

home address

a publication of resident home association

Founding Partner of **Partners For Community Living**



Milestones, Families and Friends

by *Pete Roll, Executive Director*

It was January, 2011, the start of our 45th year of service. We knew on the first day of the new year that this would be a financially challenging year, as will the years to come. We had made the decision to freeze the wages of all of our employees, so spending limited resources on anniversary celebrations seemed both unwise and wasteful. With so many reasons to celebrate even with these concerns, we had to find ways to share the good news about RHA and to recognize our history as the oldest nonprofit organization in Montgomery County to provide community services for people with developmental disabilities. Because we are blessed with extraordinary community partners, we were able to plan anniversary events that would be meaningful and respectful to the people we serve, our organization and to the people who paved the way for us.

Our first celebration was for our residents and took place on June 30th at Dominick Lofino Park in Beaver Creek. We enjoyed games, crafts, and an All-American cookout. Residents, staff, board members and community friends couldn't have had a better time. Everything for the picnic was made possible by the wonderful members of the Schulte-Pratt families, including Steve and Ann Schulte (*Steve is a member of our Board*), Mary Ann Shultz, Cathy Payne, and volunteers from Sibcy Cline Realty and Wright State University. Ann, Mary Ann and Cathy Payne are sisters of one of our residents, Susan Pratt. They learned about caring and service early in their lives by the example set by their father John Pratt.

Freezing staff salaries and holding our breath to see what will happen with our Medicaid funding was not a good backdrop for having a formal celebration at a country club. But then up stepped Rick Blessing of Nichols, Rogers & Knipper and we were able to host our celebration at the Sycamore Country Club. Then came Gene Rau of McGohan-Brabender, who not only made his own donation but encouraged others to donate as well, including Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield and UNUM Provident Life Insurance.

We also received support from Greg McAfee and McAfee Heating & Air Conditioning; Larry Storer and the good people at Schott Plumbing; Joseph Bettman from Bettman's Pharmacy; and Mike Houser from Houser Asphalt.

We were first in our community 45 years ago and that certainly is worthy of celebration. We have extraordinarily caring and generous friends like those we mentioned, and that is worthy of celebration. If your name was not listed above, if you were not with us for our picnic or formal event, we want you to know that you are most worthy of celebration. As part of our family, you have given

friendship, support, and donations. As a taxpayer, you have and continue to contribute directly to the services we have today. **In every way, what you do matters!**

If you are taking your time to read our newsletter, we know that you are one of those who have made it possible to celebrate and give meaning to our anniversary theme – because of you it has been and will continue to be **A Wonderful Life – As A Family of Friends.**

Resident Spotlight

Whether your child is number one in her class, your business is number one in sales, your team is number one in the league, there's always reason to celebrate when you're number one. At RHA our number one likes to watch wrestling on TV, attend dances, and work on large jigsaw puzzles. Family is very important to him. Saturdays mean a phone call shared with his Aunt Betty. He spends Sunday going to St. Christopher's Church in Vandalia with his brother Scott.



Mike represented all of RHA's residents during our 45th anniversary celebration when he accepted an official Certificate of Recognition from John Martin, Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Our number one is Michael Spurling. Now 59 years young, Michael was the very first person served by the newly formed Resident Home Association, moving into our Lexington home on February 16, 1969. A resident of our Greenhill home, he is celebrating his 42nd year with us.

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Staff Spotlight



The best part of his years with RHA has been time spent with residents, like this holiday outing with Clifford Kimmey (l), Rusty Weaver and Bob Evers.

Keith Lewis is the best. We just don't say so. Ohio says so! Keith was honored as one of Ohio's top Direct Support Professionals (DSP) by the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) during their Awards Ceremonies at their Fall Conference in October.

Hired for the first time in 1991, it was evident from the beginning that Keith was and is a very special person. With a sparkling personality, warm smile and infectious laugh even in difficult times, just being around Keith seems to make everything better, as the residents, families and staff of our Woodbury home will readily tell you.

There is no better example of dedication and caring than Keith. Just ask the residents he has taken camping on his own time, the many times he has taken individual residents fishing or to a ball game or other activities. Just ask the residents at our Wednesday senior program who know him as their master chef. When the senior program began, Keith was asked to create and cook dishes that would go along with the theme of the week. While he is adept and celebrated at Woodbury and throughout RHA for his greens, ribs, cornbread and macaroni and cheese, the theme of the week challenged him to move outside his comfort zone. Along the way he has prepared lunches that include Greek,

Mexican, Spanish, Irish, English and more. He's taken on each of these challenges with a smile on his face and sometimes a nervous laugh.

Keith also has earned a county-wide reputation for his chili that he enters every year in the Montgomery County Chili Cook-Off, along with his teammate Tracey Johnson. In addition to his culinary skills, Keith has also helped the seniors with their community garden, often incorporating their vegetables and herbs into the dishes he has prepared. He has also been one of our van drivers.

There was so much to celebrate when Keith received his award from OPRA, but there was also some sadness because when he accepted his award he was no longer one of our employees. The man who has always given above and beyond is struggling with serious health problems that make it impossible for him to work. We had to say good-bye to him in June. We had said good-bye to him once before, back in the mid-1990s when he took a job with Project Mobility – “for more pay but not a better job,” he emphasized. We had always hoped he would come back to us that time and he did.

We have that same hope now and so does Keith, although we realize this time it might not be possible because he can't

control what might happen with his health. Accepting that he may not be able to return to RHA and to his residents, he still smiles and encourages us to do the same.

Resident Spotlight

(continued from Page 1)

His family was among those pioneering families who worked to establish RHA. They wanted nothing more than to have a safe and caring home for their son.

Just as he was 42 years ago, Michael remains a quiet and unassuming man with an easy demeanor and a pleasant personality. After working many years at MONCO, he has worked at Goodwill in Englewood for three years.

It seems more than fitting during a year of celebration and re-commitment to our original mission that Michael would represent what has been and will remain number one with us — our residents. It has been 45 years since he first came to us as a tall and thin teenager of 14. Together we have grown up, grown older and grown better. Together we're looking forward to the future.

A wonderful life and wonderful friends...



Keith Savage, one of our newest residents, represented RHA in accepting recognition from Representative Bill Beagle and Senator Peggy Lehner.



George and Carol Johnson at our 45th anniversary reception prior to learning that their Knights of Columbus and Ladies Auxiliary are to receive a significant honor.

For 45 years it has been and continues to be a wonderful life for the residents, families, staff and friends of RHA. That's why **A wonderful life – as a family of friends** was chosen as the theme for our formal 45th anniversary celebration in July at the Sycamore Country Club.

State Senator Peggy Lehner and State Representative Bill Beagle joined us in our celebration, as did John Martin, Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and Mark Gerhardtstein, Superintendent of the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Not only were we the recipients of good wishes and recognition from our elected and state officials, we were honored to present recognition of our own. Brenda Whitney, who had served as RHA's Executive Director for more than 30 years, took the opportunity to announce our 2011 recipients of the Mary O'Leary Lifetime Achievement Award, the Knights of Columbus Council #3730



A family of friends and partners ... years of dedicated leadership is represented in this one photo from our 45th anniversary celebration, including (l-r) Tom Weaver, Executive Director of Choices In Community Living; John Martin, Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities; Pete Roll, Executive Director of Resident Home Association; and Bob Archer, Executive Director of Toward Independence.

and the Ladies Auxiliary. The annual award honors an individual or group who has made significant contributions to RHA and to people with developmental disabilities over many years of dedicated service.

The Council and Auxiliary have stood by our side since our first days. Over the years, they have donated thousands of dollars, including their proceeds from working as ushers at University of Dayton Flyers basketball games and collecting pennies for our Pennies for Partners project that helps us with the purchase of vans.

"One of best parts of my job," shared Brenda, "was going to the monthly meetings with the ladies of the Auxiliary, where I was always made to feel welcome and supported. The last few years I left those meetings with bags of pennies for our Pennies for Partners, some already rolled and ready to go and some in envelopes and bags for us to sit down and roll. And we did and still do, gratefully, and with every penny we are reminded of how lucky we are to have such good and faithful friends!"



Mike Schwartz (l) of Belmont Party Supply and Aaron Spoore of Cavalier Distributing celebrate at our Big Beers & Barley Wines. Participants from as far away as Indiana helped make this our best attended event. (Photograph courtesy of Iron Foust Photography.)

DSPs Rock

“Sing, Shout, Get the Word Out – DSPs Rock” was the fun-filled and motivating theme of the 2nd annual DSP recognition ceremonies. The 2011 ceremonies were held September 15 in Columbus with nearly 400 participants from around Ohio, including DSPs from Resident Home Association and Choices In Community Living.



Lisa Barnes is pictured with Sherry Steinman, editor of Pipeline Quarterly, the newsletter of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

RHA staff trainer Lisa Barnes (r) was honored during the ceremonies for her efforts in coordinating the event. This marked the second year that Lisa has coordinated the statewide effort to recognize and celebrate the service of Direct Support Professionals.

Lisa serves as a regional coordinator for PATHS, which provides training and certification for DSPs. She also has written part of the PATHS curriculum that is used in training.



It's time for some relaxation for Mike and Donna Schwartz at our 45th anniversary celebration, just before the hard work got underway for our Big Beers and Barley Wine Fest in October. Mike and Donna, through their Belmont Party Supply, initiated our annual fundraising event. They are examples for us all of that Circle of Life, of how interconnected we are. Mike and Donna, now responsible for a major fundraising event for us, first became involved with RHA as part of the Knights of Columbus and Auxiliary.



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RHA is guided by a policy-making board of volunteers representing families, DD organizations, businesses, and the community.

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Partners For Community Living

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

Would you say no?

If their safety and well-being were at risk, if their homes were in jeopardy, if their futures were at risk, would you tell them no? There are people who would tell them no. They have many reasons why they would say no. Perhaps the most important reason is that they don't know what we do. They don't know who we know. They don't know how much we depend on Medicaid funding (91% of both RHA and CICL budgets to provide direct care staff) and what may happen if or when that funding is cut.



Is he happy when he bowls? For Cyrus (RHA), the answer is two thumbs up and a boisterous yes!

threatening disease. With the support of CICL's in-home respite program, she is still able to be at home with her mother. With the support of donors to our Wish List, we helped them through a cold winter.

Will you say yes?

Will you say yes to Steve, Calvin, Natalie and all of those who depend on us by putting a year-end tax-deductible donation in our remittance envelope and sending it to us? Will you say yes to a few more hot meals, a few more games at the bowling alley, a new winter coat, furniture and more? Will you say yes to a new van for RHA's Garber Road home so that our eight residents will have safe and reliable transportation so they can get to medical appointments, go shopping, go to dances and more? Will you say yes to a new van for Choices Adult Day Services program so that people who are waiting can have access to our new location at the Huber Heights YMCA? Will you say yes to helping us purchase in-home generators to assure a place of safety and security when our homes lose power? **When there are so many who will say no, can Steve, Cyrus, Natalie and all of the wonderful people we serve count on you to be the one who says yes?**



Does she love her home? For Pam (CICL), the answer is the contagious smile she shares with everyone she meets.

Even during uncertain times we will fight for ways to say yes. We found a way at RHA when Steve told us how much he wanted to buy hot lunches at work at MONCO instead of taking his sack lunch. We went to our Wish List and found enough money to let him buy lunches two or three times a week for a little while. Money from our Wish List also made Cyrus and Doc happy when we were able to pay their fees to bowl in a community league.

We went to our Wish List at Choices when Natalie and her mother were going to have their utilities shut off. It's a struggle for them every day as Natalie courageously battles her life-



Does everyone want a friend? For Mike and Nancy, the answer goes without saying.

WISH AD

WISH — to imagine – to create – to communicate – to put brush to paint and paint to paper. That is the wish for aspiring artists everywhere, including our artists at Resident Home Association and Choices In Community Living. The wish for one of our RHA seniors is to have a drawing table at home where he can work on his art, including art he would like to submit to our 2012 **Art & Soul Exhibit**. Like all aspiring artists, his financial resources are limited while his artistic expression is limitless. His dream is to have the tools and equipment (like a drawing table) to support his art.

WISH — art supplies and materials to support CICL and RHA artists in creating art to submit to the 2012 **Art & Soul Exhibit**. OTA (Occupational Therapy Assistants) students from Sinclair Community College will be providing three art classes prior to the February 6, 2012 entry deadline for artists. Our wish is for paint, colored pencils, art paper, and canvases for our art classes.

BENEFITS: With your tax-deductible donation of supplies and materials or money to help with the purchase of a drawing table and supplies and materials you will be a patron of the arts and a patron to our artists; be an important friend to our **Art & Soul Exhibit** that supports artists with disabilities in 22 counties; be recognized as an advocate for opportunities for artistic expressions for artists of all ability levels – you may well be a part of a piece of beautiful and expressive art that is selected to be exhibited at our 5th Annual **Art & Soul Exhibit** on April 20 at the Town & Country Fine Arts Gallery.

Monetary or other donations may be made to Partners For Community Living, 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, Ohio 45414 or may be made on our secure website at www.partnersohio.com.

Meet Our Volunteers

Just what does UPS mean to us? For Choices In Community Living's Ashview Home, UPS means smiling faces, spending time together and marking off a few things on our "To Do" list. Two teams of UPS volunteers spent a summer day with the ladies and staff of Ashview. The morning team faced the daunting task of doing what most of us put off as long as we can – cleaning out the garage. The afternoon team crossed one more item off the



list when they washed windows. The best part of their day was spending time relaxing with the ladies, including painting fingernails and toes.

Ashview means something to UPS volunteers as

well, who have adopted our ladies. "I was very humbled to serve such a great group of ladies," shared Stephanie Seagraves. "I was also very touched by the sincerity and dedication of the home manager," she continues, "we were really excited to help them."

Another volunteer shared similar sentiments. "I was honored to have the opportunity to meet the ladies and to be able to make their lives a little more organized," said Lori Pelphrey. "It was so rewarding to bring smiles to the ladies' faces while helping cross off one large task on their list," echoed Sharon Fogt.

On previous visits UPS volunteers built a swing for the ladies and spent time with them during the holidays, which included gifts for everyone.

Watch us on YouTube

Since we've invited you to friend us on Facebook, it only seems appropriate that Partners takes our next step in social networking. **You can now watch our videos on YouTube.** Thanks to the technical wizardry of RHA's Lisa Barnes, you can now go to YouTube and watch our Friend By Choice video, RHA's 45th anniversary video, videos about and by some of our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and more to come. We hear that there may even be an entertaining reindeer or two coming soon!

You can view our videos by going to our website, www.partnersohio.com. To see our Friend By Choice video, click on the Volunteer Button and then the Friend By Choice tab on the left. For our RHA 45th anniversary video, click on the Resident Home Association button on the top of Partners home page. Other videos will be available at different locations on our website. We invite you to visit our website often. Not only will you find our videos, you will also have access to information about our events, services, volunteers, funding and more. You can even order tickets to our events and make donations online.

If you prefer to go directly to our videos, log on to YouTube.com/partnersohiodotcom (*the words dot com are spelled out.*)

Our donors make good things happen

2012 Art & Soul Sponsors

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Who knew a good housecleaning could make wishes come true? Cleaning up and clearing out was what the ladies of Choices' Greencroft home were thinking about when they held their recent yard sale. When the sale was over and the proceeds split between them, there was more than \$200 for each lady. Connie Haworth (pictured with Executive Director Tom Weaver) knew immediately what she wanted to do with her money. Because she feels she has so much, she wanted to share with others who do not have as much. She joyfully donated her money to help others with disabilities.



Community donors

Knights of Columbus Council 3730 (RHA)
Knights of Columbus Council 12912 (RHA)
Knights of Columbus Ushers Association (RHA))
Marion G. Laing, to RHA in memory of Carol Laing

Make a Note

- 2011 Jingle Bucks tickets are now available at our offices, by calling 937-898-3655 and online on our secure website at www.partnersohio.com. Only 500 tickets will be sold for our annual holiday fundraising effort. Our winning ticket will be drawn on December 9, just in time for you to have a holiday shopping spree!
- *Art & Soul* has announced a deadline of February 6 for entries for the 2012 juried art exhibit. Aspiring artists with developmental disabilities from a 22 county region are invited to submit up to two entries each for judging for the regional exhibit. Cash awards will be presented during the Exhibit, which will be held Friday, April 20 at the Town & Country Fine Arts Gallery in Kettering. Call 937-376-3996 for entry forms and more information.