



PEER connections

FALL 2025

A PUBLICATION OF THOMAS M. WERNERT CENTER



Wernert Center Rocks Toledo Pride's Sweet 16 Celebration

It was a sea of tie-dyed T-shirts and plenty of high spirits on Saturday, August 16 as TMWC participated in Toledo Pride for the third year in a row. Members of the Center's Safe Zone group and plenty of allies marched in the Pride parade, worked the TMWC booth, and helped spread the message that the Wernert Center is open to everyone, including members of the LGBTQ+ population.



Activities Specialist Maddie Cummins and Peer Education Specialist Callie Dahnke, who lead Safe Zone, praised the members who got involved in spreading the inclusive message of Toledo Pride, which celebrated its 16th year.

"I recognize how much TMWC's involvement with Toledo Pride means to our LGBTQ+ members and I am proud to continue to be involved with this important event," said Dahnke. "I hope TMWC's involvement with Toledo Pride will continue for years to come and that peer involvement will continue to grow with each passing year too, as we strive to foster a more inclusive and supportive community for LGBTQ+ people, both at TMWC, and in the community at large."

Cummins praised the Wernert Center's dedication to inclusivity for all members.

"From logistical planning, to decorating, to tie-dying group t-shirts, members and staff alike have participated in every aspect of this process," said Cummins. "We could not do it without the dedicated people behind us, and are so glad that the Wernert Center makes it a priority to show inclusivity and respect to every person that walks through the door."





Members and Volunteers Install New Rain Garden

The Wernert Center now has an awesome new rain garden outside thanks to the concentrated efforts of various volunteers and members, who installed the structure on Saturday, Sept. 20. According to Gardening Club facilitator Kathleen Hunter, who oversaw the project, a rain garden works by capturing storm water in a specially designed shallow depression filled with native vegetation, which naturally filters pollutants from the runoff and help the water soak into the ground, thus recharging the groundwater. The rain garden was made possible thanks to a \$4,000 grant from Sacred Grounds. Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped with the installation!

Welcome to Wernert:

JASON WEBBER AND WILL HAYES JOIN THE CENTER



Jason Webber

Jason Webber is the new Communications Specialist at the Wernert Center, bringing 30 years of media experience with him.

A native of Longview, Washington, he previously has worked as a newspaper editor, a reporter, political commentator, and as the publicist for notorious rap group Insane Clown Posse. In addition to his communication duties, Jason also DJs on Fridays during lunchtime, and runs karaoke.



Will Hayes

Willie Hayes is our new Computer Lab Coordinator, bringing plenty of energy, know-how, and lived experience to the Wernert Center. Will has been in recovery since March 2019, when following the loss of his brother, he realized he was taking life for granted, a revelation that served as the catalyst his recovery. When he's not teaching computer skills to Wernert Center members, he is a locally known gospel rap artist who performs under the name TooTuRnT.

Remember Ellen Myer

January 15, 1956-August 8, 2025

The Wernert Center extends its condolences and sympathies to the family and friends of the amazing Ellen Myer, who was a longtime member of our organization. We will miss you, Ellen.



Artist Spotlight:

CRAIG PYM

Wernert Center member Craig Pym creates artwork that dazzles the eye and boggles the imagination. He can be seen in the Club Room and the Frank W Lynch & Jane Lynch, MSW Art Studio creating vibrant works that stay with you long after seeing them. Craig has been drawing since he was a young man and started painting at age 29, mostly using acrylics and watercolors.

"I like having fun with colors and artists like Monet and Van Gogh really inspire me," said Craig. "I also like experimenting with metallic paints and glitter."

Craig is always working on a piece, averaging one completed work every week. He draws inspiration from the world around him, using nature, the outdoors, and Old West End architecture as his muses.

Thank you, Craig, for sharing your gifts with the Wernert Center.



RECOVERY together



LIFE AT TMWC



KARAOKE



BINGO



OUTINGS



Heart & Soul: CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Heart & Soul: Caring For Our Community held its annual educational fundraiser at the Wernert Center on Sept. 24 with close to 100 attendees. Guest speaker Marriah Kornowa, executive director of NAMI Greater Toledo gave a presentation on "The Effects of Mental Health on Families," while guests enjoyed mocktails and great food. Proceeds benefitted programs and services at the Wernert Center and Northwest Ohio Behavioral Healthcare.

For more information, visit heartandsoultoledo.com

MISSION

To improve the quality of life for persons living with mental illness by offering hope and peer-driven programs that address recovery through education, advocacy and peer support.

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