



Padua Ponderings

Volume 4, Issue 2: Summer 2011

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Mission Statement

The Padua Center, sponsored by St. Martin de Porres parish, is a Christian community-based presence reaching out by empowering people at all stages of life to achieve their maximum potential through education, counseling, support and community involvement.

Vision

The Vision of the Padua Center is a neighborhood free of commercial sex trafficking, and drugs (use and supply), beautified by the people actively engaged in community and self-growth.

Principles

- Umoja*—unity
- Imani*—faith
- Kujichagulia*—Self-determination
- Ujima*—collective work
- Ujamaa*—cooperative economics
- Nia*—purpose
- Kuumba*—creativity

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Transitions at the Padua Center

Transition at the Padua is taking place. After three years of dedicated service Mrs. Alicia Smith, the educational coordinator at the Center, has left to continue her studies. Alicia came to the Center in 2008 after leading a charter school in Detroit, Michigan for two years. She used her organizational skills and her love of children to enrich the Padua Center experience. Through her leadership, Padua Center saw growth and stability. Most evident is the positive influence she had in the lives of the young men and women she nurtured. Mrs. Alicia Smith affected nearly 250 children during her tenure at Padua Center.



Alicia Smith leaves to continue her education.

A former charter school principal, she has the skill and love for not just the kids but also the community. Along with her son Joseph, they started Maturing Young Men, a program that mentors young men and grooms them to become productive citizens. Her vision created numerous collaborations with the Boy Scouts Of America, the University Of Toledo, the City of Toledo, the Elks Lodge, Council Woman Paula Hicks-Hudson and Dr. Morris Jenkins of the University of Toledo. Padua Center will truly miss Alicia; she will continue her work in the community as she pursues her Master’s degree in criminology at the University of Toledo. The Center will honor Alicia at the “Peaces of Art” banquet and silent auction on Oct. 16, 2011.

Mrs. Tami Rehkla, head teacher in the after school program, completed her Ameri-Corps service and moves onto further her education. Mrs. Tami Rehkla, came to Padua Center in 2009 as a student from Owens College. Tami’s skill and inspiration brought the tutoring program to a highly successful level. The Center saw her love for children daily. According to Tami, coming from the suburbs it was a cultural awakening to work with minority children. After a few months here, one could see the love the kids had for her. Tami returns to school to work with special needs children.

Padua Center Welcomes Mrs. Morgannia Dawson

The new Educational Coordinator at The Padua Center, Morgannia Dawson comes to this position with great experience and enthusiasm. Morgannia, a native of Toledo, is a former teacher at Nathan Hale Elementary School. She brings experience as a teacher to this position.

She will work with two social work interns: Crystal Oliver and Luana Rager and Mercy Corps member Brian Hayward to assure the continued quality of the Padua Possibilities program. Mrs. Dawson will also direct the after school-tutoring program that also began in September.



Mrs. Morgannia Dawson, Educational Coordinator

The Vertical Garden

Working with staff from Toledo Grows, the children had a fun time building two vertical hydroponic garden systems. Mercy Health System procured a grant entitled, "Access to Food," which provided for the systems.

The children planted peppers, greens, and tomatoes in the styrofoam pots. The garden system is a pole and pod system with a 55-gallon barrel to water the garden through a pump system.



Chicken Fest is Another Success

The chicken fest was a hit for the community. Once again, the fest featured a chicken barbeque, water games, face painting, and general fun. A drum line came to entertain during the beautiful summer afternoon.



Volunteers and Their Impact

Reflection from Grace Wang

“I have always enjoyed working with children which was the reason that I chose to spend my summer at Padua Center. However, what I gained from this experience was far more than what I expected. I had the opportunity to organize and carry out five summer camps that provided children with lots of fun, as well as valuable information and knowledge, such as maintaining inner peace, resolving conflicts, protecting the environment, something not heavily emphasized in school. Besides working with children, my duties at the center allowed me to be actively involved in events and services offered and held at the center. Together with neighborhood residents and community leaders, Padua Center leads us to make a difference in the community each day; in the process of serving others.



Grace Wang, a medical student and volunteer at Padua Center.

I reciprocally gained from the people that I served. I improved my skills in communication, administration, leadership and teamwork, as well as becoming familiarized with community organizing and gardening. I found it a privilege to be part of an organization that provides so many services to both children and adults. Padua fosters involvement and volunteerism. Community service is a life-long commitment. As I leave Padua Center with an enriched experience and personal growth, I will continue to dedicate myself to public service and education.”

Reflection from Ashley Fuchs



Ashley Fuchs, a medical student and volunteer at Padua Center.

Working as an intern at Padua Center through the Community Health Project has been a wonderful experience. As a future physician, it is imperative that I learn more about the community I am living in, as I will be treating patients of all different backgrounds. This program not only helped me understand part of the community, but also allowed me to become part of that community. I immersed myself into a culture other than my own and learned the beliefs and backgrounds of the people in the community.

The experience I gained this summer is invaluable. I improved my communication skills and understanding through working with the young people at Padua Center. It was a pleasure to see the progress made by several of the young people throughout the past eight weeks. Padua Center offers wonderful programs to the community that helps to form the leaders of tomorrow. I found it an honor to be a part of such a wonderful program and hope to see its continued success.

Emerging Young Ladies and Maturing Young Men Programs

The Emerging Young Ladies is a program designed to mentor young ladies. A group of ten young ladies were involved in the summer program and are continuing to meet throughout the year. Agneta Seeley taught the girls to sew and each one produced a pillow cover. In October the girls will learn to sew pajama bottoms! On September 23, the Toledo Women's Bar Association conducted a session on telephone etiquette and professional development. Humor ring tones and disrupting calls help dramatize how to use cell phones. The Q and A with women lawyers was very enlightening for the girls. The Emerging Young Ladies will continue to meet through the year. Mrs. Kim Algee and Mrs. Tracy Harmon are among the mentors who are meeting with the girls.



The Maturing Young Men is a program to give an alternative to gangs, and the negative influences in life. The young men are enrolling in flight school and after 1,000 hours they will have their flight certificates. Mrs. Alicia Smith and her son, Joseph, will continue the Maturing Young Men program separate from Padua Center.

Brighten Up "Names the Neighborhood" and Conducts Clean-Up

Brighten Up Toledo brought together the City of Toledo and the young men and women of Padua center to clean up the neighborhood; the group rid an entire alley of tires, trash, and junk. Brighten Up continues neighborhood organizing and sponsored a "Name the Neighborhood" contest. The winning name is Kwanzaa Park!



Brighten up Kwanzaa Park neighborhood clean up.



Reflections From The Desk Of Sister Virginia

Dear friends of Padua Center, this is a very exciting time for us. We are beginning a new school year, have some new staff and are launching our first major fundraiser! We are very busy at Padua Center!

Padua Center appreciates Brian Hayward for writing the majority of this newsletter. Brian is awaiting the final paperwork to join us as a Mercy Corps member!

Thanks to each of you for your continued support of the ministry of Padua Center. We are growing, we are becoming stronger. We still face many challenges with our financial situation, but we are hopeful that grants, donations and fees will continue to support the great work here at Padua.

See you Oct 16, 2011 at our "Peaces of Art" event.

Sister Virginia Welsh

Donors from March - June 30, 2011

Sharon and Ed Ahlfors
 Sharon Ahrens
 Coleena Ali
 Alice Arnzen
 Chris & Natasha Bartley
 Doris Beach
 Alyse Beteder
 Bill and Marge Blackwell
 Jonathan Boyle
 Lucille Braca
 Jacque Chaney
 Debbie Davis
 Buzz & Ellen Ditto
 Sandra Donnell
 Diane Flaggs
 Norm & Libbie Foster
 Dennis & Karen Franks
 Tim & Laura Galvin
 Anita Garraway
 Ann Hall
 Rochelle and Tom Hite
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 Rev. Joseph Jaros
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 Odessa Rowan
 Irma Rutkowski
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 Raymond and Pamela Segur
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 Kay Shrewsbury
 Sue Nowak
 Sister Elizabeth Jean Siebenaler
 Eric Sack
 Cherie Spino
 St. Joseph Catholic Church
 Joan Szuberla
 Mary Thebo
 Lucretia Thomas
 Wauseon Machine & Mfg. Plant 1
 Warren and Kathy Welsh
 Clancy Yaeger
 Jean Zurat



It's our birthday!

Padua Center is celebrating its fifth birthday at "Peaces of Art"
 There will a banquet and a silent auction of children's art

October 16, 2011 (5:00 to 8:00 PM)

Sullivan Center at Gesu Parish
 2049 Parkside Blvd
 Toledo, Ohio 43606

Music provided by Father Art and the Hoy Notes!

See you there!



Darryn shows off his sunflower that will be auctioned at the "Peaces of Art" silent and live auction.



Isabel helps Timmetrea with her art for the "Peaces of Art" auction.



Morgan Mingo, a Padua Volunteer

