

St. Ann Center's SEASONS OF LIFE

People of all ages and abilities spend the day at St. Ann Center because of your support. You made these stories of our joyful intergenerational community possible.

Kayla Beats the Odds

If you want to know where the action is at St. Ann Center's Young Adult Unit, just look for Kayla Prink. The 4-foot-tall, 60-pound bundle of energy has a passion for dancing that has earned her the nickname Twinkle Toes around the Bucyrus Campus where she's a client.

Kayla, 26, was the focus of life-or-death attention on the day she was born, three months early, in the middle of respiratory and congestive heart failure. "The doctors didn't know if she would make it through the night," her mom, Renee, recalled, describing how she

and husband Jim kept a vigil in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. A week later, a geneticist determined Kayla was among the one in 10,000 infants born with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS), a rare genetic disorder that can lead to a variety of physical, cognitive and medical abnormalities.

"The doctors didn't expect her to live out the year and recommended she be discharged to a hospice," said Renee. But instead, Renee and Jim packed up their tiny firstborn, along with heart and apnea monitors, and brought her home.

Although Kayla's body was fragile, her spirit was tough as nails. She graduated from Ben Franklin Elementary School in Menomonee Falls at the age of 21. And while Kayla is unable to talk or perform self-care skills and is legally blind, she's blessed with sparkling eyes that speak volumes.



Kayla with mom Renee (right) and CNA Sr. Brigid (above).

Finding an adult day care for Kayla was a challenge, Renee said. Options were limited and expenses were crushing for the Prinks, who work full-time. Renee's boss, Sherry Husa, a St. Ann Center board member, invited her to tour the campus. "I was very impressed," Renee said. "It was important for us to have Kayla in a faith-based environment that understands the value she has in the eyes of the Lord. The staff sees the higher purpose in caring for the most vulnerable and think of it as a privilege, just as Jim, Jamie (Kayla's 19-year-old sister) and I do.

"We're thankful to St. Ann Center for seeing that she's safe, well cared for and engaged in life. And we're very proud of Kayla," said Renee. "She's one happy kid."

Your support gives Kayla and other St. Ann Center clients a place where they are valued and loved.

Dear Friend,

Everyone loves a good love story and there are plenty at St. Ann Center.

One of my favorites features a young woman I'll call Lindsay, who's dearly loved by her parents. She arrives at our Stein Campus beautifully dressed, nestled in a power wheelchair three times her size. That's when St. Ann Center enters the story. From the moment Lindsay comes through our doors, Meg, one of our volunteers, is by her side.

Although Lindsay doesn't speak, Meg can tell what she needs by watching her face and listening to her vocalizations. A grimace, blink or murmur all have meaning. The two have developed a language of their own.

One day, Meg wheeled Lindsay over to the ball pit, so she could listen to the children playing. An outgoing 2-year-old, unafraid of the wheelchair, put his small hand on Lindsay's. Noticing her eyes were closed, he quietly asked, "Baby sleeping?" That made her squeal with delight. At lunch, Lindsay is spoon-fed by an attentive CNA. Later, another carefully bathes her. She might spend an hour in our beauty salon having her hair washed and her nails cleaned and polished. It's not a typical love story, but it's one I never tire of hearing!



Photo: AARP

J. Edna

Sr. Edna Lonergan, OSF

On Our Wish List

Our wish list is updated online:
stanncenter.org/wishlist

Celebration of Culture

History makers of the past, present and future filled St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus for Black History Month.

The adults presented excerpts from "Mama's Kitchen," an original play written by volunteer Michelle Woodard, showcasing strong African-American women in U.S. history. Adding to the theatrical backdrop were artistic signs made by student volunteers from Divine Savior Holy Angels High School.

A fun-filled fashion show was a fitting finale to the program, as clients, children and staff modeled their African-inspired garb. "The Bucyrus Campus is truly a multicultural experience, with staff members from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and the U.S.," said COO Diane Beckley. "A fashion show is a beautiful way to demonstrate the diversity and depth of our African roots."



Bucyrus Campus COO Diane Beckley and childcare kids are the height of African fashion.

An Able Advocate

Tiffany Payne still laughs when she thinks of the day her younger cousin brought a friend home to play. After they were introduced, she overheard the visitor ask, "What's wrong with her?" Her cousin responded, "Nothing. She has cerebral palsy. The switch in her brain that tells her body to walk doesn't work. But everything else works really good!"

That's obvious in her accomplishments as a social worker and intake coordinator for the Bucyrus Campus. Tiffany meets with prospective clients for adult day care, gives



tours to families and helps clients attain their goals. But one of her most important roles is not listed on her job description. "Working with a population that's considered vulnerable, we must be their advocates," she said.



Tiffany Payne helps clients feel at home.

Tiffany stresses the impact of words. **The words "disabled person" or "wheelchair bound" emphasize the disability, she explained, whereas "a person with a disability" and "people who use wheelchairs" put the person first.**

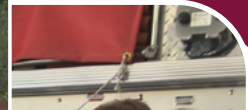
Tiffany is working to build a world of inclusion, starting with intergenerational programs like St. Ann Center's. "When we expose children to people of various ages and abilities, they're able to think outside their own experiences," she said. "They learn to appreciate differences, not fear them."

Fired Up to Learn

Where's the pole? That was the burning question St. Ann Center's 4- and 5-year-olds had during a visit to the St. Francis Fire Department.

Their tour guide, Lt. Mike Corso, explained that a pole isn't necessary at their single-story building. But he happily showed them dozens of other cool things that make a firehouse such a fascinating place.

The kids took an up-close look at an ambulance, sat behind the wheel of a fire truck and ate lunch at the firehouse. Fire safety tips were sprinkled throughout the visit. "We like to show the kids what we look like in and out of our gear," Lt. Mike said. "The more exposure kids have to firemen and what they look like, the less likely they will be fearful should they ever have to meet one of us in their home during a rescue."



Lt. Mike Corso shows childcare kids how a fire engine works.

Reading, Writing & Relating

Children flock around Tonya like chicks to a mother hen as she reads a poem about family. "My momma and daddy were both from the South," she told the 3-year-olds sitting cross-legged. "They had strong hands that were always busy...always working. Can I see yours?" Dozens of tiny hands reach toward the ceiling.

Tonya is one of the adult clients who crave the day when Literary Club meets at St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus. Held weekly in the adult day care unit, the club aims to help its members hold on to reading and writing skills that may be diminishing due to age, illness or memory loss. "We start out writing the alphabet, and then move on to names, words and sentences," said Wanda Gray of the adult day care staff. Reading materials range from newspapers to simple books.

Never stuffy, Literary Club really gets interesting when the childcare children arrive.



A good story is a great way to connect the generations.

"The little ones get such a sense of accomplishment reading to adults," Wanda explained. "One little boy read a storybook aloud cover to cover. When he saw the excitement on the adults' faces, he read it all over again!"



Kids and adults use their senses to understand one another.

The Magic Touch

Developed by Sr. Edna 21 years ago, **Benevolent Touch (BT)** is any positive tactile contact on another person's or one's own skin given and received with loving intent. Sandy Anderson, Vice Present/Director of Wellness, and Shanness Williams, Vice President of Intergenerational Development, launched a pilot program that has day care children and adult clients practicing BT together.

Sandy began by showing a group of the center's 5-year-olds some basic BT techniques. Then, she paired them up with adult clients, including many who use wheelchairs.

You give the generations opportunities to connect.

The activity began with the children and adults shaking hands and introducing themselves. Next, everyone started singing "The Wheels on the Bus," with the lyrics adapted to fit BT movements. For instance, when singing "The elevators at St. Ann Center go up and down," the kids moved their hands up and down the adults' hands. "We teach kids from little on, it's normal to interact with older adults and people with disabilities," Sandy noted. **In a world where we text more than we hug, moments that bring the generations together are making all the difference.**

Kids are her Niche

When Sarah Bongard packs for her day at St. Ann Center, she grabs a few books from her personal childhood stash.

A client in the Stein Campus' young adult unit, Sarah recently began "moonlighting" as the chief storybook reader for the Bumblebee Room. "Sarah glows every time she's around our class," said lead teacher Trinika Walker. "She helps with everything—getting ready for lunch, assisting on the playground and in the swimming pool. You should hear her read 'Green Eggs and Ham!'"

Like all of the adult clients at St. Ann Center, Sarah, 36, participates in intergenerational activities with the

childcare children. "I liked it so much, I wanted to do more," she said. "Being with the children is the favorite part of my day."

The 4-year-olds quickly became comfortable around Sarah, coming to her for help with knotty shoelaces and stuck jacket zippers. "The kids love her as much as she loves them," Trinika said, adding that the Bumblebees are always eager to make new friends of all ages. "Our motto is: teamwork makes the dream work. And we have an amazing team!"



In the classroom or the pool, Sarah's a natural with kids.

Computers, Kids and Seniors Click



Teens help older adults learn their way around computers.

A group of Milwaukee Public School students guided our seniors through the world of cyberspace, while learning some important lessons along the way.

"Our culture is segregated by age—and one thing that reinforces that gap is technology," said Jenny Urbanek, an instructor in the brand-new pilot program that pairs up high school students with Bucyrus Campus clients. "This service-learning experience introduces kids who grew up in the digital age to older adults who may not be tech savvy but have life experiences to share."

The program began with students introducing the adults to basic computer skills like turning on a PC or surfing the Internet. Next, the kids recorded interviews with the clients. "This helps students practice face-to-face communication with people of different cultures and generations—a skill that's been falling by the wayside," Jenny said.

One popular assignment had the students creating Photoshopped collages featuring portraits of each client surrounded by images of things they love. These digital artworks were presented to the clients at the end of the program, along with memoir books, filled with stories from their lives.

Rashaun, a 10th grader at Riverside University High School, said, "I helped out Alice, showing her how to use YouTube. I told her it's like an encyclopedia, only with videos explaining everything. She caught on quickly, too."

Urban Kids Flourish on Farm



City kids in St. Ann Center's summer camp program have found farm life to be fertile ground for fun and learning. Dozens of youngsters from the Bucyrus and Stein Campuses pay weekly visits to Creating Pathways Farm in Sussex. "Our goal is to immerse the children in nature," said the farm's owner, Rose Koremenos.

On their lush 20 acres, Rose and her husband, Gus, have created a living classroom. Campers tramp through the woods, stopping to identify trees or listen to the song the creek sings. With help from farm volunteers and staff, they learn how to read a compass and name the different kinds of fish swimming in the farm pond.

The kids get a healthy dose of horse sense, too. With each visit, they find out more about Rose's friendly herd. One young cowboy asked Rose if he could be her overnight barn guest. "He even picked out the hay bale where he planned on sleeping," she said.



Born into Music

Babies may not know the difference between Beethoven and Beyonce, but don't underestimate them. When it comes to teaching musical skills to infants, St. Ann Center's Hannah Goodness has found you can't start too early.

"I work with the Ladybugs once a week," Hannah, a music therapist, said of her 20-minute sessions with the wee ones. Babies are born with the potential to become musical, she explained.

Hannah comes into the baby room armed with small frame drums and a rattly rainstick filled with colorful beads. "Holding the drum gives the babies practice with hand movements and grasping," she said. "Bouncing to the beat exercises their legs." Hannah's guitar never fails to attract infant attention. As a treat, she lets each baby play it on his or her birthday.

Studies show infants who engage in musical play may have an easier time picking up language. "Music has natural pauses, cadences and resting places, just like a conversation," Hannah said.

"Experiencing live music engages both hemispheres of the brain. It also helps with cognitive and social development."

More than one former Ladybug has gone on to follow a musical path. "A mom recently showed me a video of one of my students performing in an Irish dance group," Hannah said. "That was a proud St. Ann Center moment."

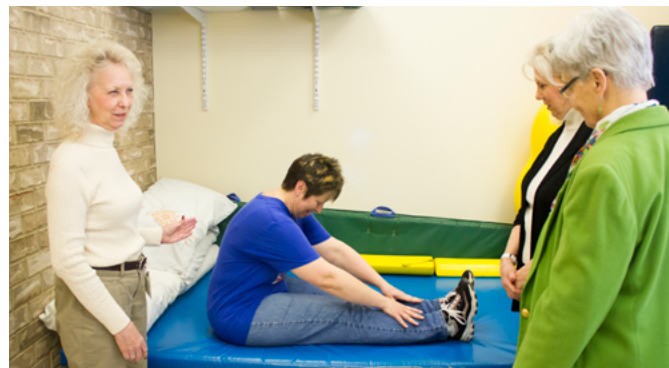
Road to Success

When Noreen first drove to the Stein Campus and saw a “No Thru Street” sign, she thought she'd made a wrong turn. But actually, St. Ann Center would take her life in a new direction.

“Three years ago, I was working as a part-time driver for a transit company,” Noreen said, remembering pulling up to the center's entrance in her van. “When I brought the client inside, I was so touched. There were three people waiting to greet her, and children and adults going in every direction.”

Just three months later, Noreen, then 48, had a stroke that affected mobility on her left side and her vision, followed by another blow, when she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. “It was hard,” she said. “I couldn't drive, and I couldn't take care of people—both things I loved doing.”

BECAUSE YOU CARE, PEOPLE WHO ARE HURTING GAIN HOPE, HEALING, AND POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR LIVES.



Noreen works on flexibility during her outpatient physical therapy session.

When her doctor prescribed physical and occupational therapy, St. Ann Center came to mind. “I didn't like the idea of going to a big, impersonal hospital,” she said, explaining what brought her to the center's therapy department. “The staff gave me one-on-one attention, and personalized the exercises to fit my needs.”

They were also available to listen to her questions and frustrations about dealing with her chronic illness. Noreen said. “This place is a real blessing,” she added. “I'm finding me again.”

Ensuring Grins

Children across Wisconsin will be smiling brighter than ever thanks to a \$100,000 endowment given by the Christ Child Society-Milwaukee Chapter to St. Ann Center's Gardetto Family Community Dental Clinic.

This one-of-a-kind clinic is the only one in the state built exclusively for people with disabilities, many of whom are living with the pain of untreated dental disease.

“We wanted to give the endowment to one nonprofit so the money would make a real difference,” said Jean Phelan who sat on the endowment's selection committee. The Society's mission focuses on serving children in need. The three-chair dental clinic, opened in 2016, now serves more than 600 clients. One-third

Children across Wisconsin will be smiling brighter than

are children. The clinic receives five to ten referrals per day from doctors, dentists, public clinics and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

“We saw how your clinic has the equipment and the staff trained to work with children with disabilities,” Jean said. “And we want to make sure you keep going strong.”



Unique clinic meets patients' special needs.

Down to Business



Budding entrepreneurs have a new place to blossom at St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus during First Friday 4Business. Open to all north side residents interested in starting small businesses, the group meets the first Friday of each month, 7:30 – 9 a.m.

This networking group gives small businesses and startups a forum to learn from and help one another succeed. Experts attend, too, including representatives from Business Improvement District 32.

The group is an outgrowth of an "On the Table" discussion, sponsored by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and held at the Bucyrus Campus for the past two years. "St. Ann Center is happy to provide the north side community's small business operators a place to find peer support and useful resources," said John Jansen, St. Ann Center's Vice President of Grants, Community and Capital Development.

**For more, visit our Facebook page:
 MKE First Fridays - Facebook.com/FF4BIZ**

also impressed by how adaptive the children are when interacting with adults. "They're very friendly and accepting." The No. 1 takeaway in the community nursing practicum is the importance of "seeing the clients as people," said Meg Brethauer, a clinical assistant professor. "Society tends to walk past and not see people who are blind or in a wheelchair. After the clinical," Meg said, "our students stop and talk to everyone."

Teens teach tech to seniors

Inside...

Plus,
 City kids
 experience
 farm life!

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Caring Beyond the Classroom

Nursing student Anna Yoder has been told the importance of treating everyone as an equal, but she said "It's really proven true at St Ann Center."

She is one of the students who did a clinical rotation at the center through the Columbia College of Nursing in Glendale. Students come one day a week for 15 weeks and rotate through various departments. Each student meets weekly with a client and learns about his or her health history.

Anna was amazed to see how much clients open up to the nurses when they are made comfortable, especially in a non-hospital setting. "They come to see us as 'their nurses,'" Anna said.

The intergenerational aspect has a huge appeal to the students, too. When their semester is finished, the students celebrate by putting on an intergenerational carnival in the atrium.

"It's pretty cool to see how excited the adults get when they see the children," Anna said. She's

