On July 30, 2019, the May Dugan Center celebrated 50 years of helping people enrich and advance their lives and communities. *We would like to dedicate this special issue of “Our West Side Story,” to commemorate our 50th anniversary.*

Founded shortly after President Johnson launched the “War on Poverty,” residents of the near west side of Cleveland pulled together to develop programs and services that would help low income individuals. Fifty years later, our center continues to provide critical programs and services that assist individuals and families with basic human services that are desperately needed. Counseling, education, food, clothing, and community outreach are just some examples of how May Dugan successfully helps more than 6,000 people each year.

We are most proud of our many community partners that we work with throughout the year and the many individuals, foundations, businesses and churches that financially support our work. Without your continued support, we wouldn’t be able to serve over 5,000 people with basic needs, or provide mental health and substance use disorder counseling to over 400 people or enroll students into our educational programming that helps them become self-sufficient.

As we begin to celebrate this significant milestone, we hope that you will celebrate with us and continue to support us philanthropically, as a volunteer and advocate. Volunteers are needed for our monthly food, clothing and produce distribution days. On December 4th we will celebrate our 10th annual “Tree Lighting Ceremony,” at the center. This celebration brings the community together and our beautiful tree is a beacon of hope for those we serve. We are most grateful for your continued support.

For more information on the May Dugan Center and our programs please visit www.maydugancenter.org
The 2019 Irish Roots Festival was the most successful ever!

A Special Thanks to our Sponsors:

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Celebrating **50 Years of helping people enrich and advance their lives and communities!**

**May Dugan: A Woman for Others**

Today, the name May Dugan is recognized for a reputation of generosity and humanity. The Center’s namesake was an inspiration to all. Born in 1892 to Irish immigrants on Cleveland’s West Side, May Dugan lived a trying life familiar to many American immigrants. By the time she was 30, she found herself as a widow with five children and a business, called Dugan’s Tavern, to run. However, amidst all of this, her commitment to helping those in need in her community never wavered.

Those who knew her tell the story of a woman who never turned anyone away. Whether it be for food, clothing, a little money, or a caring presence, her home became a beacon of hope for a community deprived of not just material wealth, but kindness and compassion as well. Her actions and efforts to better her community would often take on a selfless form that is rarely seen to this day. At one point she sheltered and fed twenty-five people in her own home; her legendary compassion providing alleviation to those in times of hardship.

In addition to helping those in her neighborhood apply for governmental assistance, May Dugan soon found herself becoming an advocate for those in her community. Frequently making requests to local politicians on the behalf of her neighbors, she took progressive initiatives to illustrate her dedication to the West Side and its inhabitants. Passing away at the age of 82, her illustrious benevolence fed, sheltered, and empowered her community and inspired good deeds beyond her time on Earth.

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**A War on Poverty**

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson ushered in a new era of American politics. Prompted by the nineteen percent poverty rate, and a belief that the recurring cycles of poverty could be addressed and eliminated, the Economic Opportunities Act (EOA) passed and made available a host of new governmental programs.

This act changed the American landscape by attempting to eliminate poverty, expand educational opportunities for the poor, increase the safety net for the unemployed, and to maintain healthy people. The act set up local planning centers to make funding available to non-profits who were doing the work of addressing poverty.

**A Center Built on Compassion**

In response to the War on Poverty, the Near West Side Multi-Service Corporation was formed in 1969 by a group of concerned citizens who saw the grave needs of their local community. An era of engagement and involvement from the federal government led the movement in addressing the root causes of poverty. In response to the government’s request for proposals, the Multi-Service Corporation sought funding to specifically build the multi-service center.

May Dugan’s passing in 1974 brought forth sadness, but for all who knew her legacy of compassion and kindness, naming the new multi-service center The May Dugan Center was a fitting tribute. The center’s Board of Directors, which included Mary Rose Oakar, petitioned the City...
of Cleveland to name the center in honor of the late May Dugan, and since the doors opened in 1975, we have been living her legacy.

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same.

In 1984, ten years following May Dugan’s death, the May Dugan Center was a source of information and social services for the whole community. Over 3,000 people were signing in to the building on a monthly basis, turning to the Center for food, clothing, counselling, and help with employment placement. The center was truly a multi-service center—affording clients the access to multiple services in one location. More than just a center for crisis, the May Dugan Center was also home to summer programs for kids, including everything from tutoring to summer activities.

In 1994, the Center had continued to expand. 10,000 people used what had come to be known as the “self-help center” to attain self-sufficiency skills in addition to short-term help. Holly Gigante, then Executive Director, described the May Dugan Center as “a sort of emergency room where people come to get out of trouble.” There was always an effort being made for staff and volunteers to be from the neighborhood. There was a personal touch that told people, sometimes for the first time, that they had dignity and value. The Center encouraged any and all who wanted to give back, that lifting up one’s own community did not need to be an extravagant ordeal.

Addressing the Needs

For 50 years, the May Dugan Center has adapted to meet our community’s ever-changing needs. Today, the May Dugan Center offers efficient wrap-around programs designed to aid our clients through the stress and uncertainty that often inhibits their mobility out of poverty. Together, the Basic Needs, Health & Wellness, Trauma Recovery Center, Counselling & Community Services, Education Resource Center, and MomsFirst programs work in collaboration with each other and outside organizations to provide the best possible service to our clients—reducing barriers to health care, education and affordable housing.

Understanding of the stressful impact that poverty can have on a person’s health is a relatively recent construct that has aided us in trying to provide the best care for our clients. Trauma Recovery Center and Education Resource Center director Dr. Sue Marasco introduced a model of trauma informed care to the May Dugan Center, which promotes organizational safety, trustworthiness, transparency, cultural sensitivity, collaboration, and empowerment among and between staff and clients. This approach recognizes the role trauma plays in the lives of clients and seeks to shift the focus from “what’s wrong with you” to “what happened to you” by recognizing and accepting symptoms and difficult behaviors as strategies developed to cope with trauma.

In the 50 years of May Dugan Center’s commitment to the community, we have


Then Executive Director Holly Giante with intern June Virgo, 1994
given thousands of Clevelanders the tools they need to succeed. Like our namesake, we believe in treating people with dignity and helping our neighbors builds a strong and thriving community.

We are grateful to you, our partners, for playing your important role in 50 years of helping to enrich and advance the lives of so many throughout Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. We look forward to another 50 years of partnership.

Rick & Dr. Sue Marasco accept the Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award for the work of the TRC

_Become a Monthly Donor Today_

We want to be able to continue offering our services for as long as they are needed. You can help make this happen by joining our NEW Monthly Donor Program.

12 gifts per year helps MDC by giving us consistent, predictable revenue throughout the year!

$50 Per month can cover sixteen visits to Momsfirst, giving a pregnant teen critical support in carriage, delivery, and post-partum.

Go to https://www.maydugancenter.org/donate/ and follow the prompts at checkout.

_May Dugan Center Est. 1969_
The May Dugan Center Senior Drop-in Program has evolved with positive energy and a new vision of what a “senior” program should look like. May Dugan Seniors on the Move Program helps provide opportunities for older adults to continue to play a vital part in their community.

Seniors on the Move recently completed a 10 week National Council on Aging Mastery Program® offered in conjunction with Cleveland Department of Aging, Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, Rose Centers for Aging Well and Anthem Foundation.

The Aging Mastery Program® was created as a guide to building a playbook for aging well and making the most of the gift of longer life. In the words of the NCOA, “As children, we’re taught how to be successful adults. By contrast, no one teaches us how to age well. As a result, most are unprepared for this new stage in life.”

For seniors living in poverty, being prepared is particularly important. Healthy aging is more than just living another year. By 2020, senior adults on Cleveland’s West Side will outnumber those under 20 years old, and the number of seniors aging into poverty is growing. Isolation, money stress, food insecurity, and health concerns can go unnoticed in the elderly, especially if they don’t show typical signs of poverty. Isolation primarily is a circular problem, exacerbating all of the other issues surrounding physical, social, and emotional health.

Tech literacy was not included as part of the Aging Mastery Program. Program Director Vanessa Jackson decided to rectify that, and a technology mastery program began on mobile technology skills and tools on March 28th.

But do seniors really need to be taught a course in technology? YES! Technology is now an extension of human life, and mobile technology can almost not be done without. Nearly all of the Seniors on the Move participants use smartphones daily, but lacked all the capabilities.

Tablets and smartphones have apps, and most health, financial, social, and community engagement functions can be accessed using any number of apps! With this training as well as access to Wi-Fi, our seniors can easily contact medical professionals, renew medications, use the RTA more easily, and most importantly, stay connected with friends and family. Keeping in touch electronically is very helpful in combatting loneliness and increasing social involvement. Skype might just be the best medicine for unhealthy aging.

Training topics included network basics, smartphones, camera, video and communications functionality, windows based technology, using social media, safety and security and fraud prevention was part of the curriculum. Ohio Savings Bank partnered with us to help provide training for online financial tools and financial safety and security. The Music Settlement partnered with us to provide lessons on camera functions, music streaming services, playlists, karaoke and how to create a music video as part of music therapy sessions.

This program was implemented by Vanessa and Maeve McMahon; an intern in the Sociology and Peace, Justice and Human Rights program at John Carroll University. The technology training is ongoing, and is one important step towards a model of healthy, active, and social aging.

How can you help? In addition to May Dugan Center coordinating home internet access for each of our 15 participants, we are also seeking support to purchase each participant a Leveno Tablet. Presently, a $1,500 donation was made, but a match is needed.

All Seniors are welcome age 60 yrs and over. Please call or email Vanessa Jackson 216-631-5800 x139 or vjackson@maydugancenter.org for more information.
May Dugan Center is Your Community Center

May Dugan can help with a variety of issues. **Basic Needs** and **Health & Wellness** provide free foodstuffs and checkups. **Counselling & Community Services** can help you with housing issues and free mental health counselling. The **Education Resource Center** is here to help you finish your GED or get the skills needed to get a job with a living wage. Our **Trauma Recovery Center** is your advocate after being a victim of violence.

**If you or someone you know needs help, call 216-631-5800 or come to 4115 Bridge Ave.**

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**The May Dugan Seniors are beginning craft projects. We are in great need of the following things in order to set our seniors up for success.**

**Quilting:** Pins, 8.5x11” envelopes, 1 gallon Ziploc bags, Ironing board, Iron, yardstick, quilting tools, shoe box sized plastic containers, ribbon, batting, stuffing, thread, fabric, sewing instructor, quilting instructor, craft store gift cards

**Needlecraft:** Yarn, crochet hooks, knitting needles, basic patterns, knitting instructor, crocheting instructor, plastic containers, craft store gift cards

**Ceramics:** Paint, brushes, spray sealant, ceramic glue, plastic table cloths, plastic containers, craft store gift cards

**Other Crafts:** Picture frames, seashells, decoupage supplies, small wooden or papier mache boxes, hot glue, jewels, plastic containers, craft books, jewelry making instructor, craft store gift cards.

If you can help us through the donation of items or time please call Vanessa Jackson at 216-631-5800 x139 or email her at vjackson@maydugancenter.org

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¼ of all Ohio residents will be 65 and older by 2035

38% of West Side seniors live below or near the poverty line

200,000 of these residents will be 85 years old or older.

Poverty is associated with poor health outcomes. It influences environmental exposures and health-related behaviors, and is linked to an increased risk of mortality and chronic disease.
Upcoming Events

Save the Date
for our
10th Annual
Tree Lighting Celebration

Thursday, December 5th
5-7 PM

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor contact Brenda Saridakis at bsaridakis@maydugancenter.org

50 for 50!

Play to WIN...

A Heinen's Chef's Dinner for 6 right in your own home!

Between noon on July 30th until 10am on August 30th give $50 dollars or more and be entered in a raffle to win an evening for 6 with a Heinen's Chef in your home. Donate on our website and put "50 for 50" in the memo line during online checkout.

For more information visit www.maydugancenter.org