

# 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.



## One for All, ALL FOR ONE

**The three musketeers have nothing on a trio of longtime St. Ann Center clients who know the meaning and power of true friendship.**

"We're not only friends, we're brothers," said Vinnie Massalongo of the relationship he's developed with Terry Lenz and Barry Kress over the past nine years. "There's a reason God put these guys in my life. I'd do anything for them—in a heartbeat."

The trio's bond runs deep. "When I started coming here, I was still recovering from a brain aneurysm, and everything in life was different," Vinnie said, remembering his nervousness and fear. "Terry took me under his wing and made me feel comfortable and welcome."

Barry experienced the same warm reception. "I'm of the Jewish faith, and I wasn't sure I belonged here," he said. "But these guys accepted me. They've always been there for me. I firmly believe when you share bad times, they're half as bad, and when you share good times, they're twice as good."

If you're looking for these close-knit clients, just listen for the laughter. "We're clowns and proud of it," Terry said. When they're not cracking jokes, they're discussing everything from the Brewers to paleontology (Barry's avocation) to the latest project lead CNA Rosemarie Alloway has them working on. "We love her like a mom," Vinnie said.

The men's friendship extends to their families, too. Terry's wife has met his St. Ann Center buddies. And Vinnie requested a special favor of Barry. "I asked if he'd be my daughter's honorary godfather," he said. "It's a good feeling knowing if she needs advice, she can go to her Uncle Barry."

Among the many things these guys have in common, one is their love for St. Ann Center's children. They've even taken to telling the kids fairytales—with a twist. "Have you heard Little Red Riding Hood was the bridesmaid when her granny married the woodsman in a wedding officiated by the wolf, who was a minister?" Barry asked. "That's our kind of story."



**Terry Lenz (left), Vinnie Massalongo and Barry Kress take friendship to a new level.**

## Dear Friend,

**When we opened St. Ann Center, nearly four decades ago, we had a clear vision of what we wanted this place to be. More than just a day care, it would be a home away from home for the people we serve. A sacred place where they'd feel welcomed, connected and supported.**

Yes, it's important to have a well-designed and decorated building. But what makes it special goes far beyond brick and mortar. At St. Ann Center, we ask ourselves every day—does this environment help our children and adult clients feel loved? That's what makes it a real home.

A home is also a place where we are encouraged to grow and discover our purpose. I witnessed a wonderful example of that just the other day. We have a client named Bobby, an older gentleman who deals with depression. In his younger years, he worked in a security position. He even brought in his badge to show us.

Will, one of our staff members, was concerned about how sad Bobby had been in recent weeks. And he came up with a brilliant idea to help him. He swore Bobby in as a volunteer security guard! He asked him to start wearing his badge to day care, "because we need you here." Bobby was absolutely beaming. He'd rediscovered his purpose.

Being at home also means feeling secure. St. Ann Center has been working hard to create a safe environment for everyone in our care, and for our staff, volunteers and guests—especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Knowing the vaccine is one of our best tools to defeat the virus, we have offered it to our staff and the community—for the well-being of all of us.

**Most of all, home is where your family is. At St. Ann Center, that includes infants in strollers, older adults, those dealing with disabilities and people of different races, ethnicities, cultures and faiths. I can't think of anyplace I'd rather call home.**



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## On Our Wish List

- 27-in. thermal roll laminator
- Printer-scanner-copier
- Aqua Creek Product Pool Access Chairs
- Wheelchair
- Kaplan Kid Kitchen Complete
- Mixing bowls, pots, pans, measuring cups/spoons
- Adaptive cooking equipment
- Braille books
- Photography equipment
- Playing cards
- Word search books
- Bingo prizes
- "Sorry" & "Sequence" board games

**Childcare wish list is on Amazon:  
[StAnnCenter.org/amazon](https://www.amazon.com/st-ann-center)**

**Our wish list is updated online: [StAnnCenter.org/wishlist](https://www.stanncenter.org/wishlist)**

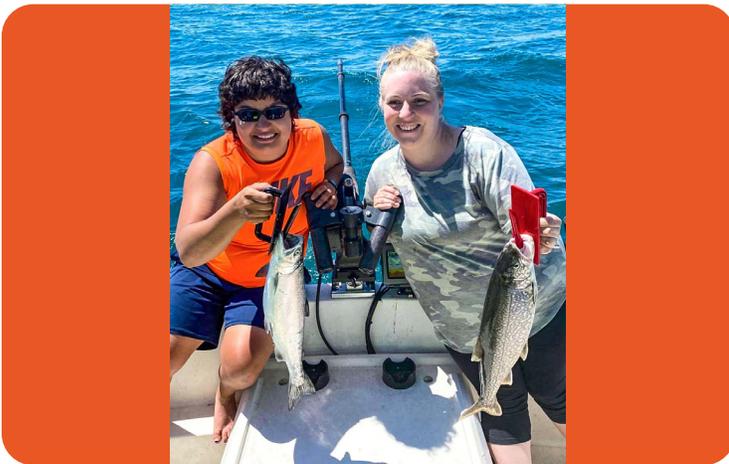
## Gone Fishing



**This summer, a group of St. Ann Center clients became part of a whopper of a fish story. And it's not exaggerating to say they had a blast!**

The clients enjoyed a day of angling on Lake Michigan at the 2021 Big Fish Event hosted by the nonprofit Fishing Has No Boundaries. The organization's mission is to provide recreational fishing opportunities for all people who are physically challenged, regardless of their age, race, gender or disability.

**"I'd never gone fishing in my life, so I figured, let's try it," said client Narkeez Carlton.** "They showed us all the components of the rods and the different lures. Just five minutes after we set up, someone yelled, 'fish on!' We caught a salmon, lake trout and rainbow trout."



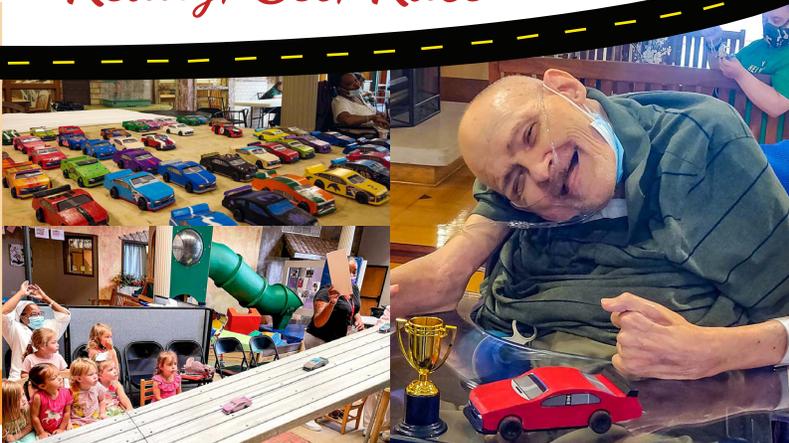
**Up before the sun, Narkeez Carlton is ready for a morning of angling with Fishing Has No Boundaries.**

An experienced sailor, Narkeez even got a chance to drive the boat. "I'm in my element on the water," he said. "And I don't believe that old saying, 'be quiet, or you'll scare the fish.' We were rocking out to music the whole time!"

Toni Alvarez, Stein Campus director of adult day care, set sail as Narkeez's companion/advocate. "It was a gorgeous day, and we started bright and early," Toni said of their 6 a.m. arrival at Lakeshore State Park. "Our boat's captain and his volunteers were wonderful. They even cleaned the fish for us to take home."

Client Larry Gliszinski brought along his grandson Nathaniel, and came home with a fish story of his own. "I had a 14-pound trout on the line—and holy smoke, it seemed like I spent 15 minutes reeling him in. But it was worth it!"

## Ready, Set, Race!



**The fun was coming fast and furious at St. Ann Center's First Annual Pinewood Derby.** Children and adult clients spent weeks working on their model cars—putting them together, painting and decorating them for maximum speed.

"We had 1-year-olds to 97-year-olds making cars," said Yolanda Jones, St. Ann Center art instructor, of the more than 60 race entries. Two days of heats were held in the Stein Campus atrium, using a track loaned by a Boy Scout troop from the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Bay View.

## New Office Means Business

**BizStarts, a Milwaukee nonprofit that helps entrepreneurs launch and grow their businesses, opened a new office inside St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus in July.**

"We want to be represented in the community where we're doing the work, and where many of our clients live," said Patrick Snyder, BizStarts executive director. In recent years, the organization has shifted its focus to assisting underrepresented entrepreneurs, including people of color and those with low to moderate incomes, in need of support and opportunity.

The new office, to be open at least four days a week, offers space for administrative staff, and for coaching and mentoring sessions with BizStarts clients.

"St. Ann Center also has some great public spaces," Snyder added. "We've even discussed hosting outdoor vendor markets on the



**Lily Dysart of the BizStarts staff prepares for a meeting in the new Bucyrus Campus office.**

Bucyrus Campus grounds, where our clients could sell their products."

According to John Jansen, St. Ann Center's vice president of grants and community engagement, "We really want to help this neighborhood become a place where people can live, work and prosper. **BizStarts is a proven leader in job creation, and having them on-site is going to have a major positive impact on this neighborhood.**"

## Youth Enter World of Work

**Do you remember your first job? For 34 young Milwaukeeans, their first experience in the workforce began at St. Ann Center this past summer.** Teens in the Earn & Learn Summer Youth Employment Program, a partnership between the City of Milwaukee and Employ Milwaukee, spent eight weeks working at the Stein and Bucyrus Campuses, developing critical job readiness skills.

Their jobs ran the gamut from tending campus vegetable gardens to assisting adult day care clients.

Alex Fuster, 14, juggled duties at the Stein Campus café and reception desk, usually reporting to work in a crisp white shirt and tie. "As a receptionist, your face is the first one people see when they walk in the building—so I wanted to make a good impression," he said. His motivation for applying for Earn & Learn was simple. "I didn't want to sit at home all day playing video games like I did last summer."

**Freshman Kaiden Vercimak valued the time he spent getting to know St. Ann Center clients.**

**"It definitely taught me patience and perseverance," he said, reflecting on interactions with older adults, many of whom deal with disabilities.** "I came to appreciate not everyone is the same as me—they move at a different pace."

St. Ann Center benefited from the energetic teens, too. Rita Estremera, who operates Aloekui Handmade Soaps and Lotions in the lobby of the Bucyrus Campus, was thrilled to mentor young Bodie Weeks. "He is an excellent worker," she said. "This program helps not only the students but small businesses like mine."



**Teens in the Earn & Learn Summer Youth Employment Program sort produce in the Bucyrus Campus kitchen.**

## Kids Get a Kick Out of Taekwondo



**“Pil sung!” The Korean term for “I can do it” echoed across the Bucyrus Campus playground as a dozen youngsters bowed to one another. It’s an attitude the kids learned to embrace, during a popular summer camp activity.**

Taekwondo instructors from J.K. Lee City Youth Martial Arts paid weekly visits. According to Mary Palmisano, the local nonprofit’s executive director, “Taekwondo shows the children how self-defense can build confidence, discipline, concentration and good sportsmanship.”

Each session involved stretches, cardio drills and exercises that help develop balance and gross

motor skills. “The older children like practicing their blocks and kicks,” Mary said as she held up a padded target for the students to aim for. “And the little ones are having fun learning to count to ten in Korean.”

The aim is not to produce a class of tiny black belts. Instead, Mary said, **“the kids are learning that with determination and practice, they can achieve anything they put their minds to—whether that’s performing a high kick, or solving a math problem.”**



**Kids practice balance with taekwondo poses.**

## Rocking the Shot

**Folks had a chance to jam to live music and get vaccinated against COVID-19, thanks to a unique pop-up clinic at St. Ann Center’s Indaba Band Shell.**

The Wisconsin National Guard offered free vaccinations at its mobile unit set up in conjunction with Indaba Nights, a family-friendly series of concerts held at the Bucyrus Campus. A team of soldiers, a physician’s assistant and medic staffed the site. **“This is a step toward convenience for anyone who’s been hesitant about getting vaccinated** because of difficulty getting to a site or concern about waiting in line,” said Sgt. Jacob Petersen. “Instead of you coming to us, we’re coming to you.”



## Vets Find Comfort in Crafts

**The clients in St. Ann Center’s veterans’ group are a crafty bunch. And lately, they’ve been keeping busy with some very creative projects.**

Director of Adult Day Care Toni Alvarez and lead CNA Rosemarie Alloway set up a partnership with Help Heal Veterans. This nonprofit’s hands-on mission is delivering healing arts and crafts kits to veterans and active duty service members.

The veterans at the Stein Campus spent several weeks in the art studio working on their kits, fashioning everything from wallets and moccasins to working clocks. “I usually give my projects away—but this one, I’m keeping,” said client Mary Collins as she put finishing touches on a leather messenger bag.



**A vet makes timely craft.**

## A Playground for All Ages

**A fanciful garden where toddlers, older adults and people with disabilities can play together. That dream came true with the grand opening of an Intergenerational Play Garden on Aug. 26, at St. Ann Center's Bucyrus Campus.**

The 11,660-square-foot playscape includes four whimsical structures—large enough to accommodate an adult and two children or multiple youngsters. Each uniquely designed, there's a fairy house, a teapot house, a castle and a dinosaur cave. A railed sidewalk connects the structures built with wide, step-free doorways—making the play garden wheelchair accessible.

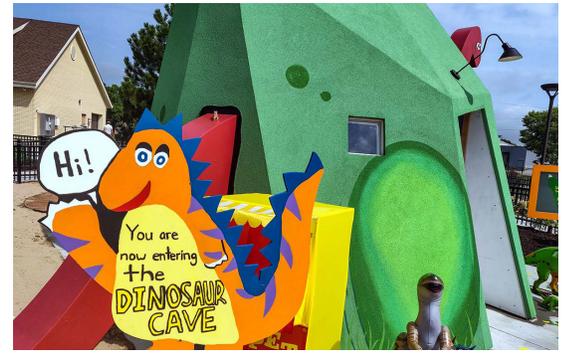
The grand opening celebration began with the untying of an African kente cloth bow. The public was then invited for guided tours. "The Intergenerational Play Garden is not a place where adults sit on a bench and watch the children play," said Sr. Edna Lonergan, St. Ann Center president. "Here, the generations will have adventures together, with opportunities for fun and learning."

Other features include raised bed gardens, a pergola shelter for reading and a wooden balance beam.

Each structure is equipped with books and toys that teach lessons related to its theme. **In the teapot house, children learn social skills, while the castle focuses on leadership, the fairy house spotlights creativity and the dinosaur cave inspires tenacity and holding onto dreams.** "These are values and abilities every child needs," Sr. Edna said.

The play garden is landscaped with flower beds, trees and benches, providing a spot where children and adults can read to one another or just relax. The Urban Ecology Center is partnering with the play garden's director Artaynia Westfall to design a curriculum of environmental and nature-based activities children and adults will enjoy together.

Initially, the play garden will be used by clients in St. Ann Center's adult and child day care programs, with plans to open it to the public in the future.



**The Intergenerational Play Garden grand opening featured a ribbon untying with Sr. Edna Lonergan and Tim Sullivan, Board Chair, plus tours of four whimsical learning structures (top to bottom) the dinosaur cave, castle, fairy house and teapot house.**

## Meet St. Ann Center's First Clients

**Thirty-eight years ago, St. Ann Center opened its doors with just four older adults in its day care. Pat Forsythe shared the charming story of two of them—her mother, Olive, and mother-in-law, Mabel.**

Both women were in their eighties and had been living on their own, when things started changing. Mabel was showing signs of dementia. And Olive, who had Parkinson's disease, fell and broke her wrist. "They'd been a wonderful support for my husband, Al, and me as we raised our four children," Pat said. "Now, our kids were grown, and we had a big house. Before we knew it, we had two grannies living with us."

These feisty ladies didn't always see eye to eye. "Mom was a strict Catholic, and Mabel was a staunch Methodist," Pat said. They were also fiercely competitive, comparing who'd received the best Mother's Day card and present.

When the grannies moved in, Pat was working as a pediatric nurse. "As much as Mom didn't want to go to a nursing home, she said she wouldn't stay with us unless I was able to keep my job," she explained. That's when Pat heard St. Ann Adult Day Care was about to open. **"It turned out to be the best thing for all of us."**



The day care bus picked up the grannies in the morning. "They made sure to have their hair done and their make-up and earrings on," Pat said. The bus also picked up a gentleman. "They'd vie over who got to sit next to him," she added.

The women were treated to a full day of physical and occupational therapy and continuing-education classes. Mabel had no idea the people taking care of her were Catholic Sisters. "We had an 89th birthday party for her and asked who she wanted us to invite," Pat said. "The Sisters were on the top of her list."

Pat wrote about her family's experience in a story entitled, "Two Grannies in the Kitchen." It ended up being published in "Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul."

Now, Al and Pat have their house all to themselves, and welcome visits from family—including their 2-year-old twin great-granddaughters. "We're hoping they'll be going to St. Ann Center's childcare soon," Pat said. **"You have been so important in all our lives! We'll be forever grateful."**

## Deer District Dreams Come True

**It was a year of firsts for St. Ann Center's 17th Annual Dream Together Gala.** Guests enjoyed a brand-new venue—Gather at Deer District—overlooking Fiserv Forum, where the Milwaukee Bucks made history as NBA Champions.

This was also the Center's first "hybrid" Gala. Guests from as far away as Florida joined the event from the comfort of their homes—participating in the silent auction and watching an exciting livestreamed program.

Your support of the Gala raised more than \$112,000. In addition, **Tim Sullivan, St. Ann Center's Board Chair, announced a \$1.5 million matching grant from the Bucyrus Foundation.** This will go far in ensuring children, frail elders and adults with disabilities have an enriching and compassionate place to spend their day.



**Fiserv Forum was the backdrop for Dream Together Gala.**





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# Postcards from a Memorable Summer



Tour a playful garden  
*Inside...*

Plus, action-packed activities for all ages.

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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)

**Our St. Ann Center supporters ensure our children and adult clients enjoy enriching activities year-round. Thanks to you, this summer offered plenty of opportunities for the generations to interact and have fun in the best way possible—together!**

**Here are just a few of the happenings that kept our St. Ann Center family happy and engaged in recent months.**

1. What better way to celebrate Disability Independence Day than with a parade featuring clients and their hand-decorated wheelchairs and walkers?
2. The pool was the place to be, as children got their feet wet with swimming lessons and adults enjoyed increased mobility in the water.
3. A parking lot carnival challenged the kids and adults to try their hand at everything from horseshoes to corn hole to a dance-off.
4. Clients and kids at the Stein Campus celebrated the annual Summer Blast, an outdoor fun-fest featuring music, games, and sweet treats from the Milwaukee Police Department ice cream truck.
5. An historic Juneteenth Day was commemorated with a parade and homemade posters with messages of African American pride.
6. Young Bucyrus Campus readers had a chance to pick out a book to keep when the Next Door-Milwaukee Mobile Library paid a visit.
7. The after-school kids unleashed their inner scientist, experimenting, exploring and inventing with STEM toys.

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