

# St. Ann Center's seasons of Life

People of all ages and abilities spend the day at St. Ann Center because of your support. These are the stories of our joyful intergenerational community.



Photos taken before COVID-19

## Couple Finds a Second Home

**Tom and Judy Pinger have been married for either 43 or 47 years, depending on which one you ask. But they agree on most everything else. They value their independence and love spending time together at St. Ann Center.**

The Pingers live in a supported independent living apartment and come to the Bucyrus Campus five days a week. "After we retired, it didn't take long for us to get antsy," Tom said. "Our social worker suggested we get involved in the day program at St. Ann Center. We took a tour, and here we are four years later."



Opposites really do attract in Tom and Judy's case. Judy, 70, is bubbly and likes socializing, while Tom, 76, is quiet and reserved. "I love all the activities," Judy said, listing balloon volleyball, karaoke, art and jigsaw puzzles among her favorites. Tom prefers to settle down in a comfy chair to read with a cup of coffee. The flexible day program suits them both.

With no children of their own, the close-knit couple appreciates the chance to spend their day with the younger generation at St. Ann Center. "I think older people feel better when they're around kids," Tom said. "They keep your mind working." Judy looks forward to the end of the pandemic, so she'll be able to spend more time with the children. "We could paint, dance and do science experiments together," she said. "They catch on so quickly."

Independence is important to both Tom and Judy. When he fell and injured his hip a couple of winters ago, Tom wasn't sidelined for long. "The staff at St. Ann Center was there when I needed help," he said, remembering his introduction to using a walker. "Now, I get around pretty good."

Judy recalls an attentive activity director who recognized her hidden talent. "I was singing to myself, when she came up and told me, 'You have a beautiful voice,'" she said, smiling. The next thing Judy knew, she was on stage at the Bucyrus Campus band shell as part of an intergenerational talent show.

**"I sang 'Climb Every Mountain'...until you find your dream," Judy said of that performance. "Now, I'm not afraid to sing loud, so people can hear me."**

You help Judy and Tom, and other clients like them, remain active and independent.

# Dear Friend,

**As we celebrate the start of a brand-new year, I can't help but reflect on the one we've left behind. In many ways, it's been among the most difficult times in memory, due to the pandemic that's upended all our lives. However, I find so much to be grateful for.**

For the first time in St. Ann Center's 37-year history, we were forced to close our doors to protect our clients—frail elders and those with disabilities, who are most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. But during this nearly three-month closure, we came up with a re-entry plan that fortifies our ongoing commitment to the health and well-being of our children, adult clients, staff and volunteers. That's quite an accomplishment.



Our staff has worked tirelessly, going far beyond their job descriptions—conducting health screenings at our front door; sterilizing classrooms, offices and public spaces; wearing PPE throughout their workday, and patiently reminding everyone 3-years-old and up to keep their masks on. I've never been prouder of these committed teachers, CNAs, administrators and support staff who understand that our work

Some of our beloved clients have not returned to St. Ann Center, due to fragile health or fear of the virus. However, a wonderful group of new clients joined us when the Milwaukee VA Medical Center temporarily closed its day program. (See story on page 3.) This close-knit group of retired military men and women have added new vitality to our adult programs. I look forward to the day they will be able to meet face-to-face with our children and share stories of their years of service. What a history lesson that will be!

makes it possible for others to do their work while knowing their loved ones are being well cared for.

In 2020, I have witnessed tremendous anxiety, sadness and disappointment. I've also seen amazing strength, compassion and resilience. I hope it's those things we'll carry with us into 2021 and beyond.

Happy New Year!

## On Our Wish List



- Bariatric bed • King-size sheet sets • Dental floss • Interdental brushes
- Marvel Education Friends with Diverse Abilities Figure Set • Wooden puzzles for kids ages 2-5
- Rock painting kit for kids

Our wish list is updated online: [StAnnCenter.org/Wishlist](https://StAnnCenter.org/Wishlist)

Childcare wish list is on Amazon: [StAnnCenter.org/Amazon](https://StAnnCenter.org/Amazon)

## Serving Those Who Served



**Veteran's Day 2020 was a memorable one at St. Ann Center, as a record number of vets were honored for their service.**

The Stein Campus atrium was awash in red, white and blue. The honorees represented many military branches—the Army, Navy and Airforce, included. Sr. Edna assured them, “Because of you men and women, we can enjoy great freedoms, without fear. We’ll never forget the brave choices you made, all for our benefit.”

The Bucyrus Campus turned out strong on Veterans Day, too, honoring about a half-dozen clients with certificates of appreciation. The ceremony also featured a song of gratitude, sung in Swahili by Sr. Kevin, Sr. Celestine and Sr. Brigid.

## Clearing the Air

**Spending time inside St. Ann Center will truly be a breath of fresh air, thanks to some modern technology that mimics Mother Nature.**



**Upgrade creates healthier buildings**

A system known as Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization (NPBI) is being installed at both the Stein and Bucyrus Campuses. “This is another important step we’re taking to keep our clients, children and staff healthy during this time of flu and COVID-19,” said Chief Development Officer Chris Jackson.

**Veterans at St. Ann Center enjoy special events, art classes, support groups and camaraderie.**

Actually, every day is Veterans Day at St. Ann Center. A special veterans support group was recently started at the Stein Campus—giving them a place to share their stories and concerns and socialize with their peers. “We feel blessed to have them,” said St. Ann Center Chaplain and group facilitator Rodican Rose Bon, who meets with them weekly.

Mary Collins, a client who served as an Army medic, is thrilled to have a place to spend her day. **“We’re all very close, so it’s nice that we can still be together instead of being bored at home,” she said.**

Outside, nature uses ions (atoms or molecules with an electrical charge) that are created by lightning, waterfalls and ocean waves to break apart unnatural toxins. Inside, the NPBI technology creates ions that are dispersed through a building’s ventilation system. The ions latch onto particles of dust, dander, pollen, etc. and make them come together into large clusters that are easy to trap in an air filtration system.

In the case of viruses, bacteria and mold, the ions bond with these pathogens and disrupt their surface proteins, rendering them inactive and harmless.

The NPBI system is being installed by Johnson Controls. Next Door Milwaukee funded this installation for all its Head Start sites, including the Bucyrus Campus childcare wing. Other grants were received from the Bradley Foundation, Francie Luke Silverman Foundation and Townsend Foundation.

## Boot Camp Means Business

**Building a business from scratch is tough, especially with limited money. A new program, offered at St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus, is helping low-income entrepreneurs make their dreams a reality—and strengthen Milwaukee neighborhoods in the bargain.**

St. Ann Center partnered with local nonprofit BizStarts to host a Community Bootcamp for Entrepreneurs. Over six weekends this fall, 25 people learned the fundamentals of launching and growing a viable business. Another 109 watched online.

The innovative program is rooted in the work of University of Notre Dame Professor Michael Morris, who led several of the sessions. Morris is world-renowned for developing trainings that use entrepreneurship as a way out of poverty. "To survive in poverty, you have to be resilient, adaptable, creative and tenacious," he said. "Those are very useful qualities for any business owner."

Shiquita Mann, a program participant, launched Blossom



**Professor Michael Morris gives entrepreneurs the tools and support system they need to succeed.**

Candle Company last year, making eco-friendly soy candles in her home. She sees the bootcamp as a way to take her business to the next level. "If my company succeeds, it's not just me who benefits—it's the whole community," she said.



**Shiquita Mann came to the bootcamp to expand her line of self-care products.**

The Bucyrus Campus was specifically chosen as the training site. Many of the business hopefuls live on Milwaukee's north side. "This program has the best track record in the nation for starting small businesses in underserved areas," said John Jansen, vice president of Grants and Community Engagement. "A healthy business climate and a healthy St. Ann Center go hand in hand."

## Sorority Takes on COVID **Milwaukee families got some help staying healthy this fall from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (DST). As part of their Midwest Impact Day, sorority members donated COVID-19 survival items to St. Ann Center and other nonprofits.**



**Staffer Gloria Miller greets parents with PPE kits donated by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.**

The sorority's Milwaukee Alumni Chapter provided disposable masks, hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes and gloves in bulk. "COVID-19 has impacted us in a way we've never experienced," said Vivian King of the sorority's special projects committee. "We're reaching out to service organizations to distribute these supplies where they're needed most and make our community a safer place."

The 53206 ZIP code was targeted to receive the materials due to its significant health care disparities. At St. Ann Center, "we felt it was important to get this PPE out to the families we serve," said Casey Rozanski, vice president of Marketing and Fund Development. The supplies were broken down into family-size kits and distributed to childcare parents.

## Dancing through a Pandemic

**The past year has been no waltz in the park for anyone. But that's about to change, thanks to an exciting partnership between St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus and Danceworks, a nonprofit dedicated to bringing the joy of dance to Milwaukee.**



**A Danceworks artist in residence demonstrates classical Indian dance to an engaged class of school-age kids.**

Since early November, Danceworks artists in residence have paid biweekly visits to the campus, putting on interactive workshops for the day care children and adult clients. The program is sponsored by the United Performing Arts Fund and Kasey's Fund, which aims to expand access to the arts for individuals and families with disabilities or economic barriers.



**Hindustani vocals and the tabla hand drum provide perfect accompaniment for the dancers.**

"We're excited to be partnering with a vibrant organization that does so much for the community," said Danceworks Artistic Director Dani Kuepper. "Because of the pandemic, it's been hard to find healthy places and spaces to perform. The Bucyrus Campus is ideal, with its beautiful outdoor band shell and large indoor atrium, where we can move."

Each workshop is presented by a professional dancer and musician. For safety, the adults participate one week, and the children the other. The program solves two problems at once, Dani explained. "We're developing a deep, ongoing relationship with this community that goes beyond a single performance," she said of the workshops, which are scheduled through July. "And we're able to give Milwaukee dancers and musicians meaningful work during a time when they need it the most."

Danceworks artists will present a variety of dance styles including tap, contemporary, classical Indian, hip-hop and improvisation.

The clients and kids will learn about the background of the dances and work with the artists in coming up with dances of their own.

Dani describes the 9-month program as "a great opportunity to connect at a time when everyone is so hungry for it." The program will culminate with a performance at the Indaba Band Shell in August, when the children and adults will show off their skills and dances they've helped choreograph.

**The adults learn some beneficial stretching exercises before diving into a session of chair yoga moves.**





A neighbor picks up a yard sign promoting voting.

## Every Vote Counts

It was a socially distant way to get out the vote. A caravan of cars came to the Bucyrus Campus for a nonpartisan pop-up event celebrating Homecoming and Early Voting Day, Oct. 24, sponsored by the NAACP.

Drivers rolled into the campus parking lot for information on voter registration, polling places and early voting locations. They also picked up window and yard signs and T-shirts promoting the importance of voting.

"Our goal was to engage infrequent voters, encourage them to get to the polls and take their family and friends with them," said Una Van Duvall, state NAACP Communications Director, who is also on the St. Ann Center Board of Directors. The ZIP codes in which the Bucyrus Campus is located have a high percentage of infrequent voters, she added.

WNOV radio did a live broadcast from St. Ann Center's Indaba Band Shell, including interviews aimed at educating and informing voters about the general election. "It is vital not to take our right to vote for granted," Una said. **"Democracy is something we must participate in and work hard to retain."**



NAACP fights voter apathy.

## A Life Well Lived

**Sr. Jessine Reiss, OSF, spent a century making the world a better place. She left us last September, at age 100, with so much beauty to remember her by.**



Sr. Jessine enjoys her 100th birthday party.

A Sister of St. Francis of Assisi for 77 years, Sr. Jessine began volunteering at St. Ann Center when it occupied just a few rooms in the basement of the Motherhouse. "She read one of our newsletters and saw some errors that really perturbed her," Sr. Edna said. "After that, she became our official proofreader."

It's no wonder Sr. Jessine was a spelling whiz. She served at Cardinal Stritch University for 60 years as associate professor of English and director of publicity. As St. Ann Center grew, she put her skill with words and research to invaluable use. **"She helped write many of the grant requests that raised money we needed to build both our Stein and Bucyrus Campuses," Sr. Edna said.**

Most dear to Sr. Jessine's heart was her work with Sr. Lucille Walsh and Dr. Abbas Hamdani in founding the Islamic-Christian Dialogue in the 1970s. It spurred collaborations between Christians and Muslims in the Milwaukee area that continue to this day.

"When Jessine was your friend, you knew you had a friend for life," Sr. Edna said. "She's someone I'll never forget."

## Better Together

**The power of Zoom and plenty of imagination made for an exciting day of intergenerational fun at both St. Ann Center campuses, thanks to donor Paul McComas.**



**Rosemarie Alloway, her daughters and mom prepare to demonstrate the jingle dance.**

Paul—a Chicago-based author, actor, filmmaker and Milwaukee native—is also known for his philanthropy. When Sr. Edna told him how COVID-19 had interfered with interactions between St. Ann Center’s children and adults, he came up with an ingenious solution—portable Plexiglas panels.

The Plexiglas was put to good use at the Stein Campus. To celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day, lead CNA Rosemarie Alloway and her four young daughters performed Native American dances on one side of the panel, while the adult clients watched at a safe distance on the other.

Paul, who watched the dancers via Zoom, said, “I was always proud to be born on Columbus Day. This year, I’m just as thrilled to share my birthday with Indigenous Peoples’ Day.”

Later, at the Bucyrus Campus,



**These kids may be young, but they have 200 million-year-old dinosaur roars down pat!**

Paul gave the kids and adults a “prehistory” lesson. Again using Zoom, he shared his impressive collection of realistic dinosaur models—from a longnecked Brontosaurus to a soaring pterodactyl to the sharp-toothed Tyrannosaurus rex.

The children got front-row seats in the atrium, while the adults looked on from the upstairs veranda. Afterward, the kids went on a dinosaur egg hunt, played Jurassic Park bean bag toss and donned dinosaur masks and tattoos.

## Check Out This Library

**The Little Free Library movement has opened a new chapter at St. Ann Center’s Bucyrus Campus, on the corner of N. 25th St. and W. North Ave.**

This global phenomenon of small, front-yard book exchanges number more than 100,000 around the world in over 100 countries--from Italy to Brazil to Japan. Now, St. Ann Center has partnered with Next Door Milwaukee to bring books to kids in its north side neighborhood.

Next Door will keep the library stocked with quality reading for young and intermediate readers. There will also be some titles for the grown-ups.



**Power in Partnerships**

*Plus, stories from both campuses!*

**STEIN CAMPUS**

2801 E. Morgan Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53207  
(414) 977-5000

**BUCYRUS CAMPUS**

2450 W. North Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53205  
(414) 210-2450



To update your mailing preferences:  
(414) 977-5064 or [sselz@stanncenter.org](mailto:sselz@stanncenter.org)

**\$250,000**  
**Charity Cash Raffle!**  
2021 Raffle #1

**Drawing: Saturday, Apr. 24th, 2 p.m.**  
Tickets on sale: Thurs., Jan 14<sup>th</sup>

**GRAND PRIZE: \$200,000**

**Tickets: \$50 or 3/\$100**

For information on walk-in ticket purchases, call: 414-977-5000

To purchase tickets via phone, call: 800-272-1938

Learn more online: [StAnnCenter.org/Raffle](http://StAnnCenter.org/Raffle)

**DON'T MISS A THING!** Keep up-to-date about all the excitement around St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care. Subscribe to our blog to receive updates delivered right to your inbox, including:

- Special events happening at St. Ann Center
- Fun and heartwarming stories about the children and adults who spend their day at both our campuses
- News of programs and services offered to the community
- Great photos and videos showing life at St. Ann Center and much, much more!

You will hear from us once or twice a month. Don't worry—we take your privacy seriously and never share your information.

Sign up today at [StAnnCenter.org/mailling-list](http://StAnnCenter.org/mailling-list).

**Join us!**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Virtual" Indaba African Ball**  
**Saturday, February 6th; 7 p.m.**  
**Location: [StAnnCenter.org/IndabaBall](http://StAnnCenter.org/IndabaBall)**

Enjoy an evening of great fun at the 2021 Virtual Indaba African Ball, a fundraiser supporting the Indaba Band Shell and its upcoming summer season of family-friendly entertainment.



**Your Ball experience includes:**

- A free online event filled with music and dance, a delicious African recipe demo, a salute to Black community leaders, an African fashion show and heartwarming stories of how you are making the arts come alive for all generations
- A chance to win a great giveaway with your free registration
- As an African Ball supporter, you can help make the Indaba Band Shell a mecca for the arts and entertainment on Milwaukee's North Side

**Together, we aim to raise \$10,000 to fund:**

- The 2021 Indaba Nights Summer Entertainment Series at the Band Shell, including stipends for local entertainers

**Don't miss out. Register online today!**  
**[StAnnCenter.org/IndabaBall](http://StAnnCenter.org/IndabaBall)**