

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

# Ross

COMMUNITY  
CENTER



# Ross Community Center

WHERE GENERATIONS COME TOGETHER

# 2020

## Ross Community Center Year in Review

*Our weekly community market*



## About Us

### Our Board

Mark Flodder(President),James Borgmann (Treasurer)  
David Heilman(Secretary),Susan Johnson, Rachel Stahlke,  
Diane Curtis, Dallas Lambert, Tania Said, Jim Harding

### Our Team

Jacqueline Hanoman, Amanda Owen, Paige Dennison,  
Matt Mercer, Tom Dalton, Madison Prather, Rachel  
Foster, Jack McFarren, Grace Witty, Lucas Hatcher,  
Taylor Bowers, Ayah Eid

## Our Vision

a community center that provides unique and diverse learning, wellness, and athletic programs in a safe environment where people can develop life skills, grow, and experience success.

## Our Mission

to build community by providing and promoting programs, services, and activities for the advancement of education, health, and wellness in our diverse community

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## ADVANCING EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JACQUELINE HANOMAN

2020 was an extremely challenging year for the world, a year which made us live in ways we never thought we would. Our circumstances forced us into an unexpected, and for many an undesirable solitude, and at the same to find creative ways to connect with each other.

**Creativity.** If there is one word that illustrates the path that we at the Ross Community Center have carved through the pandemic, it is creativity. 2020 was the year in which we fully explored our creativity as a community center with the mission of building community, advancing lifelong learning, education, health and wellness. When the world as we knew it was upended, the foremost thoughts in my mind as the leader of our organization were: How do we continue our mission? How do we stay relevant in the midst of this crisis? How do we continue to serve our people?

Once I got past my angst, the answers became clear: **Focus** on what we are good at. **Think** carefully about how we can adapt them to our new circumstances. **Identify** which resources we have that will allow us to reinvent ourselves. **Be creative** and imaginative to strengthen our mission. And this is what we did.

When the pandemic began, we were forced to suspend some of our programming, activities, services and events, and we adapted others to our new circumstances. We rose to the occasion and served our community in innovative ways focusing on addressing our strengths to their needs.

Parent picking up summer packets



## 2020 NUMBERS

Pounds of food given out at the weekly  
Community Market

**105,931**

Dollars spent on food, sanitation, and hygiene  
products for the Community Market

**\$17,029.45**

### Number of Youth served (unique individuals)

AfterSchool, Preschool, Baseball, Summer  
Programming, Suzuki Sprouts

**215**

Donations

**\$31,400**

Average Number of people served at the weekly  
community market

**590**

Total Grant Funding

**\$808,200**

# ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

When the pandemic began, with the abrupt economic and labor disruption in people's lives, food insecurity throughout our city rose exponentially. In response, we took our weekly community market curbside to serve our community. From May 2019, when we began our market, to mid March 2020, we served approximately 80-100 people on a weekly basis. During the pandemic from mid-March to December, we served an average of 590 every week. Our market is not only to give out food; it is one way we engage with our community through sharing food, hygiene products, books, healthy recipes, kids' activities, healthy lifestyle activities and more. It is a space of solidarity; of friends helping friends through challenging times.

We held a very successful hybrid Family Engagement Summer Camp in collaboration with PBS in which 45 children and their parents/guardians participated. Our joint WIPB/Ross Center team created content on our Youtube channel and prepared weekly activity packets which parents picked up. Children and team members met online to discuss the activities and show final products. As a result of our success, this camp was selected as a pioneer program for other PBS camps across the country.

We held our yearly Summer Youth Baseball League, adhering to COVID-19 regulations, in which 95 children ages 4-12 participated. It was, as can be expected due to the circumstances, a drastic drop from the prior two years during which an average of 300 children played. Notwithstanding,



*Volunteer Recruitment at Ball State University*

*Our director and a student reading outside*



it was emotionally important for children and families to have this opportunity to play.

We began the renovation of Rose Park, to convert it into a beautiful space of tranquility, gathering, learning and play for people of all ages.

We built a community garden in collaboration with Purdue Extension with the objective of creating spaces of connectivity with our community, as well as educational opportunities for gardening and healthy eating.

We continued building our sports multiplex by breaking ground on our third ballfield and soccer fields.

We strengthened existing collaborations, and created new ones, which supported us in our community engagement, both onsite at the center, and connecting people to services throughout the city.

Due to our strict adherence to COVID-19 regulations of mask wearing, hygiene, physical distancing and more, we did not have a single case of COVID-19 among our staff and never had to shut down.

Our major achievement was that we ended 2020 as a stronger and more versatile organization that has demonstrated that we adapt rapidly in a sustainable manner to changing circumstances and creatively reconceptualize our path forward.

## GRANTS AWARDED

As a non profit organization carving its new path to achieving our mission, thus far we mainly depend on grants and donations. The generosity of our funders and donors supported us through this difficult year, helping us to achieve so much more than could have been expected during this pandemic. We thank them for their belief in the capability of our team to achieve what we did.

## 2020 NUMBERS

\$75,000 operating expenses.  
 \$30,000 Ballfield maintenance grant  
 \$5,000 COVID-19 Response Emergency  
 Rapid Grant

### **BALL BROTHERS FOUNDATION**

\$12,000 for our Community  
 Market

### **CITY OF MUNCIE HUD**

\$2,000 COVID-19 Emergency Response  
 Grant

\$7,992 Emergency grant for furnace  
 replacement

\$30,000 for Community Engagement  
 programming to strengthen Web of  
 Support

### **GEORGE AND FRANCIS BALL FOUNDATION**

\$10,000 for Operating and Community  
 Market

\$2,000 COVID-19 Emergency Response  
 Grant

### **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

\$86,700 Renovation of Rose Park as a  
 beautiful space of wellness, gathering,  
 learning and recreation

### **ZEIGLER FOUNDATION**

Community Impact Grant (\$800,000 over  
 three years, 2020-2023)

### **IU HEALTH FOUNDATION**

\$34,900 for salaries

### **PAYMENT PROTECTION PROGRAM**

# LESSONS LEARNED

2020 was an interesting year for us all. We started out the year with strong preschool, afterschool, adult, health and wellness, and sports programs, a flourishing weekly community market, and a bright outlook for the coming year.

When the global pandemic hit, we had to quickly change our plans, our goals and our intentions. Our goal of hosting more gatherings and community events was not going to be possible and when schools closed down in March 2020, we knew our plans to grow the program would have to wait as well. Nonetheless, we started making plans. Then we made contingency plans. We had no idea if schools would go back in a week, a month, or at all during the school year, but we were still determined to help anyone we could. We didn't know if grocery stores would catch up to the demands. We didn't know if our neighbors would be able to keep their jobs.

Instead of focusing on the unknown, we focused on what we could do. We knew we could increase our market. So we did. We knew we could use technology to interact with students and families. So we did. We also knew the Ross Center needed to stay relevant and active in the community and to continue to be a catalyst for change and commitment to the wellness of all.



*Students practicing music after school*

*A sample of summer packets*



The biggest lesson we learned in 2020 was simple: focusing on what you can't change won't help any situation. You must focus on the good you can do, the strengths you can use and the difference you can make together.

We are fortunate to have amazing partners in the community who care about changing things for the better just as much as we do. Ball State PBS helped us engage with families and children in meaningful ways. The 8Twelve Coalition supported with neighborhood projects and energetic neighborhood leaders. Purdue Extension helped create our community garden. HLC brought health and wellness programming and so many more organizational friends and volunteers who have made our community engagement stronger. We thank them all for their friendship and support.



*TeeBall game on our baseball field*

## The Path Forward

Over the last five years, our center has been carving its path toward becoming a unique place for cultivating lifelong learning, health and wellness in an emotionally, psychologically, and physically safe space. We are focused on our goal of becoming a Concentrated Focus Model for development and a catalyst for revitalization of our neighborhood, which has been made possible by the funders who have generously invested in us and the people who participate in the programs, activities, events and services we offer. We are indeed a pivotal element of Muncie's future.

We have achieved a lot and in 2021 it is important we prepare to enter the next stage of our development. It is the year we will move into the final phase of creating our multi-sports plex. We will build our third ballfield, soccer fields, and sidewalks, creating a walking path around the center, and connecting to the projected new health center at Hoyt and Memorial. We will complete the renovation of Rose Park to become a beautiful place of tranquility, emotional wellness, gathering, horticultural community education, and outdoor learning. We will continue our weekly free community market, where we distribute food, hygiene products, books, family engagement activities, and do programming outside for attendees of the market. We will expand our afterschool and out-of-school programming where we focus on enhancing our kids' creativity, imagination, and academic achievement.

With our new facilities, we will expand our sports, health and wellness programming. These include expanding our youth and adult sports programming beyond youth baseball and youth and adult basketball, to include youth and adult soccer, volleyball, flag football, and community sports days, among others. Our health and wellness programming includes multiple recreational activities for youth, exercise, nutrition and mental health programming for adults and seniors, focused on strengthening community wellbeing.

We will expand our community engagement programming, services and events, which all underlie strengthening the web of support within our community. They include celebration of events such as Valentine's Day, Mother's and Father's Days, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, Community Fun Days, and Ice Cream Socials. They include programming such as supporting COVID-19 vaccination, emotional wellness for youth, adults and seniors, young parents' programming, horticultural education in our community garden, healthy eating and cooking, English as a Second Language classes, Adult Art classes, and collaborating on resident-driven projects with the Thomas Park/Avondale Neighborhood Council, among others. Our services include AARP Tax Preparation, an emergency food basket, distribution of diapers and other essential items, and referring people to other agencies and services that help to address challenges such as housing, rental assistance, lead remediation, utility bills and others.

We have entered 2021 with great promise, the will to achieve our objectives and to fulfill our mission of building community through advancing education, health and wellness for our diverse community. We are excited about the future!