

Summer 2020

ASSUMPTION CENTER

16 VINEYARD ST. WORCESTER, MA

How Does Our Garden Grow?

As the pandemic flipped our world around, we looked to our community garden **Semillas de Vida** as a safe haven. The space granted us nourishing time spent outdoors, letting us connect with the earth, and more importantly with our neighbors on Vineyard Street.

The garden underwent a transformation from years past. Old trees were taken down. Conner built new raised beds, a log bench, and an arch trellis. Sammie, our recently returned Chaparral AMA, added touches of decoration to our prayer garden. Serafina introduced new fruits and vegetables to the beds. Friends Amie and Guadalupe have been regular caretakers. The result is a true labor of love and we are thrilled to share the rewards of our hard work with Worcester families.

The garden has never looked so good and we look forward to welcoming more faces, old and new, to the experience the magic themselves!



David paints on slate to decorate a pathway in the garden.

Upcoming Events at the Center

Watering and Weeding

Knitters— Friday mornings 10-12 (meeting off-site until further notice)

Farm to Table Evening—TBA



A glimpse of the thriving vegetable beds!

Girls With D.R.E.A.M.S. Goes Virtual



When we paused in-person gatherings, Myra set up virtual meetings on the video chat platform Zoom, enabling us to keep seeing each other's faces during the pandemic. With help from Sandy and our two Holy Cross volunteers, Celia and Olivia, up to eight of our young girls participated each week in games, arts & crafts, team-building activities, and discussions over several weeks. Activity supplies were delivered to the girls' houses when needed, like the s'mores ingredients we used for virtual camping.

Other fun highlights included Jeopardy trivia, a paper flowers craft, a blindfold treasure hunt, and bingo. Continuing our meetings was important for the girls to have a safe space to talk about how they've been coping with staying home, managing the many changes brought on by the pandemic, and making sense of the social justice challenges in the national spotlight.

Although it felt different than being together in person, we are thankful that we could still have important conversations wherever we are, and share many laughs and smiles through our screens.

Making the Most of Mentoring

The mentoring program at St. Peter's Church had an abrupt end back in March, but we were lucky enough to distribute Easter baskets to the kids on their last day.

Most of our college student volunteers departed Worcester, but many stayed in touch with their mentees by writing letters and creating videos of themselves reading books to start a virtual reading library on the Assumption website. We also mailed activity packets to our mentees' homes to help them stay creative during quarantine.

We're very blessed to have dedicated volunteers who are always thinking of inventive ways to stay involved in the kids' lives. We miss our mentees and mentors very much and hope to be reunited again soon!

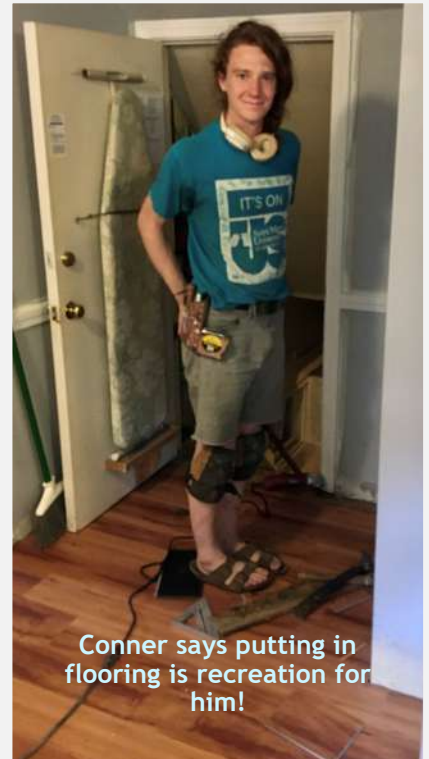


Valeria, Ivory, and Alex pose with their mentors and Easter baskets donated by our friends at Holy Cross!



Center Update – Kitchen Makeover!

Our Center kitchen was in need of a facelift so who better to ask to renovate it but our multi-skilled AMA Conner! Conner has spent many hours sanding and painting the cabinets, painting the walls and putting in a new laminate floor! We are so grateful to have such a willing tradesman in the house. Thank you Conner for doing such a wonderful job!



Conner says putting in flooring is recreation for him!



Cana News—Welcome Back Serafina!

Sandy was thrilled to receive a call from AMA alum Serafina (Worcester & Philippines) a few weeks ago asking if she could move into Cana. Serafina is the assistant manager at two new ice cream shops here in the Woo. Her aunt owns the new franchise called SubZero, which uses nitrogen to make ice cream.



Serafina had to return early from her volunteer site in San Jose due to the coronavirus, so we asked her if she would like to help us get the Center garden started up again this spring. Serafina was very excited to get back to the garden since she was responsible for it last year. We are very grateful for her commitment to the garden and for her wealth of knowledge too!

We are so happy to have you back with us Serafina!



Serafina with some of the neighborhood kids! They are learning about the garden!



Celebrating Senior Milestones

Agustina Pedroza is a bright, young lady who grew up in our mentoring and GWD programs and graduated from University Park Campus School this year. We were gutted that she couldn't celebrate her graduation and prom in the normal fashion, but we came up with the next best thing! We surprised her with a graduation gift at her house back in June, then hosted a distanced-prom for her and her friends in the garden in July. The event was complete with Chinese takeout, music, photoshoots by the newly built trellis, and a lot of dessert!

It was warming to see everyone enjoying themselves and to feel the Center bustling again after these tough few months.

Congratulations to Agustina on all of her accomplishments! We wish her the best of luck as she studies biotechnology at Worcester State University this fall!



Knitting Group

Our Knitters recently started meeting outside the Center. Knitter Barbara Engwall has a grassy knoll in her neighborhood not far from the Center, so she suggested that the Knitters could meet there on Fridays. Each person brings a lawn chair, a mask and we sit six feet apart. The number of Knitters varies from week to week but it has been a joyous reunion for those who are attending!

