



Miracles on 32nd Street

2020: Volume I

HEROES FOR HOPE: THE PROOF IS IN THE PEOPLE

Written by Ivica Miljak, WSCC Marketing & Events Coordinator

Walk through our donation doors on any given day and a hive of activity greets you, as staff and volunteers buzz around to prepare a meal, greet a client, or grab a slice from our social enterprise, Ohio City Pizzeria. The truth is, a lot goes on around here, and in the midst of all this busy-ness sits Rachel Acevedo, our Strengthening Families Coordinator and newly minted Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator. For Rachel, no two days are the same. Juggling her two roles means that some days, she's building relationships with families in our Family Engagement program: reaching out, hosting events, facilitating services, but most importantly, planning and implementing strategies to help families grow stronger. It's no surprise that she's built some pretty strong bonds with the kids and parents in the program. "For the families that come back regularly," she says, "you get to watch the kids grow up, and just being there and supporting



them, you get to be part of so many of their milestones and so many different times in their life. I was at the house when a couple of twins took their first steps. I helped another boy get a new backpack when he was starting school. You should've seen the look on his face! Being able to share these moments is my favorite part about my job. You don't want to see families and kids come back again, but as long as they need us, it is so rewarding to be part of their journey."

In recognition of her work, Rachel

was named the 2019 recipient of the Superstar Award, co-sponsored by the Saint Luke's Foundation and the Baltimore-based Superstar Foundation. This distinction recognizes the very best direct service staff in the field who distinguish themselves and their work by building transformational relationships with those being served through the intentional use of data to adjust their service delivery approach. The selection committee

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DIRECTOR'S DIALOGUE: *Face Lift*



I think that our Center takes great pride in our building and facilities. The front of our main building is iconic. It's certainly what I thought of whenever anyone mentioned the Center before I worked here. I'd go so far as to say (without mentioning names) that other local organizations have attempted to mimic the front of our building! We also take pride in the renovations that came out of the Campaign for

the Future so that we could provide a 42-year service with a modern facility. We've recently been able to update our Workforce Development Program building with a new elevator and other modernizations thanks to the Cleveland Foundation. Of course, the 35-year-old Ohio City Pizzeria also saw a face lift in 2019.

Likewise, some incredible people have come through our Center to work, volunteer, serve and be served throughout our history. I love that a volunteer has sought to memorialize many of those faces through watercolors that decorate our walls. We show our appreciation for special people through awards and other recognitions as well. I'm even reminded often about the contributions of my predecessors and all that they've meant to this place. I have a direct line to many of them so that I can better understand my role through their interpretations of it. Some incredible people have sat in my "chair."

I loved our Christmas card for 2019, because it combined both of these blessings. That iconic building received a true "face lift," by putting that which breathes life into this place right in front of it - the staff's faces! They too are iconic, sometimes modern (sometimes less so and that's okay too), experienced, thoughtful, personal. They are a part of our story too, even if they weren't a founder, a big donor or in a position of leadership.

The staff here is our face to the rest of the world. I'm proud that it is a diverse face. I'm proud that it is representative of those we are privileged to serve. I'm proud of the expertise they bring and acknowledge that the work they do to actually fulfill our mission is not an easy one. Heavy are the burdens of the caregiver in a world with growing needs.

So we will also take an opportunity at the end of February to acknowledge the staff through a week the board has called "Caring for the Caregiver." Staff appreciation week will be something of recognition, personal affirmation, food and other treats, personal care and building of camaraderie. It is unprecedented in my career to see a board do something like this and yet it is so obvious and necessary.

Of course, while you may not be on the all-star team that is our staff, you can still be a caregiver. All who volunteer, donate, attend an event, help carry a box of clothes in from a donor's car or give their time and expertise on our board are caregivers too. We all have gifts to bring, and we thank all of you for sharing them so freely.

*In a spirit of service,
John Litten, Executive Director*



was impressed with Rachel's work throughout the implementation of our pilot Family FUNDamentals program, a repeating six-week series designed to promote family skill building. As part of the team that developed the program, Rachel was responsible for building it from the ground up, using data from the initial six-week cycle to inform future editions of the program. So far, the program has been nothing short of a rousing success. "Not only do I feel more comfortable with WSCC, but my kids feel more comfortable. They are stressed and nervous with new people and new agencies," says one mother of her family's experience. In just six weeks, "this program helped me manage stressful situations with my children and how to talk through them," added another.

There is certainly a science behind the art of our work, and Rachel's excellent use of data in her work

is one of the reasons she recently added a new hat as our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, a role which will allow her to apply leadership and vision to ensure innovative and effective strategies to achieve and maintain equity across all of our programs and among our staff, donor, and volunteer communities. It's a collaborative, creative role, and another that Rachel is involved in developing from the ground up, albeit this time from an internal standpoint, ensuring that all of the moving parts of our organization are compliant in being equitable and diverse, and that anyone who wants an opportunity to get involved in support of WSCC's mission will have the opportunity to do so.

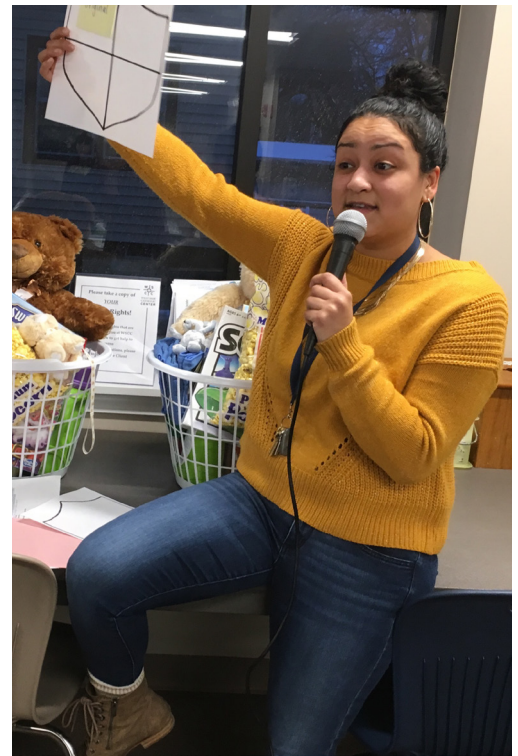
One of Rachel's early initiatives was the formation of a Parent Advisory Committee. She gathered a group of parents from the WSCC community for the purpose of providing input for our

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Strengthening Families Initiative on the design of programs, and on how services meet the needs of the families involved. One who knows Rachel would not be surprised by the way that she taps into invested members of her community in order to drive the great results she achieves in her program. It's another way to gather data and feedback as her work continues to evolve, all while giving her constituents a sense of ownership over their WSCC experience.

As daily life at WSCC continues to hum around her, it's impossible not to be drawn to the flurry of activity surrounding Rachel's work. Her passion is tangible, her enthusiasm contagious. Her work is the kind that makes you notice "the value she places on reaching out to parents and being open to their suggestions, the obvious level of comfort clients have with her, and her communication with her team." These are the sentiments of the Superstar Award selection committee, ones that are shared among Rachel's colleagues here at WSCC. To provide that level of value and comfort is not easy. It requires a certain sort of care, a unique kind of personal touch. And at the end of the day, the results don't lie – Rachel is making a tremendous difference in the lives of those she serves.



CITY CHAMPIONS

It was an incredible honor to be named by The Plain Dealer as a Cleveland City Champion! This series, in partnership with The Guardian and with public broadcaster Ideastream, highlights people and organizations that have done bold, innovative work to lift up a neighborhood or a community.



To check out our article, head over to cleveland.com and search "West Side Catholic Center." Our feature is titled "West Side Catholic Center serves 'often invisible' population."

To read about other Cleveland City Champions, you can head over to tinyurl.com/CleChampions and learn more about the people and organizations that are transforming Cleveland through their work and through their stories.



FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the Incredible Organizations that Support Our Programs

The George Gund Foundation was established in 1952 as a private, nonprofit institution with the sole purpose of contributing to human well-being and the progress of society. Over the years, program objectives and emphases have been modified to meet the changing opportunities and problems of our society, but the foundation's basic goal of advancing human welfare remains constant.



The George Gund Foundation has been a supporter of WSCC since 1991. Their consistent and ongoing support has provided for our Resource Center and basic needs programming which supports over 50 services ranging from meals and clothing to legal assistance and tax clinics.

The Resource Center emphasizes hospitality, welcoming all who come in need of our services. Every individual who comes in need is served at no cost in a safe environment with dignity and respect. Open six days a week, the Resource Center provides respite day shelter for the poor and homeless, as well as outreach, wellness and self-sufficiency programs.

**THE
GEORGE
GUND
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Thank you Gund Foundation for your ongoing support!

DONOR GRATITUDE

You can make donations to WSCC to celebrate a special occasion, to ask "in lieu of gifts" or to honor someone special. WSCC expresses gratitude for the recent donations made in memory of the following:

IN MEMORIAM:

Jeremy Bennett	Kathleen Kennedy
Richard Clemens	Maura Lang
Mary Lou Craven	Martin Mamone
Joan Cuffaro	Jean Merriman
Brenda Daane	Max Muzyczka
Rosemary T. Eyerman	Vincent Ruggerio
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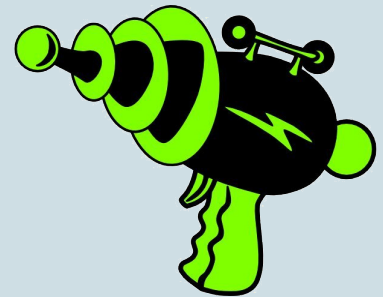
To learn more about giving, contact the Advancement Department at info@wscenter.org or ext. 132.

EVENT CENTRAL

New name, same fun for the entire family!

WSCC Family Extravaganza

Formerly known as Rock & Bowl, this event combines bowling, laser tag, and arcade games to create a fun-packed day for the entire family to get more familiar with WSCC and our mission. Join us on Sunday, March 29th from 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM at SPINS Bowl in Independence!



Visit wsccenter.org/rockandbowl to learn more!

Save the date for a wonderful event put on by the amazing ladies of the Friends of the West Side Catholic Center, an organization that does so much to support our Moriah House Family Shelter!



SAVE THE DATE!

May 1st, 2020

Friends of the West Side Catholic Center
presents

COCKTAILS, CUISINE AND CIGARS FOR CHARITY

Benefitting Moriah House

Please join us at Lakewood Country Club

***Annual Fundraiser moved from March to
May 1, 2020. More details to follow but add
this event to your calendar*

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for Friday, November 20th, when we'll host our signature gala fundraiser, Warm Hearts Winter Nights, at The Marriott Downtown at Key Center.



...AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, LACE UP THOSE RUNNING SHOES TOO!

This year's Pancake Run, our 15th edition of the event, will be held on Saturday, June 6th at 8AM right here at WSCC. Every registration includes a pancake breakfast and the coolest race shirt in town, courtesy of GV Art & Design.

Get those competitive juices flowing, because even if you don't win the race, you can still try to eat the most pancakes!



Learn more about this year's race at wsccenter.org/pancakerun!



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IT IS OUR MISSION :



West Side Catholic Center is grounded in faith, hope, love and respect for those we serve. We assist all who come in need of food, clothing, shelter, advocacy and a path to self-sufficiency.

"I don't feel judged by you, you can see my flaws and know my flaws and you wouldn't think less of me."

~ WSCC Client



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