

May Dugan Center

Serving the people of the Near West Side and Greater Cleveland since 1969

September 2009 Newsletter

May Dugan Center celebrates 40 years of service

For 40 years, May Dugan Multi-Service Center has been continuing the tradition of its namesake, May Dugan, by providing programs to assist those in need of food, cloth



Pat Reynolds with a portrait of his grandmother May Dugan

ing, shelter, employment or help improving their general quality of life.

May's spirit is alive in the center today not only through the programs it offers, but also through her grandson, Pat Reynolds, who has served on the institution's Board of Trustees for the past four years.

"One of the things instilled in the family was to try to help others," says Pat Reynolds, grandson of May Dugan. "There are a lot of excellent programs down here from the basic core programs for people who aren't as fortunate as others to programs that assist area residents with community organizing."

May Dugan was a well-known philanthropist in the neighborhood surrounding her saloon and her home on West 58 Street. The daughter of newly immigrated Irish parents, she married an English auto mechanic. When her husband died in 1928 of the flu, May was left on the brink

of the Great Depression with six young children to raise on her own.

"My grandfather had a good business but when he died there was no one to pass it on to," Pat said. "My father was the oldest child and his dad died when he was only 14 years old."

May struggled to make ends meet as a saloon keeper and used her connections to help her customers and neighbors through difficult times.

Working in the saloon, she met all types of people in her business from gamblers and gangsters to politicians, always providing a place for those down on their luck to feel secure.

"They used to call her a front porch social worker because she used to sit out in her rocking chair and give advice to people whether they wanted it or not," Pat said. "But if someone needed help she was the person who could get things done for you."

May even went so far as to run a rooming house out of her own home after her children had grown up and moved away. Anyone down on their luck and looking for a place to stay could find a bed at May's as long as they abided by her rules. Even those that could not afford to pay were offered a bed to carry them through a rough patch. When May passed away in the early 1970s, community members petitioned to name the West Side Multi-Service Center the "May Dugan Center" in honor of the woman who gave so much back to her community.

"There's always going to be a need for a facility such as this," Pat said. "It's unfortunate, but there is, practically speaking, going to be a need."

May Dugan Open House Celebration

May Dugan Center is hosting a jazz-theme open house from 3-6 p.m. October 25th with Marilyn Holderfield.

We welcome all friends and neighbors in the community to help kick off the celebration of the

multi-service center's 40th anniversary.

All are invited to celebrate the center's incorporation with the state on July 30, 1969, so save the date and come celebrate with us!

May Dugan Center develops new mission, big plans

Eight months ago, I assumed the responsibility as Executive Director of the Near West Side Multi Service Corporation better known as the May Dugan Center. It would be an understatement to simply say this position has been a challenge. As for many other non profit Executive Director's, the challenges have been overwhelming and requiring tough decisions to ensure successful operations and outcomes.

In spite of the many critical issues impacting the May Dugan Center, there are many rewards to serving in this position. On July 30, 1969 our Center was officially registered with the State of Ohio as a 501-(c) (3) organization. For the past 40 years, hundreds of thousands of individuals and families have received assistance through our comprehensive case management/counseling services. As we begin to celebrate our 40th anniversary, we are continuing to develop and implement a strategic plan and a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy. In February, we held a Board and staff retreat on a Saturday attended by nearly 100%. The goal was to revisit our mission statement. As a result the two hard working groups agreed on our new statement "To enrich and advance the lives of individuals and their communities." This new mission will follow by the formation of an updated Vision Statement, specific goals, objectives and measurable outcomes.

For many years people throughout the community have become familiar with the May Dugan Center, but many are not familiar with the programs and services we provide on a daily basis. Our new branding and communication tools will allow us the opportunity to become more visible in the community and inform stakeholders about our services. One of the most rewarding services we offer is our monthly Food & Clothing Day. In partnership with the Cleveland Food Bank and the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland, many individual donors, our staff and wonderful volunteers, hundreds of individuals are able to enroll and receive a box of groceries and select items from the clothing and household inventory. The number of new clients continues to increase while resources steadily dwindle.

With support from local foundations, city and county government contracts, and individual donors, we are able to deliver our programs and services, however, additional help is needed to continue our operations. In addition to our daily operations, we



serve as a landlord to many other non-profit and public organizations providing many programs serving the community. Our building is owned by the City of Cleveland and plans are underway to meet with officials to begin an assessment on systems greatly needing repair. We are hoping for cooperation and support from the City and other funding sources to make our building as energy efficient and green as possible.

Through the generous support of the Business Volunteers Unlimited, 67 young professionals representing four corporations assisted with the Summer of Service project painting interior walls and landscaping throughout May Dugan. This program created great awareness and an opportunity to involve these young individuals in future projects. BVU has also assisted with the referring of several individuals interested in serving on our Board of Trustees.

Even though we face many challenges, we remain optimistic and look forward to the many opportunities ahead of us. In celebration of our 40th anniversary on October 25, 2009, we are planning an "Open House" to invite the community to visit the May Dugan Center. We hope you can join us for this affair and that you will be able to support our annual fund drive as well. Please visit our website for updates on our activities.

Thank you,

Executive Director
May Dugan Center

A Strong Start Success Story

On Tuesday, June 9th, Strong Start for Cuyahoga's Families hosted its third graduation of the year at the University Church of Christ on East 89th Street. The



Recent Strong Start graduates Tim and Katie

list of couples graduating totaled 32. One success story is from Katie and Tim who first heard about the program through Metro Health Hospital while speaking to one of the nurses. The couple were enrolled in Strong Start as they were both over the age of seventeen, unmarried, and their son was under three months of age. Throughout the 12 week program, Katie and Tim learned valuable skills to help them reach the many goals they set for themselves as a family. They learned the importance of money management, conflict resolution, and effective communication. The couple graduated with honors from Strongsville High received merit scholarships to Baldwin Wallace College.

They plan to work part-time while in college and to split the time watching their son. Katie and Tim want to be involved in their child's life as much as possible. When Katie was asked about her experience of Strong Start she said, "What is there not to say about the program, it is absolutely wonderful." The couple shares many dreams for the future such as getting married. Katie states that "this dream will be put on hold for a while." She says the facilitators of the program helped them become more realistic about their goals. They will focus more on "finishing college, obtaining good careers, and providing a stable and healthy home for their son."

MomsFirst effectively working with teens for healthy babies

MomsFirst Adolescent Component is managed within the Case Management division of May Dugan Center. Four Community Health Workers work in all 26 Cleveland Metropolitan High Schools helping pregnant teens receive medical care and/or homes for a healthy pregnancy until the infant is two years of age. Our staff educates and answers clients' questions concerning prenatal care, baby care, birth control, child care referral and family planning so teens can stay in school and graduate. In addition to MomsFirst, an additional Community Health Worker provides prenatal home visits and support services to families in other communities in non-traditional high schools or seeking their GED via the Enhanced Services program. MomsFirst uses the Baby Basis Curriculum to further enhance its effectiveness by strengthening the health literacy component. The curriculum increases

our clients' knowledge and work towards achieving ownership of their health, bodies, and spirits through increased literacy and personal confidence.

One particular client story was of interest. During this past term, an individual dropped out of school when she was in eighth grade and began attending Job Corp, but she became pregnant. Due to her pregnancy, she could not continue. She was asked if she wanted attend regular school, online, or to receive a GED. The client said she would prefer the GED because it would help her with future employment as well as attend college in the future.

Since her GED completion, she now attends Tri-C Metro Campus two days a week. Her case plan keeps her focused on college and time management as well as caring for her son.

Wednesday food distribution feeds over 2,000

May Dugan Center distributes food, clothing, toys and small household items every fourth Wednesday of the month for families and individuals who live on the West Side of Cleveland. Large bags of food staples are distributed according to the number of family members. May Dugan Center recognizes the needs of families, especially at the end of the month, and provides a supplement to food assistance programs when families need it most. Families and individuals can count on May Dugan for food assistance 11 times per year. So far this year, we have distributed food and clothing to over 3000 individuals in 1052 households.



May Dugan lobby on Food Day

May Dugan Center receives clothing, toys, and small household items through donations from community members, businesses, and organizations. Donations are accepted Monday through Friday, and are stored

until the day before distribution when items are sorted for clients. Participants usually go to the clothing room before picking up their bag of food on the day of distribution. They are able to get what they feel they need for their family and themselves

For the past several months one of our board members, Pat Casey, who has been on the board for a year, had shown an interest in volunteering for this distribution. He comes both days to give us a hand and helps with the packing of the food bags. He comes early when we start and he leaves when we finish. They pre-pack bags according to the number of family members. Pat then comes back early the next day to help distribute the bags to the individuals and families. He is getting a hands on look at how the program flows and getting familiar with the participants.



The Ohio Lottery hands out hats and shirts

Community organizing focuses on state budget and Metro Health

Over the past months, May Dugan Center community organizing has focused on two primary areas: the state budget and access to Metro Health. As many may know, Ohio passes a new state budget every two years. May Dugan collaborates with ABLE-Advocates for Budget Legislation Equality, whose purpose is to increase citizen involvement in the development of Ohio's budget. The group has worked with the community to educate and involve through testimony at the committee level, participation in rallies both in Cleveland and Columbus and meetings with key elected officials.

While the outcome is in doubt at this time, it is evident that we have vastly increased the understanding of the average citizen not only about the make up of the budget but how they might impact its development. Slowly but surely, we are empowering the low income members of our community to be part of

the political process that has such an impact on their future.

In addition, May Dugan's community organizing continues to work to ensure the most needy have equal access to health care. We are currently working with members of the community to gain information on the impact of a recent decision by Metro Health to apply co-pays to all coming for health care regardless of their income level. We suspect this is preventing and/or causing low income members to avoid tending to their health care needs. Together, with members of the low income community, we have developed a survey to gain a better sense of the impact of this decision. Once we have the results, we anticipate compiling the data and working with Metro Health to determine if changes are needed in their current policy.

Business Volunteers Unlimited get to work at May Dugan

Friday, June 26th, Business Volunteers Unlimited selected May Dugan for its annual event to volunteer with a non-profit. Sixty seven volunteers assisted with painting, landscaping, and food pantry projects from four companies: Edgemark Medical in Twinsburg, Hyland Software in Westlake, as well as Finley Davies, Inc. and Squires, Sanders & Demsey, LLP both located downtown. Each volunteer was invited to bring a donation of non-perishable food or baby-supply item such as diapers, wipes, etc. The BVU program provides young professionals with the opportunity to network, make a difference, and learn about the strong



Business Volunteers Unlimited gather with May Dugan staff.

culture of community service in Cleveland. Fostering employee volunteerism is a powerful team building tool!

New community partnership

We are pleased to announce our recent community partnership with Domestic Violence Center. During the month of October, May Dugan will shine a purple light in our lobby to raise awareness and create dialogue about the impact of domestic violence on our community. We are proud to perform this small step in empowering individuals, promoting justice,

and mobilizing the community so all people are free from violence and abuse in their relationships and homes, a step in line with the mission of the Domestic Violence Center. For information or to obtain a light bulb or string of lights, contact the Domestic Violence Center at 216-688-7229, or visit them online at www.domesticviolence-center.org.

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May Dugan's Wish List

Cargo Van	Cleaning supplies
Perennial landscaping	Picnic tables
Office furniture	New carpeting
Two-wheelers and four-wheelers	Carpet cleaning
Palate jack lifter	Office and storage Shelving
Vacuum cleaners	Financial support

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