

home address

a publication of resident home association

Founding Partner of **Partners For Community Living**



Can we catch our breath?

by *Pete Roll, Executive Director*

A harsh winter gave way to a chilly and soggy Spring but thanks to our friends at Choices In Community Living and Partners For Community Living, the feverish pace of our work on community events has kept us warm, and if not warm, at least too busy to think about it. The countless hours of planning and organizing by our fabulous Partners team culminated with our most successful fish fry in many years at St. Peter's Catholic Church. Thanks to over 100 volunteers and over 800 guests, we had a great time and a profit of \$6500 to support our shared volunteer program.

The Fish Fry was on April 1. Just one week later Partners and Toward Independence held the 4th annual *Art & Soul* juried art exhibit at the Town & Country Fine Arts Gallery in Kettering. There were 40 pieces in the exhibit, selected from entries from artists from an 18 county region in and around Dayton. It was an honor to help present the awards to the winners and to see their faces as they realized that they received money as well as recognition. The smiles on the faces of the artists and the pride on the faces of families and friends as they were honored for their creativity and talent really gave meaning to the word inspiring. It was inspiring to know as well that this event was truly a community effort, with the county boards of Butler, Greene, Hamilton, Miami and Montgomery providing the funding that made it possible.

Then there was the next weekend and another partnership effort, this time with Partners and The Dayton Theatre Guild, for a benefit performance of the Tom Griffin play *The Boys Next Door*, which focused on the lives of four men in a group home. RHA Board member Vivienne Himmell and Carol Finley, president of the Guild, provided leadership for the event. Play Director Natasha Randall and the cast and crew welcomed us and provided us with a memorable theater experience that was entertaining, comical and thought provoking. With support from Partners, they earlier hosted a rehearsal and dinner for 30 of our residents from RHA and Choices, which included backstage tours, photos and time with the actors. We learned firsthand of the quality theater the Guild provides our community.

Following that event was our annual Volunteer Reception, hosted by the Duke family, where we celebrated the people who provided us more than 5000 hours of service last year.

Partners hosted our annual Mothers Day Luncheon at the NCR Country Club in early May, and, as if on cue, it rained once again. Inside the lunch was delicious, the service impeccable and the time shared together priceless.

And then there came the Bowl-A-Thon at Beaver Vu Bowl, another event coordinated by Partners in support of the people served by RHA and Choices, and another successful event, with proceeds going to the Wish Lists for both our agencies.

And now do we catch our breath? Well, we've already scheduled next year's Fish Fry, we're already getting sponsors for next year's *Art & Soul* exhibit and we've set the date for our 2012 Bowl-A-Thon. We got finished with this year's work just in time to start on next year. It is through these efforts and hard work, through our partnerships with so many community organizations year after year that we not only provide funds for things we couldn't provide on our own, we also tell artists with disabilities that their creativity and talent has value.

We tell our mothers and families that we honor them because we could not be who we are without what they have done and still do. We watch bowlers with and without disabilities bowl on the same teams together and smile as we watch them laugh with each other, slap each other on the backs, cheer for each other. We have fish dinners and play casino games and there is money once again to help with our shared volunteer program. We make time to honor our volunteers for their service because they take their own time to make such a difference to our residents and our agencies.

And when there is time – maybe just a moment – we take that moment to remind ourselves that as tired as we are, we are always stronger, always better, and always more successful when we do all these things and more together!

Resident Spotlight

There's no place like home and to really, really appreciate the truth in that we need only have Joyce Short share her story.



Joyce (*center in photo*) found her family and her home just last year when she joined our RHA family. She was 62 years old at the time and had been living in the county's Emergency Shelter. She had lived in her family home until her mother died when she was 48.

In those intervening years she went from place to place, never having what she wanted most, that sense of belonging, the assurance of being a part of a family.

(Continued on Page 2)

Staff Spotlight

We have to be taught to care, to have empathy and concern for others, to be responsible and responsive. Luckily for 21 year old Annie Duke Lima she is surrounded by family that by their examples taught her about caring, empathy and responsibility. In September our youngest DSP (*Direct Support Professional*) will celebrate her



second anniversary with RHA, although her family history with us now

extends to two generations. Annie's favorite aunt is Aunt Kris, better known to us as Kris Bergman, Home Manager of our Garber Road Home, with 31 years of service. In addition, Annie's parents, Michael and Beth Duke, have hosted many events in their home, including our annual Volunteer Reception. Beth was also involved in helping us decorate our Garber Home and our offices. Her father is a dermatologist who has provided care for some RHA residents. They live in the home that was formerly the Hook Center operated by the County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Annie works with the ladies at our Springmill home. "I love how the residents always make me smile and laugh," she says of her

job. "Whether it's Loretta's dancing or Debbie's hugs, I feel like I can have fun with the ladies. This job has taught me to be responsible, to work effectively with others, to provide excellent care to our ladies, and how to multi-task. This job has given me the foundation for what I would like to pursue in the future."

According to Executive Director Pete Roll, Annie has a sense of maturity that far exceeds her age. She is thoughtful, courteous, respectful and brings a positive and enthusiastic presence to our Springmill home and our agency. "Having someone so young yet so insightful is very rare and it gives me hope that there are others out there who will be a part of who we are and what we do well into the future," says Pete, "much the same way as Annie's Aunt Kris gave us that hope for the future when she joined the RHA family in 1980."

In the short time she has been with us, she has earned a reputation as a 'neat freak.' "She likes to clean more than me," shares Home Manager Wanda Cooley, "and anyone who knows me knows that means a lot of cleaning. She has a great work ethic, is very polite and the ladies really like her."

"I think I was always destined to be a caregiver," says Annie, although she admits that it is not always easy. "Being a direct care provider is so fulfilling, but it can also be stressful," she admits. "You have to balance many roles at once, from cook to

hair stylist to nurse. It's so important to be positive, energetic and ready to work when I start my shift. I try to do things that relax me, that fulfill my needs before I come to work because I can't care for six women if I haven't taken care of myself."

That sense of balance comes not only from her family, but from her own experiences as well. "I got secretly married when I was 18 and I needed to show my Mom and Dad that I could be responsible and support myself." She is showing that each day, establishing herself as an exceptional young professional, loving her role as wife and step-mother to Romina, and furthering her education. She is in her junior year in the psychology program at Wright State University. She has goals for her future – get her Bachelor's Degree and then continue to work with RHA while she pursues her Master's Degree. Her ultimate goal is to get a PhD from the Kinsey Institute of Human Sexuality and then establish herself in a career as a clinical psychologist and therapist.

For the present, she has a full and happy life. "I feel grateful to have a job that challenges me every day, that helps me provide for my family and one that gives me a new learning experience on every shift." She also loves the performing arts, with ballet as one of her great passions. "I love to dance," she says in that characteristic enthusiastic voice, "my aunt Kris knows all about this. Just ask her about some of the moves I've taught her over the years!"

Resident Spotlight

(continued from Page 1)

Now staff members Beverly Bradsher (l) and Home Manager Lori Singer are part of her family, along with the other ladies in the home and her other staff. She is home. "Joyce has made more progress in just one year than anyone I've ever served," says Lori. "When she first came to us, she was so overweight she had trouble walking from the car to the front door or walking upstairs without getting out of breath. In the last year she has lost 95 pounds and is still losing. She just has this amazing will power. She wanted to lose weight. We didn't pressure her, but we supported her. Now she rides the exercise bike for miles." According to Lori, Joyce has a great memory of phone numbers and addresses. She enjoys riding

the bike because she likes watching the numbers.

In the past year Joyce has also found a job, working at URS. She tries to put most of her paycheck in the bank and that gives her a sense of security, but she did spend some to get a new wardrobe because of her weight loss. She is also generous with others. She buys gifts for the other ladies in the McSmith home. Her favorite thing to do is buy little gifts for her boyfriend Jan, who is also a RHA resident. "He has a good personality and good manners," she says of him. "He spent Easter with us. I see him every Monday at the Senior Resource Center and then I work the other days. We talk on the phone a lot."

Her first home with RHA was our old Third Street Home. She's glad now that there is a new home on McSmith Lane.

"I really like it better here. We won't have to move anymore and there's no steps. I really like that, no steps."

There are other things she likes, the ladies in her home, food in general, cooking breakfast, going out to dinner and dances and watching General Hospital. Watching that reminds her of that other home and other family from what seems so long ago. "I've been watching General Hospital since I was a little girl. I watched it with my mother."

You can hear it in her quiet voice, almost like a whisper, for her there really was no place like that long ago home, just as there is no place now like her new home. "I know I'm home," she says softly in words that say it all, "I know I'm home when I come in the door and staff take time and ask me how my day was."



A promise fulfilled

For more than three years we struggled with contractors, permits, and fear but in 2010 we met the promise of closing our East Third Street Women's Home and moving to a more accessible home in a safer neighborhood. The necessary permits were finally all in order and the contractors completed their work. The most important work came in communicating with and educating the neighbors about our home and the ladies who would live there. It may have been 2010 but we still found some of the lingering fears and stereotypes about people with developmental disabilities that we have faced over 44 years of service. Our commitment was not just to providing the ladies a house, but providing them a home as well, with a neighborhood and neighbors.

In the heat of August we loaded up the moving vans and welcomed eight ladies into their new home on McSmith Lane, with four ladies on each side of the double home. They each have their own rooms that they have decorated. There is a large patio and a backyard that is surrounded by woods. There are no steps. Best of all, there is still the family, with eight ladies and the same staff who have been beside them for years.

The home is owned by the nonprofit housing corporation MVIO (*Miami Valley In-Ovations*), with RHA providing the ongoing services for the ladies, most of whom have lived together as a family for more than three decades.

Note: McSmith joins our other homes, including Elm Grove, Elru, Garber Road, Greenhill, Joyce Ann, Kenbrook, Hemphill, Piedmont, River Bend, Springmill and Woodbury, where we serve 80 residents who are part of our extended RHA family.



Our new McSmith home



Our Partnership Award was presented to Precious Blood School during our April, 2010 Volunteer Recognition Ceremonies. Pictured are (l-r) Barbara Maloney, Amy Meyers and Mary Ann Eismann.

Our **Partners** shared volunteer program is one of the many ways **Partners For Community Living** builds community partnerships in support of our residents and our agencies. Our volunteers provided RHA and Choices In Community Living more than 5000 hours of service in 2010. Others recognized during our Recognition Ceremonies were James McDonald, Andrea Ravelli and LexisNexis.

Partners brought together staff, families, volunteers and donors for activities and support we could not provide on our own, including our Fish Fry, **Art & Soul** juried art exhibit, Bowl-A-Thon, resident picnics and parties, OTA and other student involvement, Jingle Bucks, newsletters, our monthly DATV program, grants and so much more.

Our Mission: *providing quality residential services and support to citizens with developmental disabilities.*

The Resident Home Association has the distinction of being Montgomery County's first private nonprofit agency to provide residential services and supports to people with developmental disabilities, opening our first home on Lexington Avenue in Dayton in 1966.

The foundation of our services and support is built upon the values of integrity, excellence, humanity, responsibility and respect.

RHA is a founding partner of **Partners For Community Living** with our partner agency, Choices In Community Living.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
– Ghandi



Three RHA staff members celebrated their PATHS graduation (*Professional Advancement through Training and Education in Human Services*) in 2010, earning their CIP Certificates. Pictured are Executive Director Pete Roll, graduates Nathan Stevens, Tina Ford, and Cassandra Benning-Lewis, with Lisa Barnes, staff trainer and PATHS regional coordinator. The staff took the extensive training on their own time to enhance their skills as Direct Support Professionals (*DSPs.*) PATHS is part of a national effort to train and certify DSPs.

In remembrance

Our extended RHA family decreased by two in 2010 with the deaths of residents John Ping (*Greenhill Home*) and Mike Mullin (*Garber Road Home*).

2010 Financial Report

Current Assets:

Cash	\$ 294,704
Accounts Receivable - Fees	300,977
Deposits & Pre-Paid Expenses	42,584

Total Current Assets	\$ 638,265
INVESTMENTS	1,267,374
PARTNERS @ DAYTON FOUNDATION	108,367

Property & Equipment:

Land	\$ 178,508
Building & Improvements	1,748,261
Furniture & Equipment	507,325

Less: accumulated depreciation	\$(1,229,104)
TOTAL ASSETS:	\$ 3,218,996

Current Liabilities:

Accrued wages & vacation pay	\$ 230,678
Accounts payable	143,974
Current Portion of Deferred Wages	4,200

Total Current Liabilities	\$ 378,852
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LONG TERM LIABILITIES

Deferred wages	\$ 19,759
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TOTAL LIABILITIES:	\$ 398,611
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Unrestricted	\$ 2,831,195
Net Income	(10,810)
Total net assets	2,820,385

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND ASSETS	\$ 3,218,996
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Those in service to others

In 2010 we continued to have one of the highest staff retention rates in Ohio among agencies providing homes and other services for people with developmental disabilities, due to the commitment of our staff. We honored staff for their years of service during our Annual Meeting at Sinclair Community College in May. Honored were:

31 Years of Service – Kris Bergman; Evelyn Johnson

20 to 23 Years of Service – Eula Brown; Wanda Cooley; Paul Cyphers; David Henkaline; Coneva Mack; Charnel Posey; Rhonda Rich; Pete Roll; Vicki Servais

10 to 19 Years of Service – Lisa Barnes; Joyce Barnett; Beverly Bradsher; Archie Brown; Frances Canady; Beecher Cole; Gwen Davis; Cheryl Drakes; Rebecca Fugate; Fayann Garlitz; Keith Lewis; Julia Mantle; Casey Marchal; Annalisa Meikle; Monica Redman; Christina Rhoades; Lori Singer; Pamela Taylor

Thirty three (33) of our 67 staff members have 10 years or more of service, resulting in significant savings in staff training and retention. The most significant benefit is the consistency and continuity of service to and for residents.

Board Service

RHA is governed by a Board of Trustees, all of whom volunteer their time and resources. Our 2010 Board included:

Gary Newton, President	Vivienne Himmell
Eleanor Cromer, Secretary	Nora Rutherford
	Steve Schulte
Michael Dring	
Carl Eubank	Pete Roll,
Mary Goodpasture	Executive Director



Partners For Community Living

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



The Bettman Pharmacy team ruled the lanes during our 2011 Bowl-A-Thon at Beaver Vu Bowl on May 20, including (l-r) Steve Hoffman, CICL bowler Kevin Gutierrez, CICL bowler Pete Smith and Brad Hoffman



Thank you, Reynolds & Reynolds: Getting around just got easier and more comfortable for the men at our Olive Road home (Choices In Community Living.) They stand in front of the 2009 Dodge Caravan seven passenger van that replaces their old 1994 Dodge Ram van that spent almost as much time being repaired as it did getting the men around town. Posing with their van are (l-r) Joselito Uhuad, Charlie Johnson, William Reese, Mark Ginter and Roger Ellis.

The men and their staff send their appreciation to the Reynolds & Reynolds Associate Foundation for a grant to help purchase their van. It's good to know there are many safe and reliable miles ahead and even better to know that there are generous and caring friends like those from Reynolds & Reynolds.

Bowling for Wishes

It was a warm Friday evening outside but it was even hotter on Lane 12 at Beaver Vu Bowl for the team that walked away with not only the trophies, but the money as well. Steve Hoffman and his son Brad represented Bettman Pharmacy as they bowled with Kevin Gutierrez and Pete Smith. As the Bowl-A-Thon ended, it would be Steve whose name was drawn as the winner of our 50/50 drawing. It would then be his son's turn to come forward to receive the trophy for high game and series for the men, bowling an amazing 261 game and high series of 457 for the two games. Dad Steve's high game was 205.

Their Choices teammates rounded out the night's most sizzling team. Kevin took home the trophy for highest score from among Choices bowlers, with a 204 game. Pete rounded out the team with a high game of 154. Ruth Griffin bowled a 213 to take home one trophy for high game for the women and another for high series at 373. Keith Savage won the high game trophy for Resident Home bowlers with a 141.

Kevin is no stranger to taking home bowling trophies. He has bowled in leagues for more than a decade. According to Anita Kitchen of the Recreation Department of the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Kevin has won the high average trophy in every league. He has a high league score of 233. He had an astonishing eight turkeys in one season.

While not every bowler could boast of a night like Kevin and our other Lane 12 bowlers, everyone was a winner in the most important way. All of the proceeds from our Bowl-A-Thon go to the Wish Lists for Choices and Resident Home to provide clothing, shoes, furniture, holiday gifts and more when there are no other funds available. The Bowl-A-Thon is our major fundraiser for our Wish Lists.

WISH AD

WISH — Friends to join us for our Battery Brigade. We need smoke detector batteries (9 Volt Lithium) for our homes — more than 100 needed — three or more for each home, depending on the size of the home.

BENEFITS — Safety and security for our residents/clients; early warning protection for our homes; insurance companies are now requiring that we install long-lasting (10 year) 9 Volt Lithium batteries in all our smoke detectors. State regulations require us to have smoke detectors outside of every bedroom, as well as other locations in our homes.

Donate a battery (or batteries) now or make a \$10 tax-deductible donation for the purchase of one battery. Donations may be sent to or batteries dropped off at Partners For Community Living, 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, 45414.



Celebrating their part as an irreplaceable piece of the puzzle are our 2011 Volunteer Awards recipients, including (l-r) Ellie Stephens, Diane Kauflin, Jessica Minor, Marilyn Rodney, Kris Bergman, Carolyn Hayes; back row AJ Kaltenback and Nathan Miller (University of Dayton.)

Michael and Beth Duke opened up their home to host our 2011 Volunteer Reception in April as we joined in the celebration of National Volunteer Week. Volunteer Coordinator Pam Winston recognized individual and group volunteers in the following categories:

Partnership Award: Marilyn Rodney, recognized for her long-term creative and strong leadership in promoting and supporting service learning;

People's Choice Award: Jessica Minor, Sinclair Community College Sign Language Department;

Fresh Energy Award: Carolyn Hayes;

Above and Beyond Award: Ellie Stephen (*CICL*) and Kris Bergman (*RHA*);

Positive Image Award: Irene Dickey, University of Dayton marketing classes;

Positive Connection Award: Diane Kauflin

The involvement and support of area colleges and universities is a win-win for us and our volunteers. Marilyn Rodney and Jessica Minor have been instrumental in the involvement of Sinclair Community College students in service learning projects. Some of those projects have developed into long-term, ongoing partnerships with us, including the Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA) program where students spend their nine months practicum with us, as well as the efforts of Sign Language classes in planning and coordinating one of our most popular annual activities, our Halloween Party.

University of Dayton students have been involved in numerous projects, with an emphasis this year on Irene Dickey and 35 marketing students who designed a marketing campaign for our Friend By Choice program.

The men in our Garber Home (*RHA*) have extended their network of family and friends, due to the efforts of Diane Kauflin. Diane's brother, Mike Lewis, lives in our Garber home. She brought together a group of family and friends who wanted their children to understand and celebrate diversity. Through many visits and activities over the years with the men, they are now more than volunteers, they are friends and a part of our extended family.

Carolyn Hayes is one of our newest and most spirited volunteers. She has only been a volunteer since November. In that time she has become a volunteer at our monthly bingo. She brought a team from her job, LexisNexis, to help get our Woodbury (*RHA*) home prepared for a holiday celebration. They scrubbed cabinets, cleaned windows and decorated the house. They then baked cookies and made candy. She has now adopted the ladies at our Springmill home (*RHA*).

The partnership of our staff with our volunteer program is key to its success. This year we honored Choices In Community Living's Ellie Stephens and Resident Home Association's Kris Bergman for their support.

Editor's Note: For more information on our Volunteer Program, please contact Pam Winston at 937-278-0791 or pwinston@rhadayton.com.

Partners For Community Living, in conjunction with DATV, has produced a 32 minute video showcasing our Friend By Choice program. The video can be seen On Demand on DATV or you may contact us at 937-898-3655 to schedule a presentation of the video for your class, house of worship, business or organization.

Lest We Forget update

Our *Lest We Forget: Silent Voices* film documentary continues to share our powerful first-person histories across the United States. The film has been purchased by universities, colleges, organizations and libraries across the country and Canada, as well as by individuals. Arkansas University, Stillwater Center and the University of Washington Libraries are three of the latest institutions to purchase our Partners For Community Living film. It is in national distribution by Icarus Films.

Thank you for caring

"It takes each of us to be willing to give just a little of ourselves so that others may have the homes they need. See what a difference it makes for them and for you when you say yes to becoming a partner in this important work." – John W. Pratt

Anonymous Donor, to Endowment in memory of John Pratt

Ellie Kent, to RHA in honor of Brenda Whitney

Kroger, Fish Fry

Sinclair Community College, Fish Fry

Trotwood Rotary Club

William and Penny Wolff, Boys Next Door

Bowl-A-Thon sponsors:

Accel Consulting

Bob & Gloria Archer

Broadway Sand & Gravel

Edith Fuson

Houser, Inc.

Kiwanis Club of Northridge, Inc.

George C. Martin Funeral Home

MONCO Enterprises

RHA 45th Anniversary Donors

Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Houser Asphalt

McAfee Heating & Air

McGohan Brabender

Schott Plumbing

UNUM

RHA in memory of Eleanor Cromer

Betty Lou Arnold

John Moore

Ludolph Van Der Hoeven

Mary Ann Best Buchan

Mary Brennan

Vivienne Himmell

Roland Eichner

Walter and Patricia Porter

Winn Hamrick

Meet our new Board member

Sarah Seagraves is new to our Board of Trustees but she is a very familiar face to us. She is the mother of Jeff Seagraves, who has lived at our Woodbury home since 1986. A mother of four grown children, she is very active with the staff and residents of our home, but it didn't start out that way for her.

"A lot of families are afraid to let their children with disabilities grow up," she says. "I can say that because I was one of those mothers. Jeff was my child and he lived at home with me. He didn't need another home." There came a time when Jeff first left her for a short respite with RHA. "He came home and the first thing he said was he was moving and I thought oh, no you're not! Why would you want to leave me?"



There followed a second respite for Jeff and him again telling his mother he was ready to leave home. Although it was a struggle, she listened to him and heard in him that desire to be independent. She agreed to Jeff finding a home at RHA. During the intake process, she was visited in her home by Pete Roll, who at that time was a program manager. "Pete and I still laugh about that meeting," she recalls, "I was very defensive and still unsure about Jeff leaving my home, about leaving me. Pete and I talked and talked and finally I understood that there were two questions that I had to answer – how did I feel about him moving and how did he feel about moving? His feelings were more important and now I look back at this as one of the best decisions I've made."

When sharing why she agreed to serve on our Board she thinks back to her experiences at Woodbury. "It's just been an amazing experience, the staff members are just amazing. Jeff gets to be involved in so many things. He loves bowling and dancing. I've seen the growth and changes. I've watched the guys interact and I've seen firsthand how they grew from a group of men into a family, while each gets to celebrate their own individual personalities."

Amazing is a word she uses to describe her role as a board member as well. "Having been on the outside and watching them and now being a part of the Board is amazing. They aren't like any other board I've seen. They are responsible but they are also responsive. They know all our residents by name and they truly treat them like members of their own families. It has so much more meaning and is so much more effective being on a Board that can combine necessary business with that sense of family."

She shares the same concerns as her fellow Board members. "Given today's political environment and the attitudes of those in leadership, how will we survive with as little interruption as possible in the lives of Jeff and everyone else served by RHA? It's scary and a big challenge to make sure we are strong, persistent and vocal advocates for our residents."



Count your blessings

Count your blessings was one of Eleanor Cromer's favorite sayings. That's what we did for the more than 20 years that Eleanor served as Secretary on our RHA Board. That's what we do now as we mourn her loss and celebrate her life. Eleanor, who died in January, was one of those pioneering mothers who dedicated her life not only to her own daughter but to the sons and daughters of so many others. Her daughter Amy moved into one of our homes when she was 20 years old. She is now 54 and resides in our new McSmith home (*the replacement for our Third Street home*).

"Eleanor loved Amy very much," remembers Executive Director Pete Roll, "but she didn't ask for or expect Amy to receive services that were different than the care we provide to our other residents. That's the kind of woman she was. As a board member she was quiet yet strong. She gave her opinions on important matters while working cooperatively with other board members for the good of our agency. Much of the good reputation we enjoy today is because of people like Eleanor."

Eleanor was known for her radiant smile, her always optimistic approach to life, and her depth of kindness and her example of how to serve others. In addition to Amy, she is survived by her husband Bill, daughters Susan, Barbara and Nancy and all of us at RHA who continue to be enriched because of her life.

And just how does our garden grow? Due to a grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office and a generous donation from Barbara Richard, the answer to that question is very well indeed.

Our Garden Class, including (l-r) Elizabeth McFarland, Valvin Owensby, Melissa Fugate, Cyrus Monie and Keith Savage, has had the opportunity to learn about



gardening from the ground up. In our case the ground was indoor planters in the office at RHA that were funded by our donors.

Our gardeners planted seeds in the indoor boxes and then watched with pride as the seeds first popped through the soil and then grew into sturdy plants. Once the persistent rain stopped, our gardeners were finally able to get to Wegerzyn Garden Center, where they transplanted their plants in our community garden. They will continue to tend the garden until harvesting, when they will enjoy the best part of gardening, the fresh taste of the vegetables they grew from those first tiny seedlings.

According to project coordinator Vicki Servais, all of the vegetables in the garden are heirloom varieties selected to increase biodiversity and to develop seeds that will be started in the indoor boxes next Spring.

It's a smile of pure celebration on the face of RHA's Mary LaFalce as she accepts her award honoring her as one of the artists selected for the 4th Annual *Art & Soul* exhibit in April. She accepts her award from Executive Director Pete Roll, who was joined in presenting awards at the ceremonies at the Town & Country Fine Arts Gallery by Tom Weaver, Executive Director of Choices In Community Living and Bob Archer, Executive Director of Toward Independence. Only 40 pieces of art were selected for this year's exhibit from among those submitted from an 18 county region. The exhibit was on display for two weeks following the opening reception, with more than half of the pieces being sold. Monetary and other awards were presented during the opening reception. This year's judges included professional artists Bridgette Bogle, Trish McKinney and Bill Woody.



The exhibit is coordinated by Partners For Community Living and Toward Independence and funded entirely by sponsorships, including the Butler, Greene, Hamilton, Miami and Montgomery County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.



Driving along in our new van

Once again The Brighter Tomorrow Foundation is a vital part of adding to the quality of life for our residents. There is a new accessible van to assure safe and dependable transportation for the six ladies at our Springmill Home with the assistance of a grant from The Foundation. Our ladies and our staff say thank you every day for the opportunity to be a part of the community that has been made possible by the much appreciated new van.



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www.partnersohio.com

Return Service Requested



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

Gary Newton, President
Michael Dring
Carl Eubank
Mary Goodpasture
Vivienne Himmell
Nora Rutherford
Steve Schulte
Sarah Seagraves

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