NEWSLETTER
January - April 2016

A New Year Brings New Possibilities

This time of year always brings about a time of reflection and gratitude for the blessings of the past year. This year is no exception, as 2015, our 65th year of service, was another magnificent year at the United Community Center.

One highlight this fall was being recognized by the White House as a “Bright Spot in Hispanic Education.” This designation was given to only three organizations in Wisconsin that are helping close the achievement gap and support Latino educational attainment and excellence. We are proud of this recognition and what it means for the students we serve.

Additionally, we are excited to be nearing the completion of our $8 million Building on Success capital campaign to expand Bungeni-Guadalupe Community School, giving more students in Milwaukee access to life-changing opportunities. We are deeply honored by the generosity and trust so many individuals and organizations have placed in us by financially supporting this campaign. We are optimistic that together we will complete the largest fundraising effort in the 45-year history of UCC on time.

In 2016, we will open the new UCC Acosta Middle School and welcome 50 new 6th graders to that school with a focus on technology and skilled trades to prepare students for careers of the 21st century. This and many other exciting opportunities for us to serve the community would not be possible without the partnership of so many, including volunteers, corporate partners, and numerous other organizations who help us in our mission every day. It is with gratitude that we begin this new year of celebration for what we are accomplished and dream of what else we can achieve together.

Students Experience Medical School at University of Wisconsin-Madison

With an invitation from Manuel Santillan, the Director of Multicultural Affairs at the University of Madison’s School of Medicine and Public Health, 50 students from the Latino Arts Strings Program visited Madison recently to participate in MiniMed School, a daylong, hands-on experience to simulate some of the experiences of Medical School.

At MiniMed School, UW medical students ran a variety of workshops for the Strings students and covered topics such as the exploration of human organs. Medical students also taught a class on how to prepare early for possible acceptance into medical school.

Following the MiniMed School, the students returned the favor by performing a concert for all of the workshop participants, as well as for other university students and staff. The Dean of the School of Medicine was in attendance and expressed great admiration for the students after hearing the concert. He even extended a personal invitation to the students interested in medicine to return to the school to observe a variety of activities, including medical operations.

For many of the Strings students, their favorite takeaway of the day included touching real human organs. They also felt great pride in the opportunity to showcase their talents while performing for the faculty and university students who worked with them throughout the day.
Where Are They Now?
Chris Rojo

Chris, her parents, and her siblings came to UCC and BGCS as a young family new to Milwaukee.
When she and her sisters enrolled at BGCS, the girls had no idea what the future would hold. They were not strong English-speakers and did not know any of the other students. They joined ESL classes to learn vocabulary and reading with other English-language learners. The sisters soon made friends in their classrooms and found a comfort with English. Their parents were also very involved, developing a camaraderie with BGCS families as part of the Parent Involvement Committee.

With a strong elementary school foundation, Chris’s future began to take a more concrete form in 7th grade as she entered Mr. Harris’s history class:

“Mr. Harris was my favorite teacher. I’m actually studying criminal justice because of him.”

Knowing she wanted to pursue a professional career, Chris decided to work hard and succeed in high school to eventually go to college. She participated in UCC’s Youth Volunteer Corps every summer, mentoring younger students and going on college tours throughout the state.

Thanks to her commitment to high school, Chris enrolled at UW-Milwaukee — as the first in her family to go to college! She joined UCC’s Abriendo Puertas program, which guided her not only in her early college years, but also gave her career advice and mentoring opportunities as she neared graduation. She learned how to write cover letters, network with other professionals, and develop what skills she needed to succeed in the workplace:

“A lot of doors and opportunities have opened up for me.”

In college, she interned at Milwaukee’s District Attorney’s Office and at the Wisconsin Department of Justice, where she worked alongside federal and local law enforcement agencies. She still teaches children about aggression and the different types one can have, and more importantly, how to address these aggressive situations. Senior Center Director Hector Hernandez says, “[The program] has had a great impact on them. It’s a way for them to relieve stress and add positivity to the center.”

Volunteers Give Back This Fall

As we welcome the New Year and look forward to the spring, United Community Center would like to reflect on the generosity of all the volunteers who donated their time, energy, and efforts to make this past fall and holiday season a success. With your help and support, we accomplished more than 28 projects for our students, seniors, and community.

UCC was fortunate to host the annual United Way Season of Caring with twelve volunteer projects taking place in the Senior Center, Adult Day Center, and Bruce-Guadalupe Community School. We had more than 95 volunteers from nine corporate partners participate in these events. Thanks to companies like Rockwell Automation, Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc., Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, and so many others, we were able to provide literal events to our younger students, give a career presentation to our middle school students, and even take our seniors on a memorable field trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum.

We also had wonderful group of career coaches and mentors that volunteered in UCC’s Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) program to help our college students on their journey to finding their careers. Volunteers spent time with these young and upcoming professionals sharing their expertise, advice, and personal experiences on how to be successful.

Muyacas Gracías, a huge thank you to all of the remarkable volunteers that made a difference in our community by participating in our projects and events this past year. We hope to see you and your friends again in 2016!

Contact Us
Animals

To RSVP to any of the upcoming events:
- All volunteers are invited to attend our annual Volunteer Celebration to be held on February 25th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Help our students explore different career paths during the Middle School Career Day to be held on March 22nd.

For more information on these events, please contact Joanna Rivas at priva@uccmilw.org or (414) 344-3100.

UCC looks forward to seeing you on a memorable field trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Thank you to the United Way Season of Caring. The Burnham Foundation supports the program that helps our students explore different career paths.

Creativity and Exploration Explode as Students Work with Chromebooks

This year at Bruce-Guadalupe Community School, every 8th grade student received a Chromebook to bring to and from school every day and utilize daily in class and with homework. After just one semester, the educational experience has changed dramatically for both students and staff.

Students are now able to explore more information on topics studied in class, they problem solve independently and are becoming more comfortable emailing teachers questions about homework. Students have demonstrated they can own their learning and take responsibility for finding a solution. Students are so excited about the new technology, many are showing more initiative in class, as well as keeping better records of their work while also helping improve homework and grades.

Staff have noticed that the time saved in grading homework and papers by utilizing online quizzes and homework, helps them find them more efficient and effective as educators. Many staff are excited to plan more in-depth lessons with innovative and new projects for students to explore.

Additionally, the ability to provide almost immediate feedback to students helps the student and the teacher understand where more time might be needed on a specific concept.

With many high schools moving to online and 1:1 computer based learning, Bruce-Guadalupe students will be prepared for their next academic step. The days of waiting for the laptops and finding time in the computer lab are over.

The possibilities for what can be explored with this 21st century new learning tool are endless.

UMOS Works with Senior Center to Tackle Stress

Every Wednesday, clients at the Senior Center meet for a program called Charles de Terapias with UMOS (United Migrant Opportunity Services) educator Carmen Maysonet. The Charles, which translates to conversations, offers a group environment for clients to talk about anything that is troubling them, whether it’s a disagreement with a family member or another client, or even issues of depression, clients’ “feelings are validated with listening ears. Carmen also teaches clients about aggression and the different types one can have, and more importantly, how to address these aggressive situations.” Senior Center Director Hector Hernandez says, “[The program] has had a great impact on them. It’s a way for them to relieve stress and add positivity to the center.”

Parents enrolled her at UCC
Applying to law school
1993
2015

Meet Chris Now

UCC and Community Care
Partner to Serve Elderly

The United Community Center recently celebrated their new partnership with Community Care, Inc. to provide comprehensive, attentional care for older adults in need on Milwaukee’s south side.

The partnership will help vulnerable older adults get the medical and long-term care services necessary to live as independently as possible and to reduce the need of moving into a nursing facility.

Community Care, Inc. specializes in helping older adults and adults with disabilities live independently. This partnership brings high-quality care and an extraordinary cultural experience to older adults with long-term care needs. Under the partnership, the UCC Adult Day Center will welcome Milwaukee County residents who are enrolled in Community Care’s PACE program, also known as the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

“The United Community Center is the premier provider of family and social services for the Hispanic community, and we’re excited to give our PACE participants the opportunity to experience this great organization and its outstanding programs,” said Kenneth Musson, CEO of Community Care. “This partnership is an ideal match — it optimizes our strengths as a national leader in delivering personalized, high-quality coordinated care and the United Community Center’s strong reputation of providing outstanding cultural programs to residents in the Milwaukee area.”

The partnership is the first of its kind for Community Care, which operates Medicare and Medicaid-funded long-term care programs in 14 Wisconsin counties. The Community Care PACE program is available to residents of Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

With fully bilingual staff and programs that focus on cultural sensitivity and wide range of activities where clients can enjoy socialization and stimulation, UCC will provide a unique benefit to clients of the PACE program while also saving money long-term through preventative care and services. Both organizations hope this is just the beginning of a partnership that will ensure our most vulnerable elderly, no matter the ethnicity, receive appropriate and effective care.

State Representative Dan Riemer thanks our preschool students.

Thanks to the United Way Season of Caring. The Burnham Foundation supports the program that helps our students explore different career paths.

University School of Milwaukee volunteers help students create spooky Halloween crafts.
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