

150 Years of Service

St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center Community News



www.svsfcenter.org

Spring 2010

Boundless Appreciation!

What really goes on behind the scenes on a daily basis at the Center? The answer is volunteers. The first student in the morning, the last student in the late afternoon and everyone in between are guided to personal learning achievement by a volunteer. Students, regardless of age, depend on the skills and most importantly the encouragement of a volunteer.

In the past year over 125 volunteers contributed 3,794 hours in a wide range of services. In terms of our standard work week that is equal to 101 weeks of service in a year.

Every student that achieves a GED, every elementary student that masters phonics and math facts does so because of a volunteer. Every room

that is painted, every paper that is corrected, every classroom material prepared and every special project happens because of volunteers.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that we thank each individual and group that brings action to hope and solutions to challenges through personal commitment, dedication and the gift of their skills and time.



Life Long Learning

Learning to read is not elementary

Every day, Monday through Thursday right after the school day, the halls of the Center resound with the shouts and laughter of children arriving from a community school for the Learning Experience Program. The first, second and third graders are referred by their classroom teachers because they are struggling with reading. Initially, each child is assessed for their reading level and then the intensive work begins.

As you read this, for the most part it is probably an effortless, automatic process. You see the letters, the letters form words, the words have meaning and learned fluency moves the process along to achieve an acceptable rate of reading.

However, for a child learning to read it requires complex achievements. The child must understand the relationship between sounds and letters. In English, that means a connection between 44 sounds of spoken English and the 26 letters of the alphabet. Then the letters or symbols have to be connected to sound along with the awareness that our language can be divided into small sounds. Furthermore, the small sounds can be illustrated by printed forms called phonics. All of this is only the very first step to the actual accomplishment of reading.

Each child in the after school program has an individualized lesson plan and works one on one or in a small group with a volunteer tutor. 80% of the first graders enrolled in January are reading at a pre-school level. 90% of the second and third graders who have participated in the program prior to this year are reading at grade level or above.

The gains that children achieve are a result of the teamwork with the classroom teachers and the intensive work accomplished by volunteers. **Children learn to read because a volunteer is always there.**

Our volunteers tell us the best part about working with students is:

“seeing the “light bulb” of understanding go on”

“working together toward a common goal”

“seeing students excited about learning”

“being a positive influence”

“watching children and adults grow and learn”

“seeing the importance of basic education”

Every volunteer makes a difference in the life of a student.

Every student makes a difference in the life of a volunteer.

Each gives the other a gift of caring.

“It is no exaggeration to say that how well children learn to read affects directly not only how successful they are in school but how well they do throughout their lives. When children learn to read they have the key that opens the door to all the knowledge of the world. Without the key many children are left behind.” U.S. Department of Education



Commitment And Action Become OPPORTUNITIES

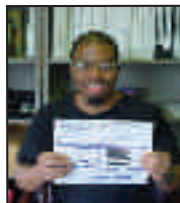
Cassandra H. is a woman who was involved in a lifestyle that revolved around drugs. Today she is a woman of faith and strong conviction about contributing to others. Her energy and joy with life is undeniable when you have the privilege of meeting her for the first time.

After Cassandra learned about the Center she enrolled in the GED program. In 2008, she had completed a training program for janitorial services but decided in 2009 that obtaining her GED would afford her greater opportunities. Cassandra attended classes regularly and faithfully completed homework assignments. After thirteen months of hard work and dedication Cassandra received her GED Certificate of Completion.

Today, Cassandra is enrolled in a Michigan Work's program that will provide her training for the transportation field. She is well on her way to employment, self sufficiency and the opportunities she has worked to achieve. It all started with her decision to pursue her GED—the first step to opportunity.

Earl E. is a quiet methodical young man who demonstrated for staff and

his fellow students the importance of persistence and resilience. Earl passed all of the GED test sections except math within a few months of his enrollment in 2007. Earl then spent eighteen months of intensive class work and homework conquering math and his fear of not having the right answer. Math had become a major obstacle to his plan to attend a community college and he was determined not to be defeated before reaching his goal.



Earl's story is one of personal courage and tenacity. It would have been so easy for him to alter his goal or give up his dream. Instead he persevered and never missed a day of class or a homework assignment. In November of 2009, he took the math section of the GED test and passed it without difficulty. Today, Earl is enrolled in an electronic drafting program at Wayne County Community College.

His artistic ability and skill with the written word are helpful but it is his unyielding resolve that predicts his ultimate success.

Camille S. had a job in the insurance industry that she enjoyed and anticipated long term security for her family through her employment until she was laid off, and it changed her life. For a period of time she worked a number of temporary jobs but needed to once again find full time employment.

Camille came to the Center to work on her GED after completing the required work for an Associates Degree in Science at Wayne County Community College. However, the degree could not be awarded until she received her GED Certificate.

As with many of the students who come to the Center, Camille faced a number of daunting challenges in her lifetime including the loss of a family member to street violence. Now at mid-life, unemployment was yet another major hurdle to overcome.

Camille was motivated and committed to success so it was no surprise that in December she received her GED Certificate. Today, the opportunity to work in the medical field is attainable for Camille as she begins her training in the No Worker Left Behind program.

Giving The Gift of Opportunity to Others

If you have two or three hours a week to contribute to adults and children, we welcome your help! Your skill and experience will provide a life changing chance for others. The Center's ability to provide an intensive small group learning environment is only possible because of dedicated volunteers. For more information call our Volunteer Coordinator, Sr. Marie Judith Haupt at 313-535-9200 ext. 3104 or visit our web site at www.svsfcenter.org.

Thank You to Our Donors

We take our stewardship responsibility seriously. Your gift allows us to continue our mission of providing children and families the opportunity for change. Education is the single factor that provides hope for the future for all who come to the Center.

We pledge to you that we will use your gift not only as you direct but always with the integrity and fiscal management you have a right to expect. Thank you for your continued support and belief in the possibility for change and growth.



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Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events

APRIL

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

A time to celebrate and express appreciation to each of our volunteers. Amazing individuals put their skills and caring into action so that children and families have the gift of opportunities.



MAY

GIVE AND GROW FUND 2010

The Give and Grow Fund provides children in the Brightmoor area an intensive summer reading and math program. It is designed to prevent summer loss and increase mastery of the foundational skills required for school success. Watch your mail for more information.

For more information please call (313) 535-9200.

The St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide education and skill development opportunities for at risk children and families.

Vision Statement:

We will provide educational offerings, basic skill building and academic enhancement for at risk children and families designed to build self sufficiency skills for academic and employability success, personal achievement and dignity.

*For more information
please visit our web site,
www.svsfcenter.org.*