

## WESTERN AVENUE COMMUNITY CENTER SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022

### UPCOMING FALL PROGRAMS

- **Hispanic Outreach Program and Interpretation**  
By Appointment
- **Senior Fitness (Ages 55+):**  
T & Th 10 -11 am
- **Tinervin Family Food Distribution:**  
Everyday 9 am - 5 pm
- **After School & Mentoring Program:**  
M, Tu & W 3:30 - 6:30 pm  
(Registration IS Required Starting Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>)
- **Body Under Construction:**  
**FREE** Adult Workout Sessions  
M & W 9 - 10 am
- **Middle School Youth Night:**  
(Registration IS Required Starting Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>)  
D87 & Unit 5 Welcome  
Th 3:30 - 6:00 pm
- **Basketball Open Gym:**  
(Registration IS Required Starting Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>)  
Th 7 – 9 pm (High School)  
Sun 9 am -12 pm (Adults 18+)
- **WERQ (Dance Fitness):**  
T 7-8 pm, F 9 -10 am
- **CCSI: Seniors Case Management Services**  
3rd M 8:30 am -1 pm,  
4th T 8:30-11 am  
(Starting in September)
- **Seniors BINGO:**  
Every 3rd Th 11 am -1 pm
- **ESL CLASSES:**  
**Heartland Community College**  
M/T 9 am -12 pm, and Th 9 -11 am
- **Kindermusik:**  
Hispanic Program  
W 10 - 11 am (Toddlers only)  
**FREE** (Starting in September)

### SUMMER FOR GROWTH

At no time in recent history has the center been as active with clients of all ages and interests. The financial commitment from the Tinervin Family Foundation and the significant gift by State Farm in honor of Willie Brown that recognized his many contributions to the community and Western Avenue has been a blessing.

As you read about this summer's activities, imagine the many smiles and positive outcomes provided by a caring and dedicated staff and volunteers for all who entered the building. Whether it was the food program, interpretation assistance, seniors playing BINGO and balls bouncing on the gym floor, it clearly represented a vibrant Western Avenue Community Center.

It is a reality that during the past several years a vibrant and community treasure was in jeopardy of fading away. From the new landscaping, modernization of our accounting and payroll functions, to technology upgrades, and renewed engagement of our Board of Directors and staff, the center is "abuzz".

Developing partnerships with Carle, McLean County United Way and the Tinervin Family Foundation are something to watch in the coming months. A mobile healthcare clinic, support for new entrants to the workforce, and a building expansion that will expand our program offerings make this a very exciting time for Western Avenue.

Not to go unmentioned are our loyal donors and founding church, Second Presbyterian who have faithfully contributed to the longevity of Western Avenue serving the community for 96 years. It is a privilege to be associated with this organization.

Board President,



Michael Jones

To see details on events, news, current programs, donate, or sign up to volunteer, click <https://westernavenuecc.org>.

## SUMMER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Summer Leadership Program

The Leadership Development Program was designed to get kids more interested and invested in Bloomington/Normal. Potential participants were recommended for the program by teachers, administrators, and other staff at Bloomington Junior High School, and then interviewed before selections were made. Funding for this summer's program was a direct result of memorial gifts from the center's longtime supporter, Willie Brown. Going forward we will name the program in his memory.

The Leadership program was designed with two parts. First, to introduce participants to Five Leadership pillars, given the acronym RAILS (RESPECT, ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY, LEARNING, and SHARING) and have them participate in a book study of Sean Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens". Second, allowing them to get out in the community to discover the numerous career opportunities available, to learn and see the historical aspects of Blo/No, as well as to have FUN! Some of our outings have included:

- **Connect Transit** – members were taught how to ride the Transit System in Bloomington/Normal. General Manager David Braun even awarded the program with FREE ride vouchers to wherever we wanted and needed to go on existing bus routes.
- **Texas Roadhouse** – provided members with a look at the restaurant industry and invited us to stay for lunch.
- **Heartland Community College** – gave members an introduction to HCC and a "Tour of the Trades" including HVAC, Welding & Fabrication, Photography & Construction.
- **Midwest Food Bank** – where kids tapped into their civic duties by volunteering. The group filled 945 bags of Cheez-it crackers which was an impressive number, according to staff at the Food Bank.
- **Other visits** – We visited the David Davis Mansion, Blo/No Water Reclamation Plant (BNWRD), Twin Groves Wind Farm, ISU Recycling Plant, the McLean County History Museum, ISU Adventure Course, Fairview Aquatic Center, WMBD TV Station, Pheasant Lanes, Epiphany Farms, Altitude Trampoline Park, and Grady's Fun Park, as well as other fun treasures like Red Raccoon Games.

One enormous program highlight was our participation in making history in Bloomington by contributing paintings/artwork on a mural collaboration with Artolution. This project involved over 2 weeks of planning and painting with the theme of "Creating Safe Spaces". The mural is currently located in Miller Park.

We want to send an ENOURMOUS THANK YOU to the Bloomington/Normal community who hosted our participants and supported our program.

An end to our summer program was celebrated with a family BBQ on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Summer 2022



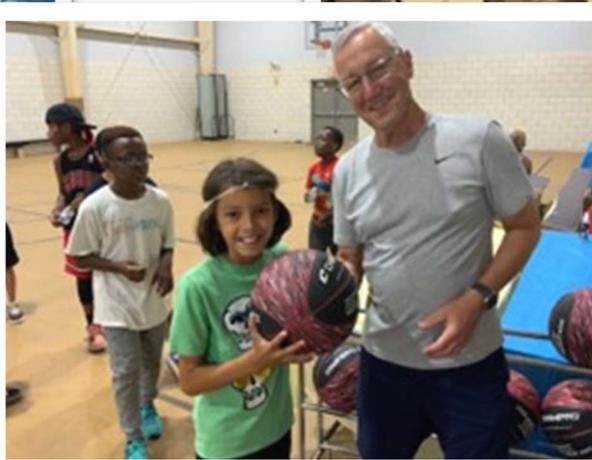
**HCC Theater Camp**

In June we partnered with Heartland Community College to host a Middle School Theater Camp. The students put on a play called Night Crew where night-time visitors, like the Tooth Fairy, Counting Sheep, and Sandman, discussed their “Nightly visiting” schedule. In a week they memorized lines, created costumes, built a set, and developed their characters.



**Basketball Camp**

This summer we have also been happy to host a basketball camp for 9- to –11-year-olds. led by Joe Nietz. The kids came three times a week for 8 weeks to learn basketball fundamentals such as ball handling techniques, offense, and defense drills. We thank Illinois State University Men’s Basketball Program for the donation of basketballs.



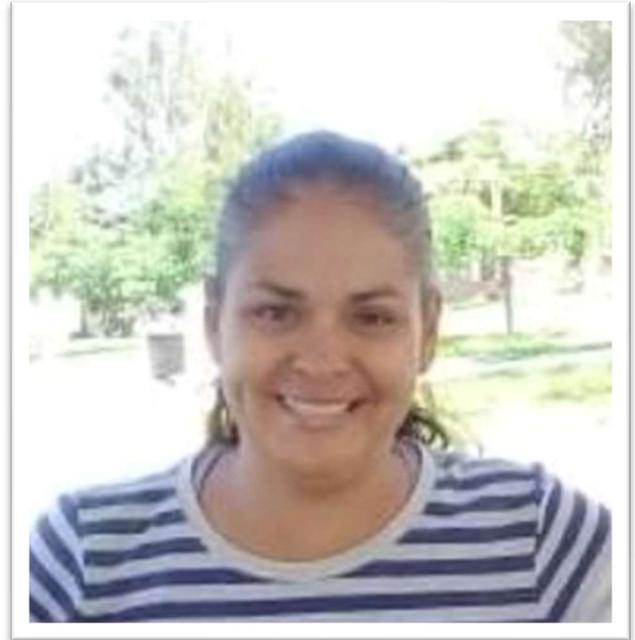
**NEW STAFF**

**New Interpretation Coordinator**

Guadalupe Perez Gomez is the new Interpretation coordinator at Western Avenue Community Center and wanted to share a message with the Bloomington/Normal community:

Being part of such a great organization is exciting. When I immigrated to the USA, this Community Center was a great support to help me navigate all the obstacles that immigrants face in a new country. Now I can help others with those same issues.

I started as a part time Spanish interpreter last fall, and I loved it. When the Coordinator role became available, I was thrilled to apply for the position. Now, I will be able to help with all the interpretation/translation needs in our community. If you need French or Spanish interpretation/translation, do not hesitate to contact me, I will be happy to help.



**New Hispanic Outreach Director**

Camila Graunke began at WACC July 2022, as the new Hispanic Outreach Director. Although new to the organization, she began her work of advocating for the Hispanic and immigrant community at an early age. During her time at Illinois State University, while seeking a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, Camila began telling her immigration story through embroidered pillows, ceramic figures, and public forums. Since then, Camila has partnered with local non-profit organizations, both through employment and volunteer efforts, to serve and meet the needs of our people through social services, immigration relief assistance, and community connections. Camila's personal experience as an immigrant, alongside her passion to love and serve the Hispanic community fuels her drive to fulfill and expand the Hispanic Outreach Program at WACC.



**New Youth Sports Activities Coordinator**

Desmond Davis joined the Western Avenue Community Center family in July of 2022. Desmond is a paraprofessional at

Stevenson Elementary and has been a Little League football, basketball, and baseball coach for close to 20 years. He is also an ISHA official. He mentions working with youth as his purpose and passion.

He was born and raised in Bloomington and has a history with Western Avenue! He would come to the Center when he was six and seven years old to play basketball and attend day camp. Desmond's position at Western Avenue will be to coordinate and create sport opportunities for the families in our community. His goal is to educate through sports: to teach youth to work well with others, be a good team mate, and learn how to win and lose. He hopes through his sports programs to give our community a place to feel at home and a place where parents and kids can feel welcome.

**EXCITING NEWS**

**J.M. Scott Renovations**

Starting August 1<sup>st</sup>, Western Avenue will begin renovations with funds awarded from the John M. Scott Health Care Trust grant. The project will begin with repainting and installing new floors in the offices, kitchen, conference room, recreation room, and lobby. The building will also undergo roof repairs and ceiling tiles will be installed. The kitchen will get new appliances and cabinets along with repairs in the restrooms. Our gym will also showcase a new basketball scoreboard! We are excited to begin the building improvements and for our community to see and enjoy the changes.

**Meeting with TFF, United Way, Carle**

This month, members of the Tinervin Family Foundation, United Way, Carle Hospital and Western Avenue Community Center Boards met to discuss future partnerships and collaborative goals. Jeff Tinervin from Tinervin Family Foundation, David Taylor from United Way, Colleen Kannaday from Carle, and Mike Jones from Western Avenue Community Center presented to the group. This meeting challenged the various Boards to dream BIG regarding collaboration and programming. The focus of the meeting was to discuss possible services Carle, Western Avenue, United Way, and the Tinervin Family Foundation will be able to provide with the installation of the Mobile Health Clinic. This resource will provide access to critical and quality health care to communities all over McLean County. The meeting also highlighted United Way's Workforce 180 program and its commitment to support individuals as they enter the work force.

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