middle) presented a \$28,000 Wal-Mart Foundation grant to MCC staff and Youthbuild participants as part of their community involvement program.

MCC sends a warm THANK YOU to Wal-Mart's State Giving Program advisory council for the generous \$28,000 grant we received for our Youthbuild program! Lisa Nelson, Senior Manager/ Public Affairs, was on hand to award the grant. JanMarie Lambert, Executive Director, and Michael Van Alstine, Neighborhood Improvement Project Director received the check on behalf of the Youthbuild participants. JanMarie shared, "The pride and confidence of our Youthbuild participants shines through in the quality of the houses they build. It's fun to see them sharing the specific contributions they made to each house."

The Wal-Mart Foundation initiated the State Giving Program to increase the impact of its giving at the state and regional level. The foundation supports four areas of focus: education, job skills training, health, and environmental sustainability.

The MCC Youthbuild program is a workforce development program centered on academic advancement and vocational training for low-income, at-risk, young adults, ages 18 to 24, most of whom have dropped out of high school. The purpose is to engage these youth in a comprehensive youth development program; to increase the availability of safe, affordable homes; to provide land and vegetation protection and restoration; and to increase the capacity of the local community to respond to disasters.



2137 W. Greenfield Avenue
 Milwaukee, WI 53204
 www.mccwi.org
 414-645-5350

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 MILWAUKEE, WI
 PERMIT NO. 3885



Contributing writers:

Jeri Jende, editor
 JanMarie Lambert
 Leo Reis
 Kelly Conte-Neumann
 Summer Camp participants

Produced by:

Blue Star Creative
 338 North Milwaukee, Suite 201
 www.bluestarcreative.com

moving people beyond the challenges of poverty

Upcoming Events

Senior Adults Program

Harvest Fest

November 18th at 11:30 am
 Public welcome by reservation, \$5 donation
 Contact: Dawn Bogart by November 14th
 414-645-5350 x 124 or dbogart@mccwi.org

Holiday Party

December 18th at 10:30 am
 (program participants only)

Youth Program

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 6th, 9 am to 11 am
 Kosciuszko Community Center
 Contact: Sherry Ellis for a free ticket
 at 414-645-4624

Youth Program (continued)

Drug Free Christmas Kick-off

Friday, December 19th, 4 pm to 8 pm
 Kosciuszko Community Center
 Free event for youth, ages 7-15
 Contact: Brian Stewart at 414-645-8440

Christmas Camp

Cost is \$25 per youth (ages 7-13)
 Contact: Brian Stewart at 414-645-8440
 Dates: 12/22, 12/23, 12/26, 12/29, 12/30 & 1/02/09



Agency-wide

**SAVE
 THE
 DATE!!!**

2009 Bowl-a-thon Fundraiser

Saturday, March 14, 2009, Noon
 New Berlin Bowl
 16000 W. Cleveland Ave, New Berlin
 Contact Jeri at 414-645-5350 x 105 or jjende@mccwi.org
 for team registration and sponsorship opportunities