

home address

a publication of resident home association

Founding Partner of **Partners For Community Living**



Celebrating 45

by *Pete Roll, Executive Director*

It was 1966 when a group of dedicated and persistent families who had children with disabilities came together to form a group known as the Catholic Federation of Exceptional Children, one of the first and most active lobbying and advocacy groups in our area. Although they didn't realize it at the time, these pioneers were true visionaries, fueled by the fire to create homes where their children would live and be cared for when they could no longer be the primary caregivers.

They were the ones who raised the money, often penny by penny and dollar by dollar, invested their own sweat equity and worked relentlessly and tirelessly around the clock to bring a vision to life. That vision became reality when the Resident Home Association was formed in 1966, followed by the opening of our first home on Lexington Avenue. On February 16, 1969, Michael Spurling became the first member of our extended RHA family. We continue to celebrate him as a member of our family 45 years later.

Providing homes and family is a reason to celebrate every day of every year, which we do. There come those occasions, those milestones, that call for even more celebration and 2011 will be such a time. First and foremost, we celebrate our remarkable founders, people like Mary O'Leary, the Gmeiner family, Marge Bristow, John Pratt and so many others who worked so diligently not only for the lives of their own children but to open a world of hope, acceptance, possibilities and dignity for thousands of others across our community and across time.

We will celebrate the very reason for our being – our residents. Their love of life, courage in the face of adversities most us can never imagine, their acceptance of themselves and others inspire us all. Our residents continu-

ously teach us so much about perseverance and tolerance and staying grounded in the things that truly matter. Meet just one of them and you will know they are why we have so much reason to celebrate.

There could be no celebration without the staff who are the heart and soul of our agency, who give life to our mission. They are the ones who are where they need to be when the weight of ice and destruction of wind mean that the lights go out and quick and decisive action must be taken to safeguard the lives and well-being of those we serve. They are the ones who coach Special Olympics, who provide activities and support for seniors, who cook great meals, who mourn when a member of the family is taken from us, who give of their own time at fish fries and other events, who are there every day of every year, some for 20 years, 25 years, 30 years and more.

We celebrate what we have accomplished with Partners For Community Living, our volunteers who give more than 5,000 hours of service each year, our historical *Lest We Forget* efforts, fundraising and so much more. We honor our community partnerships with Toward Independence and the County Board and what they bring to our residents.

We celebrate each of you, our friends who have given donations small and large, who have attended our events, who have sent us pennies to help us purchase vans, and holiday gifts so that no one is forgotten, those who bake cinnamon rolls for us and donate pop and bread, those who sing with our residents and plant flowers in the spring after a too long and too cold winter.



Resident Spotlight

With frigid temperatures still around us it may be difficult to imagine the Fourth of July, but meet Amanda Adams for the briefest of time and the first thing you will think of is



Independence Day. Independence is both Amanda's dream and her goal. At 28 Amanda is RHA's youngest and newest resident. She joined

our extended family in February, 2008, moving into our Springmill home.

That dream and goal of independence was evident immediately when Amanda moved to Springmill. She wanted something smaller, a place where she would feel more independent. In November, 2008 she moved from Springmill to our Joyce Ann home with Jill and Terrie, with two roommates instead of five and with her own room. She immediately knew Joyce Ann was right for her, at least for now. "I want my own apartment," she says with a voice filled with enthusiasm, "I want to really be independent."

According to Home Manager Connie Mack, Amanda is working with staff to set goals for her to become more independent. "Her short-term goal right now," says Connie, "is to learn to cook. Can't live in your own place if you can't cook." Connie shares she is well on her way in other areas. She describes Amanda as very neat, organized and meticulous

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Staff Spotlight

Before the internet and Facebook and Twitter, most of us let our fingers do the walking through the yellow pages when we needed information. Twenty one years ago that's what Charnell Posey did. She had just moved from Richmond, Indiana and was staying with her sister and her family near the Salem Mall. She needed a job and so she researched the phone book for places where she might submit applications. There was a place not too far from her sister's house and on Salem Avenue, so it landed at the top of her list.

Within a few days she had submitted her application, completed interviews and began her new job with the Resident Home Association, working with residents who lived in our Apartment Program in the Kettering area. Twenty one years later she is Home Coordinator for our Elm Grove and Elru homes, which replaced the Van Buren Apartment Program. That move was the biggest challenge she has faced in her job, coupled with the decline she sees in her residents as they are aging, as well as facing the loss of those she was so close to over the years, like Elgertha Hall.

"My very best memory over the years is when we took a day trip to Camp Kern and I got to push Elgertha in her wheelchair. We just had the best time teasing each other and laughing with each other." Her favorite activity is taking residents shopping. "They enjoy the one

on one time with me and I enjoy the shopping experience without spending money."

She is the second longest tenured Direct Support Professional (DSP) at RHA. According to Executive Director Pete Roll, she is everything you want in an employee. She is reliable, dependable, trustworthy, exercises good judgment and has a good sense



Charnell with her daughters Erin (l) and Caitlin.

of humor. Most people don't realize that at one time her mother Judy and father Jim also worked with RHA.

Charnell and her husband enjoy home life with their two beautiful daughters and the rest of the family, which includes four cats,

fish and a new Beagle/hound mix puppy. There is one thing most people don't know about her and something she didn't know about herself until recently. "I have a food addiction," she courageously shares. "I have finally accepted it. It has been a very difficult but liberating road. I'm continuing to learn about accepting myself for who I am."

Family at home and family at work inspire and uplift her. "I want people to know that I work with the best team of staff and the most amazing residents. I have been fortunate to work with my supervisor (Fayann Garlitz) for 20 years and four out of our seven residents for 21 years. We know each other so well and together we make our lives run as smooth as possible." Even as she continues to learn and use the computer for

documentation and other paperwork, she's always grateful that before there was Facebook and Twitter there was that phone book in her sister's house and that she opened it to just the right page that changed her life and the lives of residents she has served during so many challenges and changes in their lives.

Resident Spotlight

(continued from Page 1)

about herself and her home. She does her own laundry. She is great at spelling so she helps put the grocery list together for the home. "There's always milk and laundry detergent on the list," shares Connie, "Amanda makes sure of that. There may be other items as well but she always makes sure milk and laundry detergent are on the list. She really does make this home more independent."

She schedules her own transportation with Project Mobility when she visits her mother and family pets on weekends. She pays her own bills and has a cell phone. She recently got a laptop computer and enjoys playing card games like Solitaire. Another goal is to learn to use the computer for other things beyond games. She received her laptop and a television for her room from our great friends at Dermatol-

ogists of Southwest Ohio, who generously provide exceptional gifts for our residents who may not receive as much without their support. This year Amanda also received a very heavy holiday bag. When she opened it she found linens, towels and arts and crafts. "They are just the best," she says of them. "They make me happy at Christmas. I wrote all of them a card to say thank you for thinking of me and getting me so many great presents. They really do make me so happy."

Amanda graduated from Belmont High School. She works five days a week at Good Sam Homes, where she makes birdfeeders and shreds paper. She rubs her fingers together when talking about work. "I like the green stuff," she laughs when talking about her paycheck. "I love to shop and I need the green stuff."

She likes to shop for clothes, listen to the Backstreet Boys, and just loves Patrick

Swayze, calling him "dreamy." She takes a fitness class at Northview School and bowls every Tuesday in the Montgomery County Board Recreation's league. Jessica is just about her favorite thing in the world. Jessica is the Cabbage Patch doll her grandmother gave her for her first birthday. She has a place of honor in her bedroom, along with 15 other Cabbage Patch dolls that were birthday gifts to her over the years.

When asked what she would like people to know about her, Amanda is quick to respond. "I like pink and purple, I would really, really like to go to Disney World someday, I like to be alone sometimes, I want my own apartment, and I'm a nice person." No one could say it better. Amanda is charming, disarming, sparkling, content and happy – and yes – she is a very nice young woman.



Partners For Community Living

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

Scenes of the season:

The greatest gift of the season for the residents and staff of RHA's Woodbury home came from the hearts of volunteers. Volunteers from LexisNexis, under the guidance of Carolyn Hayes, made candy, baked cookies and decorated the house for the big holiday party. Students from Sinclair Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant program (OTA) joined in by serving food and wrapping gifts, including gift-wrappers Wendela Fullam, Penny Gourley and Toni Cockerham (seated.)



Monique Walker (l) and Jamae Finch showcase their chocolate swirl cheesecake they made to share with residents and staff at RHA's Riverbend home during their holiday dinner. The two 18-year-olds have not only adopted our Riverbend home, they have made the important decision to take our training for our Friend By Choice program. Upon completion of training, they will become our newest and youngest Friends By Choice.



Please join us

- **Partners Fish 'N Chips Fish Fry** – Friday, April 1, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Catholic Church, 6161 Chambersburg Road, Huber Heights – ticket information at 937-278-0791 – benefits shared volunteer program
- **4th Annual Art & Soul Exhibit opening reception and awards ceremonies** – Friday, April 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Town & Country Fine Art Gallery in Kettering – open to the public – free admission – RSVP to 937-278-0791
- **Partners Bowl-A-Thon** – Friday, May 20 at Beaver Vu Bowl in Beavercreek, individual and team bowlers welcome in support of Wish Lists for Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association – call 898-3655 for reservations

Note: Tax-deductible donations and sponsorships are available for our upcoming events.

WISH AD

WISH – a few hours of your time each month for phone calls, to go out to eat, take in a movie, go shopping, watch sports, go to a concert and so much more. David, Pam and Greg are among those waiting for you.

BENEFITS – make a new best friend, share with others, make a difference, add to someone's life while adding to your own – laugh with Pam, talk music with Greg, enjoy classic cars with David.

Long-term position that may result in lifetime friendship; open immediately; training and ongoing support provided.

Call **937-278-0791** for more information on how to volunteer to become a Friend By Choice or go to www.partnersohio.com to complete our online application.

Community Campaign donors

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Pledges to 2011 CICL and RHA Employee Pledge Campaign

(50% of employee pledges support the Wish List for each agency and 50% supports Partners events and activities on behalf of clients/residents.

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Margie Klos, *in memory of*

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of Carol Laing

Madison Avenue Pharmacy,

CICL holiday party (Clark/

Madison counties)

Scott Shope & Kathleen Riazzi

Shope, *to RHA*

Donald & Eunice Stueve, *to RHA*



The spirit of giving comes in many forms. We are indebted to each person and each family who joined in making this one of our most successful community campaigns. We are indebted to those as well who supported us behind the scenes to make sure we could share our holiday message with our friends and families. That spirit of family and of giving spanned the generations when one of our volunteers Nancy Reder brought along husband Emmett and two beautiful granddaughters Drew (standing) and Stacey to help us get our holiday letters in the mail. We thank the Reder family for their hard work and thank Nancy for instilling the gift of volunteering in her grandchildren.

Lives well lived

Even in a photo, like this one with Executive Director Pete Roll, Mike Mullin was a teacher. In his expressive face and expansive smile it was evident to all that this was a man who knew

what it meant to live a joy-filled life. Joy in who you are, joy in those around you, joy in what you do -these were the lessons he taught us.

Mike passed away on September 13, leaving behind that enduring legacy of a great face, great smile and even greater spirit. He became a member of our extended family in 1994 when he moved in to our Third Street Men's home and then made the exciting move to our new home on Garber Road. His housemates and staff remember him as a sweet man who always had that smile. He was known to cozy up to people and whisper pieces of juicy information about an event at work, one of his housemates or staff member and how it always pleased him to do that.

Mike had to move to a nursing facility in 2009 due to complications of Alzheimer's and dementia but he always remained one of the 'Garber Guys.'

Letting go of our family members as they age and become ill remains difficult for us. In our last issue of Home Address we shared the story of John Ping and our sadness that John had to leave our Greenhill home to go to the Stillwater Center where he could receive around the clock medical care.

John, who had been with us since 2001, died in January. Just as Mike had taught us about joy, John taught us about humor and not being afraid to have fun. He was the mischievous one in the home, including the time he threw all of the toothbrushes out of the bathroom window.

Staff had dedicated themselves to John as his health failed and he needed a feeding tube. Although he loved to eat, the loving care of staff made it possible for him to continue to be with his RHA family, something he wanted more than he wanted food. They kept the family ties with him during his final time at Stillwater.

Our RHA family extends our deepest sympathy to Mike and John's families. We

were honored by their lives and so grateful to have them as two of our teachers. We are more joyous and filled with a bit more mischief because of what they taught us about ourselves and about life.



Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

For the past several years Santa has set up one of his distribution centers right here in the Miami Valley and we know where it is. It's located in the offices of Dermatologists of Southwest Ohio. These Santa's elves take time to learn about who at RHA could use some holiday cheer and even find out what individuals like and need. They join together as a group to shop and then individually wrap gifts. It's not just one gift for one person. It's often a bag full of gifts. It's not just small gifts. It's often a television, clothing, even a computer.



This year they arranged for Mr. and Mrs. Claus (aka David and Janet Whallon) to stop by our Garber Road home to share in the holiday spirit during their gift exchange.

"The depth and level of their generosity and spirit is overwhelming," says Executive Director Pete Roll. "They have taken our residents into their hearts. It's hard for me to imagine a more meaningful gift than for me to see the excitement and joy they bring into the lives of our residents. Every year they remind us that there really is a Santa Claus and that he really does have elves who have the most generous and giving hearts!"



It's a new year off to a healthier start for RHA residents and staff. Staff member Pam Taylor was just one of our staff who participated in a nutrition and diabetic cooking class taught by Jean DeBrosse of The Ohio State University Extension Office. Participants took away healthier alternatives for themselves and residents, even for members of their own families who struggle with diabetes. In addition to Pam, participants included Lisa Barnes, Claudia Dyer, Helene Gordon, Jean Holmes, Annalisa Meikle, April Moore, Melissa Trammel, and Pam Winston.

Sharing the holidays

The men of RHA's Garber Road home send their appreciation to the students of Immaculate Conception School for making 2010 another great holiday season. The students were back at Garber for their fifth consecutive year. Residents and students spent time together making holiday cards, trimming the tree, decorating the house and singing songs of the season.



Please join us in going green and saving money. Just send us an email at partners@choicesincl.com and let us know you would like to receive our newsletters and other information by email. Staying in touch with you is very important to us!



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