

TFHappenings



COO of Teaching Family Homes Celebrates 25 years with Agency



Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan celebrates Jerry Migda's 25 years of service. Jerry has served as the Chief Operations Officer for Teaching-Family Homes of Upper Michigan since September 2001. Even though he is originally from Detroit and a graduate of Detroit Catholic Central High School, Jerry had early ties to the Upper Peninsula from his mother who was born and raised in South Range. Jerry completed his undergraduate and graduate work at Central Michigan University receiving a Master of Arts Degree in Counseling and has been a state of Michigan Licensed Professional Counselor for over 15 years.

Jerry's career with Teaching Family Homes began in 1982 when he and his wife Carol began working at the Cedar Creek group home. The Migdas were Teaching-Family Homes of Upper Michigan's first certified Teaching-Parents by Boys Town in 1983. Jerry then moved into a Consultation role in March of 1984 and supervised several group homes. In 1985, Jerry and Carol developed the West Branch Teaching-Family Home in Marquette County and were certified again in 1986. In 1987, Jerry took time to complete his Masters degree and accepted a position of Supervisor of Group Home Services with Lutheran Child and Family Services of Virginia.

In 1990 Jerry and his family moved back to the Upper Peninsula and Jerry accepted the position of Coordinator of Training. In this position, he developed outreach training for teachers and worked with Northern Michigan University to develop a graduate level class in which teachers are able to obtain credit for training by Teaching-Family Homes of Upper Michigan. Over the years, Jerry has supervised many Northern Michigan University social work student field placements. From 1994 through 1997 Jerry was part of the Hawaii site development team that later lead Catholic Charities of Hawaii to Teaching Family Association certification. Jerry has since served as Clinical Director and Regional Director for the Central Upper Peninsula and has assisted in developing many of the programs that have lead to a larger continuum of services provided by Teaching-Family Homes of Upper Michigan. Jerry has been a presenter and speaker for both national and state professional conferences.

Although he is accomplished in his career, Jerry is most proud of his three children and two grandchildren: two girls, Annie (25) married to son-in-law Jason Erickson and Sara (24), married to son-in-law Jason Parks, who spent their early years living in and experiencing a Teaching-Family group home, his son Gabriel (18) who recently graduated from Gwinn High School and two grandchildren Delaney (3) and Shane (2).

Jerry's goals for the coming years are to continue to provide high quality treatment to the families and children TFH serves in the Upper Peninsula. He'll also work towards continued development of services provided on campus, which fulfill the vision of TFH. Teaching Family Homes is grateful to have the dedicated service and expansive knowledge that Jerry embodies. **Join us October 30th 5:30-7:00 PM as we "Roast" Jerry at the Holiday Inn in Marquette.**

Adopt-a-Child Holiday Program at TFH

Do you remember the feeling of excitement as a child when Christmas is coming? Santa, the presents, the food, the time with your family... it's all so exciting for children. What about children who have none of that? No anticipation of Santa, no presents, no family to share it with?

For most of us our memories of being a child at Christmas are some of the happiest of our lives. Unfortunately, many of the children that come to Teaching Family Homes grow up with very little to look forward to at the holidays.

The Adopt-A-Child program provides a way to touch an individual child with your heartfelt donations. All children make wish lists and letters to Santa. Many of our children do so, not knowing if their wishes will be granted on Christmas morning. Every gift counts, whether it be something small like a book or a pair of slippers, or something simple like a monetary donation toward the program, everything is greatly appreciated.

For the past four years, the Upper Peninsula community has helped us create joyous holiday memories for the children in our programs. With your continued help and support, we can build on those memories again this year. You can help make a difference in a child's life at this special time of year and put a smile on a child's face on Christmas morning. If you would like to participate in Adopt-A-Child please contact Jen LePage at jlepage@tfhomes.org or Marcie Miller at mmiller@tfhomes.org, or by telephone at 906-249-KIDS (1-800-292-5260).



2009 Teen Tuesdays

Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan coordinated with other agencies to offer Teen Tuesday events this summer. Teen Tuesdays are substance-free, admission-free events available to teens in the Marquette area. Locations of events included the Silver Creek Church in Harvey, the Salvation Army Recreation Center at Sawyer, Miner's Park in Negaunee, Lake Superior Village Youth and Family Center in Marquette, Al Quaal Park in Ishpeming and Nordeen Park in Gwinn. Activities included: tye-dyeing, inflatable games, lawn games, karaoke and much more. Prizes and free snacks were also provided.



Teen Tuesdays were conceived, designed and organized by teens for teens. While there are many festivals and celebrations offered in the community, many offer adult venues. Teen Tuesdays provide an admission free, substance free and fun filled environment for everyone. This summer, over 200 youth participated in Teen Tuesday events (an average of 35 youth per event).

Teen Tuesdays are funded primarily through community donations and mini grants from Marquette County Substance Abuse and Prevention Coalition and the United Way.

South Bluff Group Home Moves Onto Campus



Ground Breaking Ceremony pictured above.

In June of this year, Teaching Family Homes broke ground on the new site for the South Bluff Group home at the TFH campus in Sands Township. The South Bluff group home had been located in Gladstone for many years with a 6-bed capacity. With the move to the central campus, South Bluff will now be an 8-bed home. The building of the new home has happened quickly, almost like a mushroom over night! As of October 1st, the Teaching Family Parents and youth have been able to move into their new home! They are all excited and looking forward to being involved in daily activities on campus.

The next phase of the TFH Campus continues right away with the construction of a school building. This 2-classroom school building will also have a library and a small gymnasium. With the addition of a fourth group home and increased utilization of our educational program, our current classroom area is bursting at the seams. The teachers have limited space for curriculum preparation. Community organizations often wish to donate books and literature for the youth; however, we do not have a central location for all the youth to check out books or access the materials. We have a wealth of parenting information that we would like to make readily accessible to other parents in the community as well. Recreational opportunities, utilizing the gymnasium, exposes children to challenging and fun alternative behaviors, while also allowing for social skill development.

Teaching Family Homes looks forward to providing more opportunities to give hope to children and families in the community. Stay tuned for more exciting news on this stage in our campus development!

The new South Bluff home.



Tour da U.P. 2009- *Between the Beaches*

The 2009 Tour da UP is in the books as another awesome tour marked by many “firsts”. While certain aspects of “da Tour” have remained the same from year to year, we did have a few changes for 2009. It was the first time we camped in one location for three nights. It was also the first time we were able to show the TFH campus to our tour participants, give tours of the facilities and explain in detail how we help children. Another first was the weather. Usually, August brings warm temperatures sunny skies and maybe a bit of rain, but this year it was a constant north wind to battle. It was the first year we had such cool weather that participants were wearing long sleeves and pants.

Our route included a little of everything. We began in Gladstone and rode flat roads to Gwinn where the Lions Club of Gwinn put on a wonderful lunch. The rest of the day of riding was a head wind into Marquette with a nice downhill decent into Tourist Park. Marquette Lions grilled an incredible chicken dinner which was followed by a camp fire and s’mores. On Monday morning we were treated to the buffet at NMU’s Wildcat Den. Cyclist’s would need all the energy they could get as the ride to west Ishpeming included 1,000 feet of elevation change from the campground. Our destination was da Tourist Trap and lunch at Lake Bancroft, provided by the Ishpeming Tri-Township Lions. After returning to Marquette, the group was served a Mexican Dinner at our campus. The evening included tours of our facilities and a presentation about TFH with a few words from our youth Mayor. The following day was a rest day to explore the local area or sign up for activities such as sailing, kayaking, mountain biking, massages, hiking, and of course a mine tour!

On Wednesday, Day 4 of the tour we broke camp and rode east to AuTrain. Many explored the beaches in the area before finishing the day’s ride at Superior Central School and Eben Junction. Weather improved on the last day and it was warm and sunny for our return to Gladstone High School. The Gladstone Lions supplied us with our traditional pasty lunch ready as riders made their way into the school. An awards ceremony concluded the tour with many great stories and memories of another fantastic tour.

We are making plans for next year’s tour which will be our 20th annual! You don’t want to miss it! For information about Tour da U.P., please call Teaching Family Homes at 906-249-KIDS or 800-292-5260. Pictures of the 2009 Tour da U.P. are available to be viewed on our web site at www.tourdaup.com.



New Family Support Workers for Alger and Ontonagon Counties

Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan is pleased to welcome Nicole Wachter as the new Family Support Worker for Alger County and Shannon Tucker as the new Family Support Worker for Ontonagon County. Wachter is a native of the Upper Peninsula and of Munising. As a recent graduate of Northern Michigan University and mother of two, Wachter states, “my experience comes from living. During college, my family’s financial situation required us to seek out state assistance. There are many programs out there to help families like mine; people sometimes just don’t know about them. I’m here to help families resource these programs and to provide hope to make life better in the future.” Indeed, that is what Teaching Family Homes is all about, providing hope to families for a better future.

Tucker, also a native of the Upper Peninsula and to her hometown of Ontonagon, is a graduate of Gogebic Community College and Northern Michigan University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology. As a mother of one son, Tucker emphasizes her belief in the new program. “I have a passion for helping people and feel this program is going to do a lot of good in our community. I have a three year old son and face many of the same parenting challenges that other families face. My job is to help families face their problems and work through the issues.”

The Family Support Workers will be working with troubled families and teaching them new skills, as well as building on the skills they already possess. The Family Support Program is a home-based program that allows the Family Support Worker to meet with the family in their home for a minimum of two hours a week to provide the family with support in the areas of parenting, vocational, and independent living skills. Families are referred to the Family Support Program by the Department of Human Services and the Family Support Worker helps the family set goals as proposed by the DHS and the family. The Family Support Worker will work with the family for up to six months to accomplish these goals.

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CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB!
WWW.TEACHINGFAMILYHOMES.ORG



*Providing Hope for Upper
Michigan's youth and families*

So many ways to make a little help go a long way...

There are always opportunities to get involved and help a child or family in need here at TFH. Whether you are capable of donating time, products, or funds, we have a program to match your needs!

Econo Foods Receipts

Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan participates in the Econo Foods WeShare Program. Every time you shop at Econo Foods in the U.P., save your receipt and turn it in to TFH offices. We add up all the receipts and receive a check from Econo Foods for 1% of the total.

Annual Fund Campaign

The ongoing Annual Fund Campaign collects dollars to designate to TFH programs. Programs in most need are identified and supported through the campaign. If you or your community service group would like to talk with someone about the campaign or a list of current needs, call us at (906) 249-5437.

Mentoring

Get involved by spending valuable time with a child. Bring a child to your workplace to give them a glimpse of what their future could be like, or simply spend quality recreational time with children in need. Contact our offices for more information.

Volunteer Your Talents

Individuals in the community have lended their talents to provide handmade items that can be raffled or auctioned off. Some of these include woodwork, quilts, water color art, baskets and more! If you have an item you'd like to donate, contact us at 906-249-5437.

Capital Campaign

Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan invites you to *Ring the Bell of Hope* with us! The onsite school at TFH is busting at the seams and needs your help. TFH is building a 2 classroom school with a library and gymnasium to accommodate the growing educational needs of youth in our care. This addition to our campus will not only enhance educational opportunities, but will also provide access to reading and resource materials for youth and families. The gymnasium offers a year round place for youth to recreate and challenge their abilities. For more information on you can help *Ring the Bell of Hope* please contact us at 906-249-KIDS.

**Stay up to date on all the latest news and events by
visiting our web site at
www.teachingfamilyhomes.org.**