We MOVED! New Location: 1221 Trimpe Building

After spending 18-months off campus and working remotely, Lewis Walker Institute faculty, staff, and students returned to campus to a new location! After it was announced in 2019 that Welborn Hall was going to be razed, plans began in earnest to find a new location to house the Lewis Walker Institute. After much searching, Dr. Candy McCorkle, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, suggested a space in the Trimpe Building that ultimately would become the new offices of the Lewis Walker Institute. Trimpe is kitty-corner from the previous location of Welborn Hall. Stop by and visit us!

Built in 1957, Welborn Hall was acquired by WMU in 1987. The Lewis Walker Institute moved into Welborn Hall in the mid-2000s and housed not only the Institute, but the Upjohn Center for Geographic Change and equipment dedicated to print services. Welborn was razed the summer of 2022 and will be used as green space in the new University Master Plan.

2021-2022: Our Return to Campus

The return to campus was met with a great desire to return to a sense of normalcy and the reality that life and education as we we know it may never be the same again. With that in mind, we focused programming on being responsive to the current needs of our students, campus, and community.
while also honoring our legacy of unique engagement activities that stimulate understanding of race and ethnic relations while a continuing to look at ways to develop more equitable and inclusive communities and institutions.

**Monthly Friday Lunch and Learns**

Building upon the success of our previous Friday Lunch and Learns, the Lewis Walker Institute focused this year’s series on Immigration. Topics included: Kalamazoo’s response to the Afghan refugee crisis; Immigration in Black and White; as well as Immigration, Policy, and Black History. We found engagement from across campus and the community. Most notably, facilitators of the lunch and learns began recording some of the conversations for rebroadcast on our WIRED podcast. The WIRED podcast can be heard on WMU’s own, WIDR radio 89.1 FM.

**Book Discussion and Community**

As is customary, the Lewis Walker Institute hosted a community book discussion. Our focus this year was on *Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence—and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets* by Thomas Abt. This book was selected as a result of the significant increase in gun violence reported in the City of Kalamazoo and across the County.

Leaders from the City of Kalamazoo, County government, Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services, and a myriad of community partners convened first to meet with and learn from Thomas Abt, author of Bleeding Out and Chair of the Council on Criminal Justice Violent Crime Working Group. Following this meeting with Thomas Abt, the group endeavored to collectively develop a short-term plan to address gun violence in the City and County.

The purpose of this workgroup was to focus on those actions that are most likely to make the most significant immediate impact on violence. The goal was to recommend actions that are short-term measures that can be carried out within 3-6 months.

The short-term recommendations included three interventions and three preventions. Recommended interventions were: (a) summer employment opportunities, (b) safe and emergency housing/lodging, and (c) hazard pay for frontline workers. Recommended prevention strategies included: (a) open more lines of direct communication between KPS, non-profits, community...
groups, and the county (outside of GVI); (b) create a hub; and (c) develop a way to track impact/success.

**Campus and Community Presentations**

The Institute co-sponsored several campus and community events consistent with its mission to promote:

- **Understanding of race and ethnic relations** through events such as the Jerjuan Howard ('21) presentation entitled *A Message to Black College Students* on October 14, 2021 in the Meader Room of Waldo Library. The presentation included a reading and dialogue based upon Howard’s newly released book of the same name. This event was co-sponsored with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

- **More equitable and inclusive communities and institutions** through events such as our sponsorship of the 2021 Virtual Summit on Racism November 12-13, 2021 hosted by the Society for History and Racial Equity (SHARE). This virtual conference was a multi-day event allowing for participants to cover a wide variety of topics from education to public health and public policy.

- **Appreciation of diverse peoples and cultures of the US and other nations** through the hybrid presentation of the Annual MLK Day Teach-In held in the Bernhard Center and live-streamed for participants unable to attend in person. The theme was “The Time is Always Right to Do What is Right.” Each of the four sessions was a derivative of the theme, including a memorial to Rev. Min Mochizuki (WMU Campus Minister who invited Dr. King to WMU and Kalamazoo), a student advocacy panel, panel of elected leaders, and call to action. Participants left the teach-in with clear pathways to take action and impact change efforts in their own communities.

**WIRE Youth Development Programs**

During the 2021-2022 academic year, WIRE programming returned in person and with an expanded focus. In addition to WIRE Saturday Academy and WIRE Summer Science and Math Camp, the Youth Juvenile Justice Fellows program was introduced as a way to develop advocacy and organizing skills of youth 12-22 who have been impacted by the juvenile justice system and parents seeking to develop the skills as well.

We focused programming on being responsive to the current needs of our students, campus, and community while also honoring our legacy of unique engagement activities that stimulate understanding of race and ethnic relations while continuing to look at ways to develop more equitable and inclusive communities and institutions.
**WIRE Saturday Academy** by Denisha Griffey

The WIRE Saturday Academy (SA) was held during the academic 2021-2022 year (October 2021-April 2022) to help provide support and enrichment in the STEM fields. This year the program continued the theme from the previous year of exploring the Interdisciplinary World of Environmental Science. This was a continued theme first introduced during 2020-2021 Saturday Academy, when the students were all virtual. The Student Showcase, introduced in 2019, allowed the students of WIRE Youth Programs to present what they learned throughout the year in the form of a symposium. This year the program introduced oral presentations instead of posters. Each participant developed the slides for their presentations to showcase to their parents and other stakeholders.

**Demographics**

There were 29 students that registered for the WIRE Summer Program. Most of the students that were registered were advancing to the 4th or 6th grade for the 2021-2022 academic school year, with none of the students advancing to the 7th grade. During registration, the parents had the option to register their student synchronously or asynchronously. The majority of the students attended in person with feedback from parents stating that they wanted to child to be able to get out the house, as Kalamazoo Public School students spent the 2020-2021 academic year virtual.

**Assessment**

Each year an assessment is provided in both math and science to see where there is gaps and needs in their learning. For assessment both traditional paper and online platforms are used. Imagine Math is used for the math assessment, the program creates Benchmarks based on State of Michigan Common Core and it assesses if the participant is on their grade current grade level if participating in the WIRE Saturday Academy and the previous grade level if only enrolled in the summer program. The data from the assessments show that there is definitely a need for improvement. There were only two students that showed proficiency on their grade level in math. The majority of the students were basic or below, with the majority below basic. The results were similar for the science assessment. The assessment provided a base to where we should start with the enrichment activities.

Additional programs, activities, and resources were offered to the students of the WIRE SA to provide additional support outside of the regular times that SA met. The students were able to use the Imagine Math Platform to enrich their math skills. This is the same platform used to assess students when they enter the program through benchmarks. In addition to Imagine Math the students were also introduced to the math tutoring platform www.yup.com, this online platform allowed students to seek help with their math homework virtually. This program is used strictly through a texting format and can be access from any computer or mobile device. Upon reflecting on
the 2021-2022 SA, it seems that focusing on particular themes has piqued the interest of students in the STEM fields particularly with Space. As future programing is developed we have learned to let the students guide us.

**WIRE Summer Science and Math Camp** by Denisha Griffey

The WIRE Math and Science Camp was held the first month of Summer 2 on Western Michigan University's Campus; July 5-29, 2022. The theme for this year's program was STEAM Forward! This was the first year that the WIRE program incorporated the Arts into the STEM Program. The topics for this year covered Civil Engineering and Music. This year the WIRE team partnered with Michigan Department of Transportation TRACs Program for the civil engineering and recent WMU graduate Josiah Denooye for music.

This year the WIRE program completed its first intensive staff training prior to camp. The instructors meet four (4) times over a course of two weeks for a total of 16 hours. During the training, the topics/areas covered were: 1) Minors on Campus Training (WMU Mandated Training); 2) Classroom Management, 3) Bullying, 4) Tentative Schedule, and 5) Curriculum training with the Michigan Department of Transportation TRACS modules. Instructors were provided with the opportunity to give input on the day-to-day logistics and teaching that would take place during the duration of the camp. We began with the review of the previous year’s science assessment to see what improvements could be made.

![2022 WIRE Summer Science and Math Camp](image)

**Demographics**

This year there were 54 students that registered for the WIRE Summer Program. Of those students 32 regularly attended. Most of the students that were registered were in the 3rd, 5th, or 7th grade for the 2022-2023 academic school year. The school districts served are Kalamazoo and Portage Public Schools. The students from the camp this year were from various backgrounds. This was a welcome shift from previous years. Although many of the students are of African American and Latinx decent, there were students of other ethnic backgrounds as well, including students identifying as Asian American/Pacific Islander and White. This year 75% of the students that registered for the WIRE Summer program were new to WIRE.

**Assessment**

Each year an assessment is provided in both math and science to see where there is gaps and needs in their learning. For assessment both traditional paper and online platforms are used. Imagine Math is used for the math assessment, the program creates Benchmarks based on State of
Michigan Common Core and it assesses if the participant is on their grade current grade level if participating in the WIRE Saturday Academy and the previous grade level if only enrolled in the summer program. Based on the results from both the science and math benchmarks, data indicates that the students are struggling in math. Of the 32 students enrolled in the summer program 69% of them are below or far below basic in math. Using that information from the results of the benchmarks, it helped guide the instructors in how and what they focused on in math. Students did show progress on post tests.

WIRE continues to be funded through a three-year grant (2021-2024) from the Stryker-Johnston Foundation.

**Youth Juvenile Justice Fellows**

The Youth Juvenile Justice Fellows piloted a youth justice training program through a grant from the Public Welfare Foundation. The Youth Juvenile Justice Fellows proposal developed a youth juvenile justice training program in partnership with the Michigan Center for Youth Justice (MCYJ) and Michigan Liberation (MiLib). Now that the first year of the training program is complete, it is positioned to be able to replicate the trainings in years 2 and 3 while developing a physical toolkit that can be shared across youth-serving entities seeking to develop similar juvenile youth justice fellows programs.

During year 1 implementation, we developed youth organizing leaders, a program infrastructure, and curriculum based upon trainings previously implemented by our partners at MCYJ and MiLib. This training program allowed for fellows and staff of the Lewis Walker Institute, MCYJ, and MiLib to provide education on the juvenile justice system while being both teachers and learners. We helped Fellows better articulate their experiences by providing training on how to share their stories effectively. Ultimately, youth and family fellows participated in a series of presentations, an Advocacy Day at the Capital, and participated in a site visit to Cafe Momentum in Dallas, TX where an innovative approach to juvenile justice was developed. Schedules did not allow for the group to provide information to the Juvenile Justice Reform Task Force, although individual Fellows were able to attend some of Task Force town halls. We look forward to Fellows facilitating trainings during the next grant cycle.
Demographics
Cohort 1 of our Youth Juvenile Justice Fellows included four youth who had some level of involvement with the juvenile justice system or law enforcement and one parent with previous involvement. By meeting with juvenile justice system administrators over the course of this first year of implementation, our goal is to recruit an increased number of system-impacted youth and parents for future cohorts through our various community partnerships. Overall, the Youth Juvenile Justice Program has exceeded expectations in its ability to provide empowerment and education for change within the State of Michigan. In collaboration with partners, this opportunity has provided chances for youth’s voices to be present and heard in important spaces of influence. Leading with compassion, education and collaboration gives promising future for this program and others like it.

Our WIRE Youth Development programming continued to grow and expand during the 2021-2022 Academic Year. One special feature of this year’s programming was the introduction of the Youth Juvenile Justice Fellows Programming to our suite of youth development programs. As the local community becomes more comfortable with the return to in-person learning and engagement, we hope to see an increase in participation across all programs and activities hosted by the Lewis Walker Institute.

The trip to visit Cafe Momentum in Dallas, TX served as the perfect culminating activity to celebrate the Fellows’ learning. Fellows were able to witness and experience the impacts of innovative alternatives to juvenile incarceration. Fellows anticipate adopting the development of diversion programs and creative alternatives to juvenile incarceration as a focus for the 2022-2023 cohort.