

Mercy Center for Women

EMPOWER!

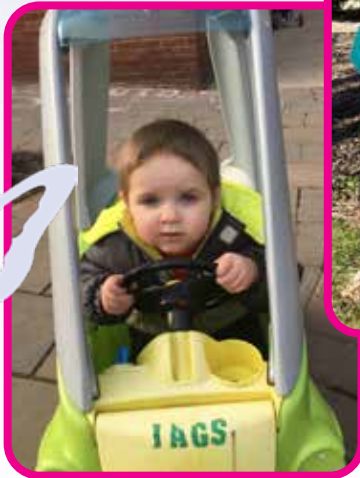
www.mcwerie.org

1039 East 27th Street / Erie, PA 16504 / (814) 455-4577
Spring 2021 Newsletter



**DRESS FOR
SUCCESS**
ERIE

WRAPPING UP MARCH



thank you!

Thank you to Matthew Zonno and Samantha Kennedy of **Northwest** for donating their Neighborhood Assistance Program funds to support our Capital Campaign!

For more information on donating NAP money to Mercy Center for Women, please call Jennie Hagerty at (814) 455-4577 or email her at jhagerty@mcwerie.org.





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2 Chronicles 15:7

**But as for you, be strong and do not give up,
for your work will be rewarded.**

Dear Friends,

The first sight of a robin brings promise Spring is just around the corner. It is nice to see the bay offer families the opportunity to walk on the ice. I believe the true beauty of Erie is the seasons. Flowers will bloom, fresh strawberries in June, longer hours in the day to enjoy running, biking, kayaking, and family activities. Yes, it is okay to love Erie! Erie brings community and a reason to breathe in a warm summer's night with a picture-perfect sunset.

The women and children of the Mercy Center continue to take measures to prevent COVID-19. It is music to our ears to hear voices of children throughout the day learning and enjoying indoor activities. The women are staying current with IOP appointments, blended case management, reunification with their children, and GED coursework. It has not been easy during the pandemic. Long walks, baking, art therapy, and reflection keeps families hopeful. The Mercy Center for Women awaits on the vaccine distribution. Through the generosity of three donors, three clients now have vehicles to transport themselves to work and appointments. One client would walk from the Mercy Center to 26th and Peach to take a bus to LECOM for her job at 6:00 a.m. each day. She is now able to drive to and from work. Thank you to the donors who graciously donated their vehicles. And a special thank you to Volt Workforce Solutions for providing employment opportunities to our clients.

2 Chronicles 15:7 gives us hope to remain strong, find faith, and know the gifts we share with others will be rewarded. This Bible verse, shared by someone I truly respect, allows for this project to be placed into perspective. It is perfect for the Campaign 2020 vision to transform a former grade school into permanent housing for women and children.

The collaborations this project will create will be a blessing to those served in the community. A 2.5-million-dollar vision for a social service agency is more than a number. Just shy of 2.25 million, we realize the need and move forward by looking ahead and thanking God for the community and generous donors.

Mercy Center for Women is partnering with the Crime Victim Center. We begin in April 2021 and look forward to the outstanding resources they provide to those we serve. In early February, the women were preparing lunches for the Erie City Mission. The Home Team and Mercy Center came together to prepare and provide lunches to Erie's homeless. We believe in embracing the need of the community and to work as one. Isn't this what we are called upon to do in our own lives? Kindness is not a task – it is a way of life.

Some wonder why: "Smile, Pray, Be Kind?" A dear soul, Monsignor John Hagerty, created these simple words to live by every day. Not as easy to practice, at least for me. In March 2020, my son and I shared a beautiful thing. We each decided to have those very words embedded in our left wrists. It reminds me daily the importance of patience and understanding. There are days, I look at my wrist often and ask to be a better steward of God. I may have some explaining to do when one day I hope to see my mother again, but for now – Smile, Pray, Be Kind. Thank you for all you share with the women and children of the Mercy Center. You are a blessing!





Smile, Pray, Be Kind,

Jennie Hagerty



Tuesday,
August 10, 2021
8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Eriegives.org

HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES:

-  "I lost a friendship due to being on lockdown and I really want to get it back."
-  "During this pandemic, I have had the opportunity to have more time with my child and more conversations with my family."
-  "My immediate family is closer than we've ever been before. Even if I can't see them in person."
-  "The coronavirus has affected everyone by putting them at risk for a life-threatening illness but has also given my family and I more time to spend with each other."



So many decisions... all because of you!



Keeping it local thanks to Iron Empire Clothing.



Mercy Center for Women **VISION 2020** will impact lives:

A former school building will soon provide permanent housing to women and children in the community. Imagine 13 classrooms transformed into two-bedroom furnished apartments. This anchor building which occupies 28th and East Avenue will showcase a thrift store, education room, food pantry, daycare opportunities, and Dress for Success Erie.

This 2.5-million-dollar Capital Campaign, just shy of 2.25 million, will transform lives. One cannot place a number on housing, homelessness, addiction, or domestic violence in Erie. However, we can come together as one to deliver a healthy lifestyle and positive journey. This school building rehabilitation will extend innumerable possibilities to the Marvintown/Academy area. Many of the Holy Rosary

School graduates are excited to see their childhood grade school come alive. The gymnasium will soon echo the laughter of children and community events in keeping with the spirit of neighborhood. The hallways will be overflowing with life and friendship.

Mercy Center for Women is grateful to the donors who have taken the time to learn and partner in Vision 2020. Our Erie Community serves many wonderful missions. Our passion drives our hearts to support what God has called upon us to do. Keep those positive thoughts coming and look for amazing things in 2022!



Women Making History 2021

As an organization that celebrates the empowerment of women, one of the transformational events that Mercy Center hosts is the annual Women Making History event. At this gathering, a class of women are honored for their commitment to service, community minded initiatives, and giving back to the less fortunate. These honorees are recommended by the community and a dedicated committee selects the final chosen honorees.

This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we thought long and hard on how to preserve this 28-year tradition while keeping safe and socially distant. The solution that we arrived on was to move the event to social media and acknowledge one alumna from every Women Making History class each day of March. These social media posts were modeled in a "Where are they now?" style, including information about their activities and accomplishments after receiving the Women Making History Award.

We will honor a new class of Women Making History in 2022. Keep an eye on the MCW website and social media platforms for the nomination form.

Thank you to the generous sponsors who made this possible, and congratulations to the Women Making History honored this year!



**DRESS FOR
SUCCESS**
ERIE

COMING SOON

Spring/Summer 2021



Facebook: @MercyCenter4Women

Instagram: @mcw_1994

LinkedIn: @Mercy_Center_For_Women

Twitter: @mercy_women



Catching Up with Melinda Albright

We shared Melinda Albright's story back in 2019, when her successful completion of our program was recognized as the Mercy Center for Women's Graduate of the Year. She was well on her way to achieving her goals of becoming a better mother and friend while on the elusive search for inner peace.



One of the best things to share about Melinda is that she is now part of the Mercy Center for Women Team! Melinda became a House Manager in April 2020. She interviewed with Executive Director, Jennie Hagerty and Director of Client Services, Carla Storrs, for a part-time weekend position. Recently, she was promoted to full-time. The positive energy and experience she brings to her role has been an asset for both residents and staff.

When not at work, Melinda spends time with her son Tommy on an idyllic farm-like setting outside of the city. They share the space with her partner Tom and their one-year-old lab/mastiff mix, Jonah. The relationships she has with them have evolved positively and continue to be a work in progress. They take the time to appreciate nature surrounding them on long hikes as a family. Some other activities Melinda enjoys are gardening, reading as many books as possible, and creating art through crafts.

Although the MCW can be hectic at times, Melinda finds peace being here. She loves being a part of the mission of the Mercy Center which includes helping our residents heal themselves holistically in body, mind, and spirit. "Serving others assists in your own healing," she shared. Contentment and happiness are the new goals she has set while she looks forward to future growth for herself and family. It is without a doubt that she will achieve these goals and much more!

Willow's Story



"Xavier, tell me what you learned in school today."

This was one of the most common phrases to hear from Willow to her son Xavier on the crisp lazy days of early fall as Xavier settled into his new school.

"We were safe for the first time in a long time," Willow shared.

Prior to joining the Mercy Center for Women, Willow and Xavier fled a domestic abuse situation and were homeless.

"We had to rely on ourselves for safety and getting by," Willow said.

Hardened by her time fending for herself and her eight-year-old son, Willow expressed, "I had a lot of anger issues coming into the program and learning how to get along with a houseful of other women was one of the hardest things for me to get used to."

In her time at the Mercy Center for Women, Willow grew from being very withdrawn and quick to anger, to slowly starting to lower her walls and let in others. She credits that to her anger management counseling that she received with our client services team. "I didn't really know how to manage my emotions. I had a lot of built-up anger [about life circumstances] and learning how to identify why I was feeling that anger was important."

"Being in a safe environment, honestly, was very important in doing that," Willow shared.

Willow was able to graduate from the program in less than a year and move into her very own apartment.

"I learned so much about managing my money and budgeting at the Mercy Center for Women," Willow said. "That was one of the most important things I am able to use after graduation in order to be able to pay my family's rent and expenses."

Another skill Willow emphasized is how she learned to cook at the Mercy Center, "I learned how to cook food from scratch there!" She exclaimed.

Currently, Willow is working on completing her GED. Once she completes that, she hopes to enter a massage therapy program in order to fulfill her career aspirations of becoming a massage therapist. Congratulations, Willow!

Holidays at the Center

CHRISTMAS at the Mercy Center for Women is always a VERY busy time for both the women and staff. This year we came together to make sure that, despite the pandemic, our women were able to celebrate the joys of the holiday season. Our Activities Coordinator Mary Tobin, through the generosity of the Erie community, was able to create a "Christmas Shop" in the Holy Rosary School gym. This shop allowed our women and numerous community members to pick out gifts to give to their loved ones. Each night leading up to Christmas Eve, the women and children read Christmas stories and decorated the four Christmas trees which were graciously donated to us. **Thanks to you, the Mercy Center for Women served over 115 families this Christmas Season!** We appreciate everyone who made Christmas 2020 a HUGE success.



Activities to enjoy during a pandemic.



Spreading Christmas Joy from Community Believers at Parker Hannifin Corp.



Clients enjoying a Christmas Tree presence donated by Mercyhurst University.



An overflow of Christmas, serving over 115 families in need.



Barber National Institute "Christmas Light Contest." MCW took 2nd place in the Business Category.



Agresti Real Estate serving Christmas joy to our clients.



The Grinch surprised the women and children with a heartfelt appearance.



HALLOWEEN is always a great time, especially with a houseful of kids ready to dress up and have some fun! This year we hosted a Halloween party where the women and children were able to receive candy, decorate pumpkins, and participate in a costume competition.



For **THANKSGIVING**, the women, children, and staff really explored what it means to be thankful for all that we have been blessed with. We did this by helping those even more less fortunate and putting together to-go meals for those without a place to call home on Thanksgiving. Together, we were able to prepare 250 meals! This turkey meal was accompanied by a side of cranberry sauce and potato salad. Cookies donated by members of the community were also included with each plate. On Thanksgiving day, residents, staff, and community volunteers walked around downtown and distributed these meals as well as hygiene products donated by the Community Health Network.



*Birthdays are a **BIG DEAL** here at Mercy Center for Women!*



Thank You FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Thank you to John Elliott and Kristian Young from Hot Off the Press for raising donations for women and children. We are honored to call you friends and to remember Kristian's mother's legacy.



Romolo's made our Valentine's Day much sweeter!
Thank you, Fit Plus Team!



Executive Director, Jennie Hagerty, stopped by Versona to see Store Manager, Michelle, who provided clothing to Mercy Center clients.



A shout-out to Mercyhurst Prep students for their donation of diapers and hygiene products. We are proud to be a part of the Mercy Family.



Hope on Horseback gave our residents confidence and healing as they enjoyed the outdoors through their therapeutic program.



Executive Director, Jennie Hagerty, took time to personally deliver valentines to so many of our LOVING supporters such as Stacy Kline. Thank you Country Fair!



Allburn Florist brightened up the client's rooms with lovely Valentine's Day violets!



A generous donor made sure our women and children had fresh veggies every week from a C.S.A. Women prepared many delicious dinners with this fresh produce. Thank you, Pat!



R.J. Messenger from Iron Empire Clothing created awesome t-shirts, hoodies, and bags for the MCW for their Local Supporting Local fundraiser.



Serendipity Sweets spoiled us with delicious desserts throughout the month!



Made with love! Hands All Around Erie Quilt Guild created beautiful quilts to keep everyone warm.



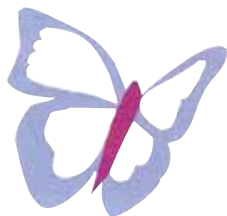
So grateful to have been a part of Country Fair's Pump for Charity!



Our AmeriCorps VISTA wrote a grant through The Erie Community Foundation to provide food for five after-care families. Great job, Shayma!

Please pray for those who have passed on and thank them for keeping our women and children in their last requests.

Sheila Ball
Belen Camara Brown
Al Buffalari Jr.
Audrey Hirt
Carol Matheis
Margo McLaughlin
Kathy Morphy
Patricia E. Villella
Mary Louise Wiczorek



"All things are possible for one who believes."

– Mark 9:23

Share a Planned Gift with the women and children of the Mercy Center for Women.

To learn more, please contact Jennie Hagerty at (814) 455-4577 or reach her by email at jhagerty@mcwerie.org

MERCY CENTER THANKS MANY FOR YEARS OF SERVICE...

Congratulations on Your New Journey!



Executive Assistant
Shirley Schell



Grants Manager
Holly Nowak



House Manager
Anita Kraut



House Manager
Denise McConnell

Cumulatively, these lovely ladies have **32 YEARS** of history and passion for the MCW. Thank you for your dedication to the women and children we serve - you have made a difference in their lives. We wish you the best!

WELCOME TO THE MCW FAMILY!

We are excited to introduce three new employees here at the Mercy Center for Women!



Erin Dworakowski is the new Executive Assistant to our Executive Director Jennie Hagerty. She does an amazing job of keeping Jennie's busy schedule in order. Prior to her time with us, Erin worked at Citizens Bank and was a Licensed Massage Therapist for Dr. Craig Costello DC, FACO, CCSP. "I am excited to begin my new chapter at such a wonderful organization" she shared.

Shelby Neal is a new addition to the Case Management Team; she is also an Art Therapist who encourages the residents to express themselves through art. She comes to the Mercy Center from Gaudenzia Inc. She enjoys traveling, gardening, and making art.



John Brown is our Maintenance expert. We are lucky to be able to share him with his current employer, Holy Rosary Church. He can fix anything and gets the job done! We look forward to the wonderful things that you will accomplish.

MERCY CENTER *for* WOMEN



Mercy Center for Women
is the only
24 HOURS A DAY,
365 DAYS A YEAR
facility that provides
services to women
experiencing
homelessness regardless
of cause.





1039 East 27th Street / Erie, PA 16504

www.mcwerie.org

Watch for MCW updates on our website! There will be updated information, new photos and videos, and opportunities to serve.



"Like and follow" our Facebook page for updates!

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Celebrating Black History Month

We celebrated **Black History Month** here at the Mercy Center for Women by learning about some key black men and women who paved the way for a change in America. A big thanks to one of our house managers, **Flo Gibbs**, for taking the time to set up such a creative and fun bulletin board!