

**THE CAROL J. GREER COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER**  
**Of St. Stephen's Community Church, UCC**  
**1007 Kimberly Dr. -- Lansing, MI -- 48912**  
*Supporting Under-Served Families and the Development of Their Youth*

**NEWSLETTER**

August, 2021

*Welcome to the first edition of the Greer Community Learning Center Newsletter. An outreach arms of St. Stephen's Community Church, the Center joins with other community resources to strengthen families and expand the horizon of at-risk Lansing-area youth. With the closing of Shabazz Academy, the Center turned to the Lansing Housing Commission which approved Greer Center programing for youth in its Hildebrandt Park Housing Complex.*

**Summer Learning and Fun**

In the fall of 2020, the Pandemic motivated the Greer Center, with its partner the MSU Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, to move the science exploration program from the St. Stephen's site to the Community Room at Hildebrandt. The program involved MSU graduate student mentors designing science related experiences and working with the youth participating in them. In several sessions students explored microbes living in, on and around our bodies. They discussed viruses, how they work and how to keep safe, studying the effectiveness of different types of masks in preventing aerosol dispersions. The program continued on-line later when the Pandemic worsened and area schools were closed. Snack sacks were delivered for each child in the household an hour before the on-line sessions began with activity kits for that day's session also provided. As one example, the youth grew crystals and explored rocks and minerals, studying the forces that help shape our planet and viewing the personal mineral collection of one of the graduate students. By summer 2021, the program sought a more in-person experience. It was then decided to move the program outside in the Hildebrandt communal area under the trees. Activities included making ice cream, studying solar energy while making solar lanterns, studying aero dynamics while putting small planes together that fly, and studying compost under a microscope and the insects that help break it down into soil. All topics demonstrated the importance of science in everyday life. On the last day of the summer session, there was a field trip to the MSU Gardens hosted by the MSU Association of Molecular Plant Science Students. These experiences brought the excitement of science to the youth with the added benefit of personal interactions with real scientists.



**Yahui Yang with Hildebrand youth**



**Team delivering snack sacks & kits**



**Hildebrandt youth at microscope**

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## New Summer Team Members

Four great new members joined the summer program. Alexis Dodd, a graduate student from Southern Illinois University and Carina Arnosti, a recent graduate from Wooster College were interns providing outreach assistance, up-dating Greer Center web presence, and creating/disseminating program promotional materials. Kayla Bertholf and Yahui Yang, were graduate students who joined the MSU team in designing and implementing the summer's activities and experiences.

### Message from the Leadership: Board Chairman, Bennie Boyd

I got involved in the Greer Center in 2010. I saw a need to help out Dr. Pat Barnes-McConnell, affectionately known as "Aunt Pat", the Center Coordinator and one of its founders. It appeared to me that she was doing the brunt of the work at the center. Her duties as I knew included program development, scheduling, food preparation for the students and clean up.

My plan was to assist with clean up after the kids left so she would not have to be in the Center late at night. I didn't really know much about the Center beside that it was opened after church service for computer use and that they offered some classes but that was about it. As I hung around and saw what was going on there, I began to think that this was a place I could support.

I saw the Greer Center as some place that I wish I had had as a young person growing up in the inner city. A place where you felt loved. A place where you were given an opportunity to learn things that would help you better yourself, a safe place. I volunteer at the Greer Center.

I believe in the mission to enrich the lives of all people especially the less fortunate and at risk youth. I believe in providing a safe space for people to express themselves. The Center supports that. I also really enjoy working with young people, sharing my experience with them. I found all these things at the Greer Center.



**Bennie Boyd, Aunt Pat & Greer Center youth, Summer 2014**



**Lisa Yun explaining process to Hildebrandt youth**



**Hildebrandt youth discussing the volcano with Alexis Dodd**

*The Greer Center is a nonprofit organization. We are able to serve the community through the generosity of people like you. Please help us by making a donation to our program.*

**By check:** St. Stephen's Community Church (with Greer Center on the memo line), 1007 Kimberly Dr, Lansing, MI 48912

**On-line via website:** St. Stephen's Community Church Lansing, click on DONATE, then Community Outreach Fund Greer Center.

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***Thank you for your interest, encouragement and support.***