



Miracles on 32nd Street

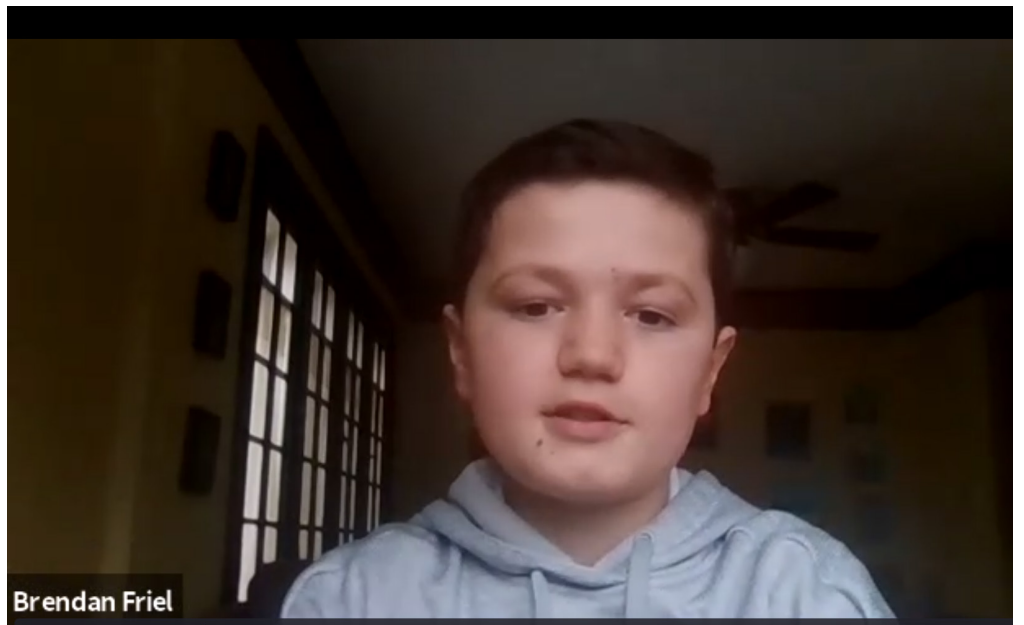
2021: Volume I

ALL BECAUSE OF YOU...

As you will read in our story on page four, the West Side Catholic Center has continued to provide services without a full pause or interruption since the onset of COVID. In large part, this is because of our community of support who has demonstrated the thoughtfulness to share their resources with us, and placed their trust in us to steward those resources to those who seek us in their time of need.

It's been extraordinary to see the generosity of so many throughout 2020, with so many acts of kindness and surprises along the way. From the 574 new donors we received support from, to all of those who passed along their stimulus and tax returns, to individuals who sought to help us from as far as Canada and Hawaii, it's been a remarkable illustration of the power of community.

With so many acts of kindness it was difficult to choose one to share here, but as with the many miracles we see on West 32nd and Lorain, one specific donor's story came to our attention as we began preparing this publication.



Brendan Friel is a 7th grade student at Lakewood Catholic Academy. Seemingly like any other kid his age, Brendan enjoys playing the piano, baking pies, playing point guard on his school's basketball team, and doing the activities you'd expect. But what makes Brendan special is a series of choices that he made. The first was a choice to selflessly participate in a study that has implications for a greater good, and beyond that a second choice that has an immediate and selfless impact.

While on a routine visit to his doctor, Brendan was asked to participate in a clinical trial for a

COVID-19 vaccine, and without much hesitation and the support of his parents, decided to do so because as he put it, "That would be cool to do, and would help."

At the time we spoke with Brendan the trial was still being conducted, and he had not yet been notified whether he had received a vaccine or if he is in the control group who received a placebo. Regardless, his participation shows his consideration for others and desire to be a part of a greater good, as does his second act of kindness.

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www.wscenter.org  1

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VOLUNTEER'S VIEW: *He Ain't Heavy*



Jesus is there
He is on the wall
His presence is felt
A smile, a touch, a hug
A question answered
A bus pass given
Mail received
A new home found
A job secured
Tears wiped clean

The disciples of Christ
Prepare the meal
Receive the donations
Distribute the clothing
Tend the garden
Shelter the homeless
Respond to emergencies
For he is their brother
He ain't heavy!

Cold and shivering
In the morning rain
Patiently they wait
Greetings exchanged
Cigarettes shared
Gossip spreads
While waiting for numbers
To be handed out
For the food line.

Numbers are called
ID pictures snapped
Breakfast is served
While some sit quietly
Waiting their turn
Under the painting of
Jesus in the food line.

In giving we receive
Blessed are we
For helping
Giving
Loving
Touching
Understanding
And blessed are they
Receiving and returning
Our love
We are one.

Christ has called
We have answered

-Polly Barrett-
WSCC *Volunteer*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1:

What Brendan did not know upon giving his consent to take part in the clinical trial was that he would be compensated for his participation. For a child of his age, such an unexpected financial gain of any size is akin to finding buried treasure, but for Brendan it was an opportunity for thoughtful consideration.

Having been volunteering with his parents in recent months, Brendan's thoughts turned to how this was a chance to further help others. So, after having come to his decision that he'd prefer to donate the money, he sat down with his parents to discuss agencies and causes that were meaningful to him, and we are beyond grateful that we were among those considered and chosen by this young man.

As we have navigated the past year and all its unpredictability one thing we know for certain is that WSCC has not simply survived through these challenging times, but instead put the power of community on display. We have seen persistence and resilience within all the people that make up our WSCC community and it's all because of you, who hold us in your hearts and minds and carry our message forward.

In our 44th year of service, we remain vigilant in our commitment to continue to meet the needs of the thousands who rely on us each year, and because of younger generations and those like Brendan the future looks bright.



Current in-kind donation policies.

Drop-off hours: Monday-Friday, 9AM-1PM
Donation limit: Two (2) bags

During this time, we are only able to accept donations of household goods, toiletries, and seasonally appropriate clothing.

You can also support us monetarily at
wscenter.org/donate.

IT'S BEEN A YEAR

I hope that when we look back on the past 12 months, through the anxiety, loss, and isolation, we remember the perseverance, sacrifice, and hope shared by so many. 43 years of preparation led us to be able to navigate such trying times. A community rooted in faith, love, hope, and respect graced us with their trust in providing the financial and in-kind resources we needed to adapt and serve as our mission calls us to do. We were tested and we were able to overcome.

We proud of the fact that we have remained open and able to provide critically needed services to clients in need in spite of COVID-19. WSCC operates on person-to-person interactions, so our challenge has been balancing continuing to meet the unrelenting needs of our vulnerable population of clients while adhering to COVID-19 precautions and ensuring the health of our clients, staff, and volunteers. Even during the strictest COVID-19 precautions, from mid-March through late-May, staff in our Resource Center adapted services to offer meals to-go, showers, and individual social work support. There was no break in service provision; these services were always available to clients. We also installed portable bathrooms and sanitation stations outside the building to accommodate the hundred-plus clients we would see on given days.

Following a phased re-opening plan, health clinics resumed in May. The Clothing and Household Items Distribution program, produce distribution, pantries, drug and alcohol assessments, and expressive arts



programs resumed in June. Certain programs, such as the ID Clinic and legal services, were dependent upon when volunteers were ready to return and have also resumed.

WSCC has yet to again host large meals or social programs inside the Resource Center, however we have continued adapting our services as needed to provide the supports we are able for our population during these times of uncertainty. This included finding a way to provide day shelter this winter in spite of COVID-19, as well as helping people file for unemployment, referring to mental health services or just being a place to turn for guidance to additional services. With the support and partnership of Community West Foundation, we were able to operate a temporary Warming Center at Trinity Lutheran Church just one block away to allow respite from the winter cold since December.

The Moriah House Shelter maintained residents without interruption, continuing to provide housing navigation services and three meals daily for our families while implementing new standards to ensure distancing and safety for staff and residents alike.

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Zaccheaus Housing Solutions continued to provide intensive case management to the clients in our rapid re-housing program, connecting clients to resources both through other WSCC programs and other agencies and community partners, while assisting them in maintaining stable housing.

Family Engagement extended food distributions for children and families for months beyond the typical 10 weeks of our Family, Food, and Fun Summer Program, ensuring access to nutritious meals while schools were limited to virtual attendance. Additional programming was developed and implemented during COVID to work with families in focusing on the protective factors outlined by the Strengthening Families Framework.

The Workforce Development Program experienced only a brief shutdown during the early months of COVID, and quickly made the necessary adaptations to continue classes in May. Since re-opening, classes have resumed without interruption and additional one-on-one services such as legal assistance have been included as services available to our jobseekers.

In so few pages it is difficult to share the full picture of all the amazing work that was done in the past year.

New challenges arose, with many seemingly unlike any we had encountered before. Yet, because of a staff so committed to serving those need, volunteers so willing to offer help wherever needed, donors so generous and supportive in responding to our requests, and leadership so dedicated to ensuring the mission continued, we persevered. Together we have accomplished so much.



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:

Rev. Richard Burchell
Daniel Cook
Brian Daw
Alfred DiBaggio
Patricia Dorenkott
Janet L. Faliszek
Dolores Hyson

Teresa Kern
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David F. Toomey
Celine Weir
Colletta Weisbarth
Patricia L. Wolf

To learn more about planned giving contact the Advancement Department at info@wsccenter.org or ext. 132.
www.wsccenter.org/legacy-giving

INTRODUCING THE EDIT COUNCIL



As a part of our ongoing mission grounded in faith, love, hope, and respect the West Side Catholic Center (WSSC) rolled out its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Today (EDIT) Council in fall of 2020. The EDIT Council is committed to promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity throughout our organization, culture, and community. We strive to understand and appreciate the individuality of every person to create a better environment for all. We nurture a culture where everyone positively acknowledges equity and inclusion through action and is aware, understanding, and appreciative of diversity.

The council will focus its efforts on promoting further awareness and understanding through learning and interactive opportunities designed for staff, volunteers, board members, and the greater WSSC community, ensuring that concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion are incorporated into everyday policies and procedures, as well as our strategic plan, and planning events that celebrate diversity, culture, and authenticity. As a festive way to kick off our efforts we celebrated the “Day of the Dead” or Dia de Muertos as an agency. We built an “ofrenda” or home altar in our boardroom and encouraged staff and volunteers to bring in photographs or other items related to loved ones or friends who have passed in order to celebrate and honor their life and memory. In addition to providing some much needed celebration and comradery during these difficult times, the week-long event also promoted understanding and awareness of the Mexican and Latin American holiday that is often misunderstood.

The EDIT Council held its first meeting September 15, 2020 and has met monthly since. The council is comprised of members from various departments and job categories throughout WSSC. Each member has commits to serving a one year term on the council ending November 2021.

2021 EDIT council members include:

- Rachel Acevedo**
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator
- Veronica Favela**
Advancement Manager
- Sherriea Jackson**
Zacchaues Housing Solutions Program Manager
- John Litten**
Executive Director
- Paul Meshenberg**
Center Support Staff II
- Nina Rodgers**
Executive Project Manager
- Denise Rowell**
HR Generalist
- Jean Sharkey**
Executive Assistant
- Marie Tables**
Family Coach
- Sharon Tufts**
President-Elect, Board of Directors

We would love to hear from you with any questions, comments, or suggestions that you may have regarding our initiative. Please contact:

Rachel Acevedo
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator
racevedo@wscenter.org
(216) 631-4741 x 131

EVENT CENTRAL



SAVE THE DATES
Saturday, September 11 (morning)
Pancake Run 5K

Saturday, September 11 (afternoon/evening)
Sips & Swigs

November TBA (evening)
Warm Hearts Winter Nights

We hope to see you, and gather for this year's events in support of our mission at WSCC.

Visit the Event Menu at www.wscenter.org



OHIO CITY PIZZERIA

great food. great cause.



DID YOU KNOW?

SINCE REOPENING OHIO CITY PIZZERIA UNDER THE OWNERSHIP OF WSCC IN JULY 2019, WE HAVE OPERATED UNDER COVID PROTOCOLS LONGER THAN WE HAVE UNDER TYPICAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE AND SUPPORT!
WE LOOK FORWARD TO HOSTING YOU AGAIN UPON OUR OFFICIAL RE-OPENING OF DINE-IN IN LATE APRIL.

OHIOCITYPIZZERIA.ORG

OHIO CITY PIZZERIA IS A
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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.

We are grateful for all who have supported us in adapting our services throughout the past year to ensure that our mission continued to be fulfilled! We are able to do great things, all because of you!



If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email info@wsccenter.org.