



The Education Experience

at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

Sometimes there IS an "I" in front of T-E-A-M

Dear Friends:

Many of us grew up with the adage that there is no "I" in the spelling of TEAM. Which meant that a team operates as a group and is not about the individual. But this past summer, here at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, we learned that sometimes T-E-A-M starts with an "I".

At the Center, we have always strived to be a solid team, because together is the only way we will meet some of the challenges our community faces. But we learned that sometimes the "I" comes in the form of wanting to be part of a greater good. Here are some of the things we heard this summer from our team of students, volunteers and donors:

"I" want to get my GED so that "I" can support my family.
 "I" want to volunteer because "I" want to give back.
 "I" want my child to have a better future and more opportunities.
 "I" want to help my classmates.
 What can "I" do to help?
 "I" want my life to make a difference.

All of these "I" statements have added up to a great team. Here are just two examples of the sort of teamwork we have at the Center:



GED Garden Helpers

As we were building our Children's Urban Garden, we approached our morning GED class and asked if any volunteers wanted to come out to help us for a few minutes. We were stunned by their response, when students, tutors and staff enthusiastically and immediately stepped up to move heavy stones and materials in a "bucket" line. Their enthusiasm was contagious and they wanted to know what else they could do. They told us they wanted to do what they could to give something back to the Center and to help our students in the Children's program as well. We are grateful for their help, what they did for the children and for proving that the Center has one of the best teams in town.

Second, in one of our adult math only sessions, one of our students didn't have the funds to purchase a math only GED prep book. Understanding her predicament and sympathizing with her, her fellow students all chipped in and bought her a book of her own, for her to use at home. She left the classroom, telling our staff "I just love this school! Do you know what my teammates did for me today?"

Teammates. That is how our students think of their fellow students and the Center. That we are in this together. That we support each other. These moments in life at the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center show what a wonderful environment we have, where everyone feels such a strong sense of community, that they pitch in to make sure everyone succeeds. Our staff, students, volunteers and donors and the world we created together at the Center – as a team, we lift each other up and are rebuilding our community. And it started with "I".

Diane Renaud
Executive Director/CEO



Releasing of the worms

Children's Education Experience

This past summer was exceptional. In addition to increasing the number of students (after doubling them in 2011), we still had a waiting list to get into the program. With this many students, we put the word out that we needed more help and our volunteers responded strongly, donating 900 hours in July alone!

We also were able to take our Children's Urban Garden to the next level and significantly expand the amount of planting and learning, courtesy of a grant from **The Home Depot Foundation**. Now we are able to offer the children an opportunity to put their math and reading skills to good use, as well as taking the "classroom outside", by providing first-hand exposure to other areas such as science, environment, and nutrition.

In addition to growing butterflies and praying mantises for a healthy garden, our Ms. Kerri led the children in the "Releasing of the Worms".

We are grateful to the many special volunteers that worked in the Summer heat, getting the Children's Urban Garden up and running. But they didn't stop there. They also stepped into the classrooms and donated additional time tutoring. We would like to say a special thanks to **Lilly Pharmaceutical, Paul Christensen, Patrick Sier and Dean Somers**.



Lilly Pharmaceutical

But the Summer Program would not have been nearly as successful, if it weren't for our sponsors. We were featured by **The Detroit Free Press Summer Dreams**, encouraging donors to support our kids. And we welcomed a new partner, **Sonitrol Security**, who provided t-shirts to all of our kids and volunteers.

The **Marc Suris Legacy Foundation** stepped forward as well, not only subsidizing the field trips again, which are the highlight of the Summer, but providing the Center with some additional critical assistance. We are grateful for our new refrigerator and air conditioning units for the children's classrooms. With these items, we were able to not only keep the kids healthy in the classrooms (safe from the exceptional heat of this Summer), but we now have a place to store the goodies from our Garden. In addition, thanks to the ladies of the former **St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Auxiliary** who designated funds for healthy lunches, as well as books and materials.

And no Summer would be complete without our end of the program BBQ, where the food was again generously donated by **Slows BBQ**.

In keeping with our Summer Olympics theme (and activities such as Relay Math), each of our students was part of our own Closing Ceremonies for the Summer. In addition to a gift certificate for back to school shopping, each child stood on our Olympic Podium to receive their medal - because they helped to carry the torch of knowledge.

Alanna Smith, age 8, celebrated her birthday at the "Closing Ceremonies" of our Summer Program. Here she is proudly showing medal and birthday ribbon. Alanna made a special friend in Ms. Kathy from Lilly Pharmaceuticals, whom she has adopted as her special aunt and pen pal.



Alanna Smith

Adult Education Experience

We are delighted to announce that after our first complete year with four campuses for adults, we now have graduates from all four locations. But our students are not just graduating; they are working hard to open doors to the next step of their lives.

Stephen Evans – was our first Central Campus graduate. Mr. Evans not only passed all the segments on his first attempt, he also received a PERFECT score in Reading (he is the 1st male to do so in our program) and received a superior score in Science (96th percentile), which again is the highest male score of this segment in our program as well. Congratulations Stephen!

TRiO – a strong partner of ours, TRiO provides resources to low income, but academically qualified students, so that they are able to going on to higher education. **Delta Saulsberry** has worked closely with each of our campuses and just over the summer alone, has enrolled over 30 of our students in TRiO.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield - as part of our ongoing effort to provide options for our graduates, employees of Blue Cross/Blue Shield generously came to the Center to meet with our students on two separate occasions this summer. The first time, they provided interview tips and resume reviews. When they returned, they held one-on-one mock interviews with our adult students, to provide true-life interview practice. A special thanks to **Patricia Stone** and her team at BCBS for their commitment and bringing this to our students.

Goodbye and Hello

We say goodbye to our Information Manager, Nicole Copes, who is leaving us to get married and move out of state. Her contribution to the revitalization of the organization has been profound and we will miss her greatly. However, we welcome Patricia Grayer-Wilson as the new Information Manager. Patricia, whom we met when she began volunteering for our Children's Program, has been a great addition and brings a true passion for our mission.

Some of our Students

Eric

Eric, one of our adult students, approached a GED Instructor and asked some very important questions:

"Do you ever close?"

Due to the fact that the limited other GED programs in the area are only offered during specific times of the year, he had trouble finding a program that fit his schedule. He was assured that The Center is indeed open year round and there is no "end" to services, as long as he follows the rules of the program and attends his assigned sessions.

"Will you ever kick me out?"

He shared with the staff member that he realizes he's a slow learner. Apparently his experience with other programs has been that he had twelve weeks to learn everything he needed for the GED, before he was "kicked out" of the program. This is why he still doesn't have his GED.

This young man works hard and comes to the Center three days a week. He is committed to getting his GED and improving his life. And we want to be here to help him do just that. This is how The Education Experience is different for our adult students. We are here...for as long as they need us.

Tayveon

When Tayveon came to the Children's program in 2010, he was in the first grade. But he wasn't able to read or write, didn't know his letters or numbers. We worked as a team with Tayveon, his mother and his school year teachers to help him overcome his roadblock to learning. His mother Denise brought him to our program because she had faith that he was smart, but just needed a little help to move him forward. And she was right. Tayveon is smart and he's also a hard worker. Her faith and his hard work paid off when he was made Student of the Month at his school last spring, in recognition of his academic improvement.

CORRECTIONS:

Due to technical issues, the following names were mistakenly omitted from the Spring Give and Grow Donor Listing. We deeply apologize and would like to acknowledge that gifts were made in recognition of the following people:

Eva Kelly made a donation in honor of Michael Garms

In Memoriam:

Ms. Lynne Adams

Mr. David Elliot

Ms. June M. Peters

Sister Geraldine Sellman

Michael R. Garms

Mr. Gene and Mrs. Martha Peterson

Mr. John and Mrs. Jan Entwistle

Mr. Chris Ryan

In Honor of:

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry and Charlotte Kelly

Mr. Stephen and Mrs. Pamela J. Kane

easy ways to Help make a Change

It's easy to be part of all of the positive changes in the Center and help in ways you may not have considered before.

SVSFC has enrolled with **Charity Motors** to help change the shape of our community through education. When you donate your vehicle, you can designate the proceeds to the Center. Visit www.charitymotors.org for more information.



Ask your employer – Does your employer have an Employee Giving/Matching Gift program? A volunteer group? Give grants to non-profits? Or are there employee activities such as a jean day that raise money? Ask how St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center can be included.

Check with your place of worship – many faith communities have funds that they designate to community efforts.

Monetary donations - We rely on donations to operate. Your contribution is not only tax-deductible, it also directly supports our programs. Your gift will help our kids to succeed in school and make our adults more employable, which has economic impact for our entire community – both now and in the future. We are able to accept secure donations on our website too!

In-kind - Visit our website at www.svsfcenter.org – We have a variety of needs. Something as simple as a roll of paper towel or batteries can help off-set operating costs.

United Way designation – If you or your company participate in the annual United Way campaign, you can designate your gift toward The Education Experience at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center.

Volunteer – It doesn't take a lot of time to make a difference. And we have a variety of ways that you can help. Whether it is tutoring, child care, administrative assistance, or publicity and marketing, your assistance is appreciated.

Call us at (313) 535-9200 or visit www.svsfcenter.org and learn more about how you can contribute to change.



May Day Patio Brick Painting – every child painted a brick that created a patio mural at the front of the center, created by Ms. Beth.



On a field trip to Grandpa's Tiny Farm in Frankenmuth – Marcus White made a new friend.

St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

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**For more information, please call us at (313) 535-9200
or visit www.svsfcenter.org**

Our Mission - We provide educational programs, basic skill building and academic enhancement for at-risk children and adults, designed to build self-sufficiency skills for academic and employment success, personal achievement and dignity.



Enjoying a kid's version of "Swan Lake" at Dossin Great Lakes Museum



Learning more about the geography of Michigan