

## Executive Director's Message



Hello from Western Avenue! My name is Mary Tackett and I am so excited and honored to be here as the new Executive Director at Western Avenue. I was first introduced to WACC as an intern with the Hispanic Outreach Program when I went to Illinois Wesleyan in 2011, and even then, I knew it was a special place. As an intern, WACC provided me with a place to learn and grow as a professional, and I also saw that it gave the students I worked with a place to learn, have fun, and engage with their peers and community. All of us here understand the way that WACC touches, supports, and cares for its community, and it has done so for 95 years. I am thrilled to lead it as we adapt and remain relevant during the challenges of a pandemic and work to continue to be a place of information, love, safety and welcome for the people in our neighborhood.

To let you know a little about me, I am from a small town in Iowa but recently moved from Moline, Illinois where I taught 3rd grade in a Dual Language school. In addition to teaching, I developed a Parent Mentor Program where parents would volunteer in a classroom and become community leaders by taking part in leadership, professional, and community outreach opportunities in Moline. WACC could not be a better fit and I am so happy to be here. Additionally, I am getting married in July and am so excited to be back in Bloomington and begin this new chapter in my life at WACC.

My entire professional career as a public-school teacher and parent coordinator has been centered on supporting multicultural youth and families. I will work diligently to lead, mentor, support, and promote love, care, and social justice for the WACC community. I am moved by the mission and vision of the center, inspired by what it has done for the community, and am excited to see what the future holds for WACC. I am honored to be surrounded with and work with the knowledge, experience, and support of the Western Avenue Community Center family.

I began my role as Executive Director on June 1st and have spent my first months here getting to know my staff, meeting with community partners and leaders, learning about the programs and history of Western Avenue. I'm looking forward to promoting different fundraising events, enhanced and innovative programs, and creative and meaningful ways to service our neighborhood as we come out of a pandemic. I am so grateful to be here and am looking forward to meeting and connecting with each of you. Please feel free to reach out or come visit any time!

In love and hope,



## Current Programming Schedule

### Senior Exercise Classes

Tuesdays & Thursdays

10:00 - 11:00 AM

### Senior Bingo

3rd Thursday of the Month

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### Senior Cards and Movie Day

4th Tuesday and Thursday of the Month

11:30-1:30

### WERQ

Every Tuesday 7:00-8:00 PM

### Teen Summer Camp

Monday-Thursday

5:00 - 8:00 PM

Call (309) 829-4807

### Martial Arts Club (Pagoda)

Wednesdays & Fridays

3:30 - 4:30 PM



### Hispanic Outreach Programs

Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

By appointment only. Call (309)

834-9205

### Latino Counseling Services

By appointment only.

Call (309) 834-9205

### Interpretation / Translation

Call (309) 834-9252 to schedule an appointment

### Food Boxes

Western Avenue Community Center distributes Food Boxes from the Tinervin Family Foundation on alternating Fridays of each month from 12:00 - 5:00 PM. Please come to the Center to receive your box; a drive-through service is provided.

Please contact Martha Saldana

(309) 834-9253 for more

information



## Program Highlights

Western Avenue was ready to welcome the community back as we entered early June. Our **Hispanic Outreach** program is continuing to see clients in their social services, interpretation, and counseling programs. We have even hosted the Chicago Mexican Consulate to provide services for our immigrant community.

Our **Senior Program** has had an active and successful summer. In May, Western Avenue hosted a Mother's Day dance as well as BINGO tournaments and fitness classes. Orman Jones, our Activity Director is working hard to bring our Seniors opportunities to socialize with monthly BINGO, card game tournaments, and movie days. Senior Citizens are also invited to participate in low-impact balance and strength exercise classes twice a week. Our goal for our Senior Programs is to expand to our Hispanic population by hosting a Loteria game and creating opportunities for our Seniors to gain more confidence with technology.

Our JOY (Just Our Youth) campaign brought in **\$47,546.19** for our **Teen Summer Camp**. Our Summer Camp has had on average between 20 and 25 students each night. Students get a free meal and get to have fun with art, sports, and gaming activities. The group has also gone on a variety of field trips: Corn belters game, bowling, and the library, to name a few! They will also be going to Chicago in August. It has been so exciting to see the children having fun and interacting with each other. It is a blessing that WACC can be a safe place for our students to have fun. In addition to our summer camp, students taking part in our Martial Arts program are meeting twice a week.

WACC has also made a difference in our community combating **food insecurity**. The Center has partnered with the Tinervin Family Foundation as well as used funds from the Illinois Charitable Funds Grant since January 2021 to distribute 1,800 boxes to 856 different families in the Bloomington/Normal area.

Currently, our Food Program works to distribute 300 boxes each month to families in the community. We operate a drive-through program where families can pick up their boxes at WACC, we deliver boxes to partnering organizations like churches and other non-profits that can reach other families, we deliver boxes to those with transportation needs, and we also offer walk-in services so families who use Western Avenue Community Center for other purposes can also receive a box. In June alone we have distributed 124 boxes via the drive through, have given 125 boxes to four partner organizations, and have delivered 21 boxes to families with transportation needs.



# 2021 Board of Directors

## Officers:

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Cheris Larson, Vice President

Jeff Gendron, Treasurer

Denny Steele, Secretary

## Board of Directors:

Toni Farrington

Mike McKnight

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Kerry Urquizo

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## 95th Anniversary

Happy Birthday Western Avenue! Western Avenue turns 95 on July 23rd. It has been a beacon of hope and love for this community for SO many years! I know many of you have many stories to tell about the people, activities, programs, and memories you have here. To celebrate this amazing milestone, we are going to have a WESTERN AVENUE BIRTHDAY BLOCK PARTY! August 14th, each of you are invited to come to Western Avenue for birthday cake, food, and fellowship. We will also be having a Bike Clinic and Back to School Activities for our youth! Keep on the lookout for more information!

## *Tinervin Family Foundation*

We are honored and excited to be partnering with the Tinervin Family Foundation. The Tinervin Family Foundation was founded in 2016 and provides programs like Mobile Food Distribution, Toy Drives, and a Halfway House for Alcohol and Drug Recovery. They participate in Adopt a Family and shoe donations, as well as donate to Mid Central Community Action, Neville House and Carle's Healthy Beginnings. They have been a gracious and impactful partner and we are excited to grow our partnership with them. The Tinervin Family Foundation has been vital in providing the food boxes for our Food Program and has already pledged \$150,000 to WACC to fund new landscaping and signs for our park and building and support other building improvements. Landscaping work began July 9th! Their vision to promote change and community outreach aligns well with WACC's mission and we are excited to discover and develop other possible avenues of partnerships and programming.



## **Donations**

Generous donations from our community partners are vital to helping us serve our community. Donations this year have been used to buy games, food, art supplies, and fund field trips for our Youth Summer Camp. Donations have also helped purchase decorations, food, prizes, and supplies for our Senior fitness programs, BINGO and card games, and dances. All of your donations help make our WACC the place of safety and love for all of our patrons. Patrons can make a donation at any time by visiting our website [www.westernavenuecc.org](http://www.westernavenuecc.org), by mailing a check, or coming to Western Avenue. Western Avenue Community Center has been a great partner with State Farm for many years!

### **The State Farm Matching Gift**

State Farm employees, retirees and agents who contribute to Western Avenue Community Center can have their gifts matched by State Farm for up to \$4,500 per calendar year. The program donations must be a minimum of \$25.

To help, fill out a simple form requesting State Farm to match your gift! Visit the State Farm Companies Foundation website or visit the SFNet home page for a link. Use the following email address to direct the match to Western Avenue,  
[finance@westernavenuecc.org](mailto:finance@westernavenuecc.org).

In addition, if you are a State Farm employee, retiree or agent who volunteers at the Western Avenue Community Center for 40 or more hours in a year, State Farm will continue to grant our organization \$500 under its Good Neighbor Grant program.

# Thank you to our 2021 Donors

Andrew & Elizabeth Hoffman

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