



Padua Ponderings

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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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Padua Center begins Padua Possibilities

After many months of planning, The Padua Center has begun an innovative program to address the suspension issue in the local schools. Funded in part



Panella Rivers, a school counselor and member of St. Martin de Porres parish, meets with one of the children in the Padua Possibilities Program.

by a grant from the Marguerite D’Youville Foundation II, the Padua Possibilities offers an intervention program for suspended children from Pickett Academy. Parents and guardians must attend a session at the Padua Center the first day of a child’s suspension and spend approximately 1 1/2 hours with Padua Staff to explore issues that might cause the child’s behavior.

Simultaneously the suspended student meets with a counselor. After the first hour session parent and child can meet together to discuss possible alternative behaviors that might prevent further suspensions. After lunch, the child meets with Dr. Lynne Hamer of the University of Toledo who works with the child on alternatives to violence and disruptive behavior. Two hours of academic tutoring complete the day for the suspended child. In October and November the Padua Center had five different children participate in the program. It will be several months before we can judge the success of the program.

St. Marguerite d’Youville Foundation II Awards Grant

In the midst of a tough economic climate and great losses for many foundations, the St. Marguerite d’Youville Foundation II granted \$15,399 to the Padua Center for two innovative programs focused on helping students achieve academic excellence. The Padua Possibilities program provides an alternative to suspension for children from Pickett Academy. The Vision Therapy program, to begin in January, will screen children for vision stress and will then provide therapy for them at The Padua Center. Dr. Jeffery Schmakel is assisting in the implementation of the Vision Therapy program. Two therapists are receiving training.



Sister Virginia receives grant money from Tony Werner of the Marguerite D’Youville Foundation II for the Padua Possibilities and Vision Therapy programs.

Christ Child Society Provides Coats for Children

The Christ Child Society generously provided coats for all the children at The Padua Center who were in need of winter apparel.

Hats and gloves accompanied the coats and big smiles of appreciation were evident on the faces of all the children and their parents. The Christ Child Society has partnered with The Padua Center for two years and really helps us keep our children warm.

Comments from Alicia Smith, Educational Coordinator

The students and staff of the Padua Center wish everyone a Happy New Year. We are thankful for 2008 and everything that we've been blessed to accomplish. We are looking forward to a prosperous and eventful 2009, filled with new programs and activities for our students and community.

Thank you to all, who joined us in our Kwanzaa Holiday Celebration on December 29, 2008, it was especially wonderful because of your presence. Thank you to St. Martin de Porres, AmeriCorps, Toledo Grows, Dr. Hamer and the University of Toledo, St. Johns, Challenge Girls, the Youth of OLPH, Youth of Sylvania Franciscan Academy, Julie Taylor and Christ Child Society, Rite Aid, UT3, Knights of Columbus, Mercy College, Lourdes College, YWCA, Rita Hoff and St. Patrick's of Heatherdowns and many more organizations and volunteers for opening their hearts to our children this season.

Padua Center is busy each day providing after school academic assistance. The Knights of Columbus provide assistance in understanding the functioning of the government and our core democratic values. The Center assists 22 students from various schools throughout Toledo with arts and crafts, social skills, and computer assistance.

We also provide reading support along with new programs that will guide our youth through leadership with the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts of America sponsored by David Walker and Scout Reach, and give direction to post secondary education with Engineering Minds for Today's Youth with John Whitlock a local Toledo engineer.

Vision Therapy, with Dr. Schmakel, will help many of our students receive necessary treatment to improve in school. Our Emerging Young Ladies Program will begin very soon. It will run every Saturday starting January 17, 2008 for four

Baby Chicks Join the Center

Ten two-week old chicks arrived at the Padua Center on November 5, 2008. These chicks are rapidly growing and will join the five hens in the outside chicken coop. Because of their very tiny size, they are currently kept in a brooder box in the Center.

Shelby, one of our littlest children, watched with great interest as we explained all that the chicks would need to grow. She was well aware of their need for fresh water two times a day, and a full tray of chick feed. She was intrigued with the need for grit because the chickens have no teeth and she thought the heat lamp was interesting. After a quizzical smile she asked, "Where are their toys?" Our thanks to Mike Szuberla and ToledoGrows for all their work with the chickens, both inside and out!

weeks. This is a wonderful and fun learning opportunity for young sixth and eighth grade girls. The program will end February 14, 2009 with a Valentine Banquet that will allow them to dress up and celebrate what they learned. Padua Possibilities, our alternative to suspension program, has had a very good impact on participating students, providing academic and social skills to improve their behavior upon their return to school after suspension. These are just a few of our programs that currently benefit our students and community.



Many donors made possible the smiles on the children's faces as they opened donated Christmas presents.

Please feel free to share any thoughts, ideas, or visions you feel may be productive. Truly it is a group effort to support the growth of the Padua Center mission. There are many things on the horizon for Padua Center children and its community. Continue to pray that our God will strengthen us through faith to achieve all that is before us. If you need any information, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you,
Alicia Smith

The Kwanzaa Celebration

Each year the Padua Center sponsors the celebration of Kwanzaa. This year the Center partnered with St. Martin de Porres Parish and invited parishioners, neighbors, participants and supporters of the Padua Center to celebrate one night of Kwanzaa.

The African-American celebration runs from December 26, 2008 through January 1, 2009. Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa focuses on a particular principle. The principles of Kwanzaa are the principles upon which The Padua Center operates; you can find them on the first page of the newsletter.



K. LaVerne Redden, of St. Martin de Porres Parish, pours water onto a plant as part of the Libation Ceremony at the beginning of the Kwanzaa celebration. Major Smith assisted in proclaiming the names of Ancestors. We proclaim that we stand on the shoulders of those gone before us.

New Partners: Work Experience and Experience Works Programs

There are a number of programs in the Toledo area that are helping to staff the Padua Center. These programs are invaluable for us because we are a non-profit organization. "Experience Works" is a program that provides work



John Howard, from Experience Works, is our new Volunteer Coordinator.

opportunities for older adults who seeking employment. Three Experience Works members bless the Padua Center by assisting the center in the day-to-day operation of our programs. John Howard attends to the morning needs of Padua Center. Sherry Baker is a vital part of our new programs. Sherry is receiving training as a vision therapist and will work in our Vision Therapy program. She also provides tutoring for the youth in the Padua Possibilities program. Our third Experience Works member is Elsie Pate who assists in the preparation of snacks for the children, and manages the records of those who are coming

and going! Beverly Speight, of the Work Experience Program assists John Howard with the morning hospitality. Thanks to these programs the Padua Center is able to meet the needs of all our guests and children.

Light the Night Project

The University of Toledo Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership, under the direction of Dr. Lynne Hamer joined with other local organizations to address the issue of street lighting in the Padua/Pickett Academy area.

On December 16, 2008, the "Light the Night Project" held a special celebration. Mayor Carty Finkbeiner, Councilman Ashford, Scott Bishop of the City of Toledo Department of Public Utilities were among the guests. Danielle Witcher chaired the event.



Padua children lead "This Little Light of Mine" at the Light the Night celebration.

Donors and Volunteers

Lucia Braca, Painesville OH
Evelyn Shordt, Toledo OH
Candace Renner, Toledo OH
Reverend Ron Warnimont, Columbus Grove OH
Steve Wirzylo, Toledo OH
Steve Wirzylo Sr., Toledo OH
Tim and Joan Sacksteder, Tiffin OH
Rose Marie Hawkins, Upper Sandusky OH
Kim and Bill Welsh, Sun City AZ
Ed and Sharon Ahlfors, Toledo OH
Will and Gloria Baughn, Delphos OH
Walter Pauly, Maumee OH
Mary Thebo, Toledo OH
Toni and Sue Nowak

In-Kind Donation

Barbara Manning (*Website Design and Maintenance*)
Robert Scarlett (*Chairs*)
Yne Gu (*Books*)
Mary Gustwiller (*Nativity Set*)
Teresa Rodriguez, University of Toledo (*Projector, Clothes, and Gifts*)
Christ Child Society (*Coats*)
Challenge Girls (*Toiletries*)
St. Patrick Heatherdowns (*Gifts*)
Youth (*Gifts*)
Sylvania Franciscan Academy (*Gifts*)
OLPH Youth (*Cleaning*)
YWCA (*Cleaning*)
FLS Marketing and HOT Printing and Graphics (*Printing Annual Report*)

Children See Former President Clinton

In the midst of the political campaign children at the Padua Center focused their extra time on citizenship. Thanks to Jonathan Boyle and the Knights of Columbus, a number of helpful posters were available to the students.

These teaching aids helped them to come to understand the principles of our country. Through our connections with Grover Patterson School, our students received an invitation to a political rally by former President Bill Clinton. It was a wonderful experience for our children to participate in the political process and see a former President.



Former President Bill Clinton making a speech.

Because we are a tax exempt organization we assured parents that we were not endorsing a candidate but giving our children a special and rare opportunity to democracy in action. Seeing President Clinton thrilled the children and helped them to understand more fully the election process. We thank the Knights of Columbus #386 for their contributions of educational materials on the core democratic values.

Annual Report in the Mail

In October, the Padua Center completed two years of operation. It is marvelous to see all that has happened in two years. Children enjoyed success in education; they learned, played and loved summer camps; they went to a Mud Hens game, the Art Museum, and to see a former President. The children collected eggs from chickens in the backyard! Wow! This has been a wonderful two years.

In addition to the children's programs, the Center provided daily hospitality for neighbors and guests; made partnerships and fulfilled grants. Many of you received our Annual Report and our appeal for donations. If you already responded, thank you. If you are still sorting through your Christmas mail, please take time to read our report and consider making a contribution to our on-going work. If you did not receive a report, you can call for one to be sent to you, or you can read it on-line at the Center's website.

**THANKS FOR
EVERYONE'S
SUPPORT!**