



Assisting people with developmental disabilities so that they have the opportunity to build safe, healthy, meaningful lives in the community

Choices' Joices

CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING, INC. EST. 1985

Founding Partner of **Partners For Community Living**



Honoring Sam

The audience applauding Sam Klapheke at the 2010 DD Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies saw him take only a few steps from his chair to the stage to receive the award of a lifetime. What they didn't see were all the steps over so many years that led him at last to be acknowledged as the man of achievement that he is.

They could not know the challenges that faced him even before he would take his first step, that the future did not loom bright for a child born in 1964 with Down Syndrome. They could not see all those steps from behind the walls at Orient State Institution, where he lived for five or six years, followed by six years in a home for children in Canton.

When he and his sister were born as the youngest of six siblings, he was named Donald Joseph but somewhere along the line his father thought he looked more like a Sam, so Donald Joseph is known to most as Sam. He became a part of our Choices family in 1988, and is currently a part of our Monitored program. He lives in his own apartment in a complex where other Choices clients also have their own apartments.

It is partly because of his life in his own apartment that he became the latest inductee into the coveted DD Hall of Fame. Sam has lived in his apartment for over 20 years. During that time he has established himself as the 'go to' guy for not only other clients, but for staff as well. He is the informal leader for the other clients. He is very knowledgeable about safety issues and keeps a careful eye out for the safety of his neighbors and friends. On one single digit day in January it was Sam who was found carrying in groceries for an older client. He takes out their trash, often making several trips.

In 2009 staff noticed a physical change in Sam. He lacked energy and seemed lethargic. Even during this trying time, one thing didn't change. Sam never gave up. He got up every day, got on the RTA bus and went to his janitorial job at Courtyard by Marriott. Diagnosed with a dangerously low heart rate, the condition made everything he did twice as hard. He had faced harder challenges than this before and so he took control of his own life, losing more than 40 pounds in the process. He uses a treadmill and sticks to a regimented diet plan.

"When Sam was born," remembers his sister Kathy, "his life expectancy was around nine years. He's beat those odds and so much more. I can't put into words what his Hall of Fame induction meant to me. I want people to know how very, very proud I am of him, but not just for getting an award. I'm proud because of what he has accomplished to get such an award. This was his crowning moment and validated all his accomplishments. This wasn't given to him – he earned it!"

There is that sisterly and brotherly pride following the Hall of Fame induction. The plaque Sam accepted on stage went along on the summer camping and fishing trip – a tradition of the five brothers. "Sam is his own person," says his brother Mike, "and the people at Choices have helped him become that. They've just been great."



A family comes together to celebrate one of their own – it was hard to tell from the joy on Sam's face what mattered most to him during the 2010 DD Hall of Fame ceremonies, being called forward to be inducted as the newest member of the Hall or having his proud family standing by his side for this singular moment in his life. He was joined by brothers Greg (l), Mike and Steve and twin sister Kathy Pitchford.

"One of the great things about Sam is that he always encourages me," shares brother Greg. "When I get upset or down he'll let me know things aren't that bad. And he's right. I am so glad he's my brother."

"When people get to know Sam, even for a brief time, their lives are changed," his sister shares with emotion. "The best thing about Sam, well the best thing for me is that he makes me smile. When he leaves messages on my home phone I just sit and listen to them two or three times. They just make me smile. Sam doesn't judge people. He has made me a better person. I can't imagine my life without him."

There are heroes among us and they are our SIL (Semi-Independent Living) staff. Their recent critical decision-making and actions saved the life of one of our clients. She lives in her own apartment and had not been feeling well for awhile. Concerned when he hadn't heard from her or couldn't reach her by phone, Butch Van Meter went to her apartment and found her in a life-threatening coma. His quick response and work with medical personnel helped stabilize her until she could get to the hospital. Through her hospital stay, move to a nursing home and then into one of our homes to complete her recovery, it was the professional and personal dedication of Butch, Kathy Fitzwater and Lindsay Bowser that saved her life and made her recovery possible. They are heroes among us!

Home – Family – Community

by Tom Weaver, Executive Director

There's just so much to do and so little time to do it. I look around at how much I need to get done and wonder when and how it will get done. I look around at staff here in our administrative office and then meet with administrators and direct care staff that are working in homes in four counties and wonder when and how they will be able to get done everything they have to do. It might not seem like the best thing to do to add yet something else when there is so much going on, but adding something is what we've done. We're busy planning for our formal silver anniversary celebration on October 1 at Sinclair Community College. We're taking the time to plan so that we will have an event that is not only befitting a 25th anniversary, but that honors all that has been accomplished by what I firmly believe is one of the best residential service providers in Ohio.

We started serving 21 people in Montgomery County. Today we serve 150 people in four counties, including clients who live in apartments and who own their own homes. Yes, I said own their own homes. Few if any of us would have thought in 1985 that we would have clients who could make the choice to have their own home, supported by our creative staff who worked with them through home buying and home owners workshops, to working with realtors, all those steps until papers were signed, keys received and doors opened to new homes. What a difference from those years of struggle when neighbors picketed, filed lawsuits and fought to keep people with disabilities from moving into their communities. Those outward signs of fear and misconceptions have diminished over 25 years, but the battle for neighborhood acceptance has not yet been won.

We were named Choices In Community Living, but there were little or no choices for clients. They went where they were sent and received the services that were available, regardless of whether they wanted them or not. There was little self-determination, as funding followed the system instead of the person.

The legislative and regulatory changes over 25 years have been staggering. The changes have been dramatic for us as well, but every change has been made with a firm commitment to our mission. We were one of the first programs to provide homes for adults with autism and challenging behaviors. We take great pride in our dedicated staff who make it possible for people who others might turn away to have safe and nurturing homes.

We're on the cutting edge in Ohio in software development and implementation, while it seemed like only yesterday we were struggling to get the most basic computer system set up.

We have our Fun Fit Day Hab program that is just now opening its newest site in West Carrollton in a community location, something else we could not imagine in 1985, an example of so many cutting edge responses we've developed to proactively meet the needs and dreams of people with developmental disabilities. Our clients go on trips, they go out to eat at their favorite restaurants, they go to movies. They lead busy lives with activities and events year round, many of them supported by volunteers involved in our shared volunteer program. Sometimes, like the recent loss of Lora Hines, they get ill and die. Through all these adventures and all these challenges and sometimes the losses there is this group of professional, creative, remarkable people – our staff. There are our supportive families, our board members who challenge us to do better, our volunteers, donors and advocates who show us we are not alone in our mission and our caring. We've all earned it – this one big celebration on October 1st. And so this is our invitation to each of you – join us and celebrate with us – we're planning on seeing you at Sinclair!

Taking care – that's what Shirley does



Shirley Quinn (l) is congratulated by Program Director Celeste Boehm during the DD Hall of Fame and Erin Ritchey Memorial Awards ceremonies.

There's a place for eight men in the home with the big back yard on Olive Road in Trotwood. It's a home that's been a part of CICL since our beginning back in 1985. It's also a place that has seen its share of challenges and changes. There is stress that comes with eight different men with very different physical, medical and behavioral needs. There is stress in cooking, shopping getting to medical appointments and just the day to day needs in a large home. That stress has resulted in turnover in supervisors in the home.

It has also resulted in consistency and continuity for the men and that consistency and continuity has a name – Shirley Quinn. Shirley was one of the nominees for the Challenge Award this year during the Erin Ritchey Memorial Awards ceremonies, recognizing her as one of our region's outstanding Direct Support Professionals. Good heart – sense of humor – non-judgmental – steady – responsive – great organizer – just a few of the words used to describe the person who is called the “go to” person at Olive Road. She knows how the home should run, what the men need. She is the constant who is credited with support of the men and the home during times of transition.

Shirley serves and cares for each man as an individual. One of them goes to his family home every other weekend. For a long time that meant that staff had to divert time away from the other men to transport him to and from his family home. There came the plan that would allow him to visit his family using Project Mobility. Shirley was the one at his side working with him and reassuring him that he could take this important step towards more independence. When an administrator met with him to go over the process, he told her never mind, Shirley already took care of it.

Remembering Lora

If there can be any solace that comes with the loss of a family member, it may be that now she is free of pain. That is part of the solace now for our Ashview home and our Choices family as we mourn the July loss of Lora Hines at age 57. When Lora joined the Choices family 19 years ago she did so as a quiet young woman who enjoyed working in the community, earning money, talking with friends. She liked listening to music and singing old songs. She loved shopping and going out to eat, with Gold Star Chili one of her favorite restaurants. It was telling of her gentle and compassionate spirit that she loved to listen to others talk much more than talking herself. "Lora loved her housemates and they loved her," says Residential Specialist Judy Kelly. "They were like four sisters. Colleen would touch her hand and Lora would hold her hand. When Sherry would get upset, it was Lora who knew what to say and how to say it to comfort her. She was a bright, smart, kind and caring lady. She was not just a client, she was my friend."

Lora had those good years and good times, especially that summer adventure to Disney World. It seemed almost overnight things changed for her. There were those symptoms that would be diagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis. As the disease progressed, Lora's pain progressed. She would often cry in anticipation of pain. She went from walking independently to a walker and then a wheelchair. She would take small steps from her walker to her wheelchair, with tears of pain in her eyes. "I'm sorry I squeal so much," she would apologize to staff.



"Lora loved my spaghetti," remembers Residential Specialist Gigi Wiggins. There wasn't a day she didn't ask me to cook spaghetti. There would be those days she was hurting so much from the arthritis and she'd ask me what was for supper. When I told her we were having her favorite her face would light up and she seemed to forget about her pain for a little while. She will always be remembered and loved as the kind person she was."

One of the favorite Lora memories is when she decided she wanted a power wheelchair. When she took a chair out for a trial spin, she panicked and told Program Administrator Shanda Sulfridge, "that chair had a mind of its own." Shanda recalls that Christmas of 2009 was one of the happiest times for Lora. "Santa made a surprise visit to Ashview," Shanda remembers, "she was the most excited. One day before Christmas she called me and told me she had a present for me. She reached into her wheelchair bag with trembling hands and produced a white tissue wrapped package. It was a wooden angel she had painted for me. I took it home and put it on a shelf in my living room.

The day after Lora passed away I returned home after being out for awhile. My heart was heavy remembering just how hard it was for Lora, how she struggled every day. When I stepped into my living room, there at my feet was Lora's angel, toppled from the shelf. It was at that moment that I smiled, not remembering Lora for her struggles and her pain but for her happiness at Christmas. That's how I'll always remember her."

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Maurice Hollingsworth (l) has been a part of many changes since he became a member of the CICL family in 1987. Finding a friend in Human Resources Director Trent Grooms is right there at the top of the list in good things that have happened for him over so many years. Maurice and Trent share time together during the 25th Anniversary Open House/Cookout at our Olive Road Home. Olive Road was one of the first three homes when CICL began in 1985.

Thank you, Ivan

It was with both gratitude and sadness that Executive Director Tom Weaver joined in congratulating Ivan Renner during his retirement luncheon.

Eleven years doesn't seem all that long for most when it comes to retiring, but then for most it wouldn't come when you were a very youthful 80+ who had already retired once. It took 11 years of dedication and service for Ivan Renner to celebrate his second retirement, this time from Choices. Ivan, a licensed plumber, had retired from the maintenance department at an area hospital when he became a maintenance specialist with Choices.



For these past 11 years he has worked side by side with Ed Mangen, the two of them averaging more than 20 work orders a week. They were responsible for saving Choices an untold amount of money in repair and other costs. They could take a dishwasher apart and put it back together so that it worked like new. They did most of the plumbing and electrical work for Choices Montgomery County homes. They mowed lawns in the summer and cleaned driveways of snow in the winter. They built ramps to individual specifications.

Ed is going to miss that day to day partnership with Ivan, but he is not alone in missing him. Staff who could count on him to take a look at something in a home even if it wasn't written down, clients who loved him – from the office to every home and every heart he touched, Ivan is deeply missed. We would say to him in one voice, "Thank you, Ivan. Thank you for taking care of us, for not just taking such good care of our homes, but such joyful care of us. You made each one of us feel secure, comfortable and valued."



Volunteers from KeyBank take a rare moment to smile for the camera before getting back to the hard work of washing CICL's vans. The volunteers were participating in Neighbors Make the Difference Day when they came to our CICL's office to wash windows, vacuum rugs and put a shine on our vans. They even took time to clean our work van, and all with humor and joy. We say thank you to Andy Czysewski and the KeyBank volunteers for being such good neighbors to us!

David the artist

Congratulations to David Pryor for being named Artist of the Month by We Care Arts. He takes part in various classes, but his favorite is the wooden tole painting, where he has painted everything from wooden fish to bird houses. His face flashes one of his characteristic great smiles when he says, "I can't wait to get back to class each time and see everybody."

David lives at our Broadbush home and has been a member of our extended family since 1988. In addition to expressing himself through his art classes at We Care Arts, he enjoys listening to music, with Elvis and Dolly Parton two of his favorite artists. He also has the heart of a volunteer. David and his great smile can be seen at our Fish Fry every year helping out wherever he can. He'll step up at other events and help out without a moment's hesitation. He couples his giving spirit with one of his favorite hobbies, building model cars, trucks and planes. While the experience of putting the models together is relaxing, the real joy comes when he donates his models to children in local hospitals. "It makes me feel good knowing that my model cars help a sick child's day, even if it's only for a moment."

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Partners For Community Living

a collaborative partnership between Choices In Community Living, Inc.
and The Resident Home Association

Become a member today

With the end of 2010 just around the corner, this might just be the time that you can insure the future for the people served by The Resident Home Association (RHA) and Choices In Community Living (CICL) with a tax-deductible donation to our Partners Endowment Fund. Our Endowment is held at The Dayton Foundation. No donation is too small to make a difference in growing our Endowment.



We also invite you to consider becoming a member of our *John W. Pratt Society*. Our *Society* honors the example and legacy of John, who was a founding member both of The Resident Home Association and Choices In Community Living, as well as a long-term member of the board of the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities. His last effort in advocating on behalf of the people he served and loved was in helping us establish our Endowment Fund.

Like John, you too can leave a legacy and add your name to the list of caring and dedicated families and friends who have named our Endowment in their estate planning. You don't need a lot of money to leave a legacy to our Endowment. What you do need is care and concern for the people we serve and the services we are providing today and want to provide well into the future.

With that care and concern you can leave any percentage of your estate in your will or in a trust. As with annual gifts to our Endowment, no gift is too small. You may also include us as one of your beneficiaries in life insurance policies or retirement accounts.

Our Executive Directors, Pete Roll and Tom Weaver, invite you to contact them at any time for a confidential conversation on how you can become a part of our *John W. Pratt Society* through a planned gift. Please contact Pete at 937-278-0791 or Tom at 937-898-2220.



And the Oscar goes to....

It may not have been Hollywood and it may not have been Oscar but for RHA's Karen Gabbard and CICL's Vicky Wagers it meant even more. It meant being recognized by their peers from across Ohio both for their artistic creativity and their dedication as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs.) Karen and Vicky walked away with their own version of the Oscar for their comedy rap video "DSP Ladies." They received a raucous standing ovation from the audience, with chants of 'DSP Ladies.' Many people in the audience scrambled to get their photo taken with them after the presentation. This dynamic video duo also won Honorable Mention – Most Realistic for their video "Coffee Chat." Pictured are DSP Recognition Event and RHA Staff Trainer Lisa Barnes (l), Karen, Vicky, and Fatica Ayers of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council. The winning videos from the event can be seen at <http://www.YouTube.com/OADSP>.

A new Friend By Choice

Making a difference one person at a time, one friend at a time – that's the goal and the promise of our Friend By Choice program. We welcome Kenneth Hilliard as our newest Friend By Choice volunteer. He has been matched with Tom Barnes (CICL) and the two of them are enjoying getting to know each other. In addition to being Tom's new friend, Kenneth is a RHA staff member.

There are still many people at RHA and CICL waiting for a friend just like Kenneth. You may just be the person to help us find those friends. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Pamela Winston at 937-278-0791 and let her know about your church or community groups that would be interested in hearing more about our volunteer program and Friend By Choice. Help us open up new opportunities for friendship and service.



It's a win-win situation when we team with area college and university students, like Lisa Mable-Grisez writing class from Sinclair Community College. The students recently took part in a project to write ads for our online volunteer recruitment campaign. It's a win for us each time we partner with classes and individual students in the service and support we receive for our agencies, programs and clients. It's a win for students when they receive credit for their service with us while learning more about people with developmental disabilities and the services we provide.



Jingle all the way

It's that time again – time to be thinking about holiday shopping and we have the perfect answer for how you can go on a shopping spree this year. It's time for Jingle Bucks '10. There are just 500 Jingle Bucks tickets available at \$25 each. One winner will be selected to receive up to \$5000 (based on number of tickets sold.) All proceeds benefit Partners For Community Living in support of RHA and CICL. The winning ticket will be drawn on December 10. Winner need not be present to win. All applicable rules apply.

Go to www.partnersohio.com for rules and to order your ticket on our secure website.

It promises to be a very full Fall

Two of our most exciting and popular events are on the schedule for October. There will be the 2nd Annual Miami Valley Beer Fest on October 9 at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. Not only is there great entertainment, food, beers and ales, but all of the proceeds go directly to support Resident Home Association.

It's busy as usual at Choices In Community Living as well, with rehearsals underway for the annual Talent Show, the premiere event for fun, laughter, friends and family. Talent Show 2010 will get underway on October 22 at Northview School, 8114 North Main Street.

It's a busy time for our shared volunteer program as well. There is a new class of OTA (*Occupational Therapy Assistant*) students from Sinclair Community College doing their field practicums with us. The fun of another Bingo season got underway in September.

Our annual Halloween Dance/ Party for RHA and CICL clients will be October 23 at the offices of United Rehabilitation Services (URS). The Dance/Party is planned and coordinated by Jessica Minor and the Sinclair Community College Sign Language class.

Editor's Note: Our Bingo and Halloween Dance/Party are two events that provide the most enjoyment and interaction for our clients, made possible by the support of our volunteers. Each event costs us \$300 each year, including such things as refreshments, decorations and prizes. They are two events/activities included in our Adopt A Project program. If you, your family, friends or church or civic group would like to get involved in adopting these or any of our other client-centered projects with a sponsorship or donation, please contact us at 937-898-3655 for more details. Your donation or sponsorship will mean that we can use the funds currently used for these projects in other ways to serve our clients and support our programs.

Won't you Friend us?

Please help us expand our friends on Facebook. We have a Facebook link on our www.partnersohio.com website where we share updated news, information and stories. We would like to make new friends to share our good news. There are three ways you can help: 1) send us a list of your Facebook friends (first and last names only – we don't need emails or other information) to partners@choicesincl.com and we will contact them to ask them to be our friend; 2) you contact your friends on our behalf and tell them about our Partners Facebook link and ask them if they will be friends with us and ask them to contact us with an email to partners@choicesincl.com; 3) send a message to your friends and let them know about our events and activities, tell them about our Jingle Bucks tickets, let them know about volunteer opportunities and more – be a Facebook advocate for the people we serve.

Help us reach out and make new friends to support people with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for your donations

Donations to RHA in memory of Dorothy M. Thomas

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Jim & Joan Thomas
Paul Thomas
Al & Ina Weinstein
E. David Zennie
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Bob & Ruth Steinbach – *CICL 25th Anniversary*
Ron & Diane Timmons – *RHA Ladies Home*
Brenda Whitney – *CICL 25th Anniversary*

Thank you to all the caring donors who attended our housewarming shower for RHA's new ladies home and who donated wonderful kitchen and bath items.

Thank you to staff, families and friends who donated so many items for Choices fundraising auction during our Silver Anniversary celebration.

McSmith thank you notes

You made a difference to our McSmith Ladies.

"I really like to sit out on the quiet back porch and knit" are Barbara Kost's words of gratitude, with an emphasis on the word *quiet*.

"I love to see all the birds, little frogs and hear the crickets in our back yard," shares Linda Favorite.

For Darlene Hobbs and Joyce Whittamore it's all about the privacy. *"We like that everyone has our own room."*

From all of us at RHA to our donors, thank you for warming our new home with your friendship and generosity.