

# The Marsh Messenger

• Fall 2014

• [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org)

*Serving children and families since 1922*

## Meet Mr. Breese: The New Marsh Foundation School Principal

This June, the Lincolnview Local School District hired a new principal for The Marsh Foundation School. Robbie Breese is a Lincolnview graduate and had been teaching in the elementary school for the past two years.

Breese holds a Bachelor's in Education from Wright State University and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Bowling Green State University. He completed his principal licensure program also at BGSU this year.

In addition to his experience at Lincolnview, he also taught at Dublin City Schools and Defiance City Schools before moving back to the area. Before starting his teaching career, he worked as a youth specialist/coordinator at Starr Commonwealth.

"I have always wanted to become a school administrator," said Breese. "My love for education combined with a great experience that I had at Starr Commonwealth made this position at The Marsh very intriguing."

He said the start of the school year has gone about how he anticipated and that he is looking forward to a fun, successful school year.

Breese said that he is invested in learning more about The Teaching Family Model, which



**This summer, Lincolnview Local School District hired Mr. Robbie Breese to serve as The Marsh Foundation School Principal.**

is the model used at The Marsh. "After learning more about the basics of the model, I plan to research education methods that may effectively work with this model," he said.

Breese has many goals for The Marsh School, including advancements in technology, modernizing curriculum and offering coursework that may better prepare students for the future.

When asked why he wanted to work at The Marsh, Breese had this to say, "Every day we

have an opportunity to build a positive relationship with children who have few positive relationships. Every day, we offer safety to children who have rarely felt safe. Every day we have the opportunity to educate students who have struggled or given up in regular school systems. Every day, we have the opportunity to give hope to children who have never had hope. This is why I work at The Marsh Foundation."



**THE MARSH**  
FOUNDATION

### Please Share

Please share The Marsh Messenger with others in your family or office who might like to read it. Thank you!

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### Leadership

- **The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees:**
  - Gary Clay
  - Gary Corcoran
  - Robert Gamble
- **The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:**
  - Robbie Breese
  - Jeff Grothouse
  - Kim Mullins

## From the Executive's desk ...

I have often been asked by community members, referral parties, and visitors about the training we provide our residential workers. They want to know how The Marsh Foundation ensures that its workers receive the necessary training to work effectively with children and youths.

The state of Ohio requires that workers receive initial and on-going training in areas such as principles of child care, behavior management, first aid, CPR, crisis management, policies and procedures, etc. Workers spend much of their initial training learning about The Teaching Family Model, which is a specific skill-based training model.

Because many of our youths have been traumatized by abuse and/or neglect, workers also receive special training on Trauma Informed Care. This training may take place on site, off site or through consultation services. Our residential workers, who are called Family Teachers, have the most interaction, and therefore, the greatest impact on relationships with children and youth. It is important that they are well trained initially as well as throughout their employment.

### Systems Driven Process

Initial training and monthly, in-service training is a necessary



Kim Mullins, P.C.C.

and efficient way to provide knowledge, theory, philosophy and values to introduce procedures and to provide opportunities to practice new skills and obtain feedback. Classroom training, however by itself, is not sufficient to assure that staff will develop the ability to effectively implement skills and techniques.

Consultation and Coaching allows Family Teachers to practice and master skills on-the-job. The consultant observes the Family Teacher right in the group home setting and provides advice and encouragement specific to a skill or technique. Consultation is the principle way in which carefully selected Family Teachers can learn to master skills, particularly if they are in their first year of employment. Evaluation, or Family Teacher

appraisal of performance, is designed to assess the application and outcomes of the skills taught in training and reinforced and expanded in the consultation/coaching processes.

The evaluation of Family Teacher performance not only provides feedback for the Family Teacher but it also provides feedback useful to trainers, consultation/coaches and managers. The integrated systems of training, consultation and evaluation systems are vital to Family Teacher competency and program effectiveness.

Ongoing skill development and education for all staff at The Marsh Foundation will always be a priority. Fortunately, the systems approach can help us identify skill gaps, deficiencies, trends and patterns. Once identified, we can develop

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*"Because many of our youths have been traumatized by abuse and/or neglect, workers also receive special training on Trauma Informed Care."*

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a plan to address the needs. We can also look at the data collected from various evaluations, clinical diagnostic and trauma assessments, and use it to enhance our systems. Here are some questions we want to ask ourselves as we identify educational needs.

- *How are we changing? Are we so used to the status quo of providing training, consultation and evaluation that we are missing new and important research information which is essential in keeping our training fresh and relevant?*
- *Are there ways that we can better utilize technology and/or the internet? If so, are we systematically providing continued education to build competence with that technology?*
- *Do we have a shortage of a particular set of skills? Do we need special training for workers who are utilizing special skills?*

Involving workers in training recommendations is of great importance. They see our youths and families first hand. Their perceptions and feedback is relevant and important. During recent strategic planning activities, we asked our workers to participate

A commitment to excellence

in focus groups. This way we gained their input into what types of training they thought would be important.

At the same time, we are trying to improve services related to trauma informed care which requires costly training sessions. We explained the need for trauma training to our workers and attempted to gain support by providing reasons and rationales that explained the benefits to them, the agency and the youth. A small group, consisting of practitioners, a therapist and an administrator, was then sent to a series of workshops based on trauma informed care. As a result, their excitement helped instill motivation with other workers to learn the new skills. A systematic way to train, consult and evaluate the new skills will be developed through strategic planning activities.

We have found that when workers are supported through a consistent training, consultation and evaluation system, they are much more likely to provide effective treatment. Utilizing a systematic process to enhance worker competency is a constantly evolving process but is essential to our success in providing quality services. Our mission to help more children and families is dependent on our ability to seek out and integrate the most current and relevant educational information for our staff.

*Kim Mullins, P.C.C.*  
Executive Director, Child & Family Services  
The Marsh Foundation

## Project Believe Donates Back Packs and School Supplies to Marsh Students



**(L to R) Gina Duncan, Tammie Rafferty and Frank Scenna (far right) from Project Believe present backpacks and school supplies for the 30 group home students at The Marsh Foundation School to Robbie Breese (center), principal and director of education at The Marsh Foundation.**

Project Believe is no stranger to The Marsh Foundation. For the past two years, the non-profit organization has made visits to the campus to deliver Christmas presents and Valentine's for youth. This year, they made an additional visit with a delivery of backpacks and school supplies.

The organization, which originated in 2009, has continued to grow and expand. They've established a board of trustees and have dramatically

increased their giving from just a few Christmas presents that year. Tammie Rafferty, the group's founder, was inspired to help others by her own daughter's circumstances.

Rafferty, along with trustees Frank Scenna and Gina Duncan, visited the campus to present the backpacks and supplies to Mr. Robbie Breese, Marsh Foundation School Principal and students.

"We feel very fortunate that Project Believe has chosen to

continue to assist The Marsh Foundation in our mission of inspiring hope to our children," said Breese. "Our student leadership team was very excited to accept the backpacks and is very proud of the opportunity to present them to their peers."

You can learn more about Project Believe by visiting their website at [www.projectbelieve.net](http://www.projectbelieve.net). Or, you can contact Rafferty directly at [projectbelieve@live.com](mailto:projectbelieve@live.com).

## Marsh School Back in Session

### Saturday, Nov. 1

Parent-Teacher Conferences

### Wed. - Fri., Nov. 26-28

Thanksgiving Vacation

### Tue. - Fri., Dec. 23 - Jan. 2

Christmas Vacation

### Monday, Jan. 5

Classes Resume

### Monday, January 19

MLK Day - No School

### Friday, Feb 13

Staff In-Service - No School

### Monday, Feb. 16

President's Day - No School

### Mon. - Fri. March 23 - 27

Spring Break - No School

### Thursday, April 2

Staff In-Service - No School

### Friday, April 3

Good Friday - No School

### Saturday, April 25

Parent-Teacher Conferences

### Monday, May 25

Memorial Day - No School

### Tuesday, May 26

Last Day for Students

### Wednesday, May 27

Faculty Work Day



## Clymer Chat

Currently, Clymer Hall has one opening, but it is expected to be filled soon. The girls have quickly adjusted to the new school schedule and are back into the routine.

They enjoyed a full summer with many activities and outings. The girls especially enjoyed the horse program and spent a lot of time at the horse barns riding and caring for the animals. They had a successful horse show and enjoyed showing off their skills to friends and family that were able to come for the day.

The girls have been spending

time outside while the weather is still nice. They are often seen riding their bikes or walking around campus after school



## Marsh Matters

There are ten boys currently at Marsh Hall. Busy with school related activities; the boys are saying good bye to their summer schedule and re-adjusting to the school year.

This summer, the boys spent a lot of time fishing at the pond and playing basketball outside. They enjoyed time at Camp Clay on several occasions.

Thanks to BeeGee Realty, the

entire campus was able to swim for free at Camp Clay when they sponsored the day.

The boys at Marsh Hall also enjoyed the Tin Caps game in August. A meal and tickets were provided to youth as well as staff and their families to enjoy a night at the ballpark in Ft. Wayne. It was an enjoyable evening for everyone, complete with fireworks after the game!



## Vance Voice

All ten openings at Vance Hall are currently full and the boys are adjusting well to the new school year.

Several boys at Vance Hall were involved with the summer garden crew. Many mornings were spent working in the garden to pull weeds, water and then harvest the vegetables. The garden crew is still attending the farmer's market in Van Wert on Saturday mornings through October. There, they sell the produce that they grow and earn money for their hard work.

Many youth from Vance were also involved in 4H this summer. Some had rabbit projects while others entered different projects. One youth did so well with his bicycle project that he qualified for and attended the State Fair. Congratulations!

The boys have now settled into their school schedules. They, like the rest of the youth, were thrilled with the new backpacks and school supplies donated by Project Believe to help them start the school year.

# Marsh Foundation Staff Present at National Foster Care Conference this Summer

The Foster Family-based Treatment Association (FFTA) recently held its annual national conference in Orlando, Fla. The Marsh Foundation is a member of the association and not only sent foster families and staff to the conference for training this year, but was also privileged to have a team of staff present a workshop at the conference.

Laura Beckett-Avery, foster care supervisor and Pamela Reagan, foster care consultant, presented 'Don't Take it Personally, but I Hate You,' a workshop focused on building positive

relationships between foster child and parent. "Building positive relationships can be just as difficult as it is important," said Beckett-Avery. "Foster children's past relationships and experiences often create walls that hinder their ability to bond with others," she said.

The workshop focused on working through a child's pre-conceived notions and earning trust. "A main motivation for becoming a foster parent is to help children feel safe and cared for. It can be discouraging when this is met with resistance from

the foster children," said Reagan.

There were nearly 30 attendees at the workshop. In addition to leading the workshop, Reagan and Beckett-Avery had the opportunity, along with Marsh Foundation foster parents, to attend other workshops. "It was a great learning experience for us and a great opportunity to gather information and resources and bring it back to others at The Marsh," said Beckett-Avery.

The Foster Family-based Treatment Association (FFTA) was established in 1988 to develop, promote, and support

Treatment Foster Care (TFC). Since that time, FFATA has grown to become the only national, non-profit association that represents treatment foster care programs across North America. FFATA's more than 400 member agencies are located in nearly every U.S. state and Canadian province and provide treatment foster care services to over 50,000 children and youth each year and a larger array of child welfare and mental health services to over 600,000 children and youth.



Clockwise starting at top left: This summer, a picnic and fun day was held on campus for youth and staff. Here, Trustee Gary Clay plays a board game with a youth. The summer activities assistant, Elizabeth Davis, is also a certified lifeguard. This created the opportunity for canoeing at the pond weekly. The Marsh once again had a booth in the Commercial Building at the Van Wert County Fair. Thanks to all who visited! Also held this summer was a field day. Team games and individual activities kept the youth busy all day. Chalk art, relay races and snow cones were just a few of the features. Prizes were awarded to all. Lieutenant Conn from the Van Wert Police Department is our liaison. He attended a recent in-service and talked about ways The Marsh and Police Department can work together more effectively.



## New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Robbie Breese ~ Director of Education/Principal
- Ariel Baker ~ Family Teacher
- Nicole Bolenbaugh ~ Driver
- Matt Saam ~ Family Teacher

The Marsh Foundation and Big Brothers Big Sisters need volunteers to be a Big for the Supper Club Program. There are several youth from The Marsh looking forward to spending some time with a special friend a couple of times a month beginning in late October.

Without enough volunteers some of these youth may not be able to participate in the program. You could be that special person! One youth from the program in the past said that the best day we had a Supper Club was the day he got his Big! You could help give another youth the same experience.

The program will begin



in late October. In the Supper Club program, the Bigs and Littles get together on the first and third Thursdays of the month for supper and an activity. Some of the things planned include a Christmas Party and Feast, All Group Birthday Party, art project at Wassenberg Art Center, service projects, going to Camp Clay, making meals, Minute to Win It games, The

Amazing Race, and lots of other fun!

Volunteers also visit their Little at the youth's group home once a month on a weekend day of their choosing for a couple of hours.

To participate in this program, or for more information, please contact Sherry Grone at 419-605-2512 or [sgrone@marsh-foundation.org](mailto:sgrone@marsh-foundation.org).

It doesn't take a lot to make a BIG difference in a life of a youth at The Marsh Foundation. A past youth summed it up when he said, "It is really cool how you guys do this for us. It is really appreciated. It's a lot of fun."

## Clinical Stakeholder Annual Satisfaction Survey Report Compiled

Each year, The Marsh Foundation conducts a survey of its stakeholders about the clinical (counseling) services that clients are receiving. Results from the 2014 fiscal year survey were recently compiled.

These surveys are conducted to measure performance improvement and gather input. All active clients and their treatment team members are surveyed. The rating scale is 5 - 1, with 5 being very satisfied and one being very dissatisfied. Any question's total average rating that is below 4.00 indicates an area needs improvement.

When all respondents were averaged, they answered a 4.57 to the question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with the clinical services you received at The



Marsh Foundation?"

Clients are asked questions pertaining to confidentiality, input in treatment planning, if they are treated with respect, etc. All questions were answered with an average of 4.00 or higher.

Parents were also surveyed. Parents were surveyed about

things such as convenience, accessibility, confidentiality and whether the treatment is reaching goals. The average of all responses was over 4.38.

Treatment team members were surveyed on things like communication, treatment goals, cooperation and accessibility. The

average of all responses was above 4.32.

Many respondents left comments in the space available. Several youth and families expressed gratitude for the helpfulness of services and staff was complimented on their dedication and commitment to youth.

One parent stated, "Our therapist goes way above and beyond anyone we've dealt with. She is awesome!" And, a client said, "You guys are amazing and have been by my side over half of my life and are still helping me turn into the person I wish I was a very long time ago. You have changed me for the better and stood by my side when I needed you most. Thank you for all you have done for me."

# Independent Living Program Slated to Open at Senior Hall this October

When foster mother Faye Lepper passed away unexpectedly last winter, it caused Senior Hall to close temporarily. Previously operated as a foster home, the house is reopening this fall. It will still feature an independent living based program, but is now licensed as group home.

The home will hold up to six boys, ages 15 1/2 and older at a per diem of \$160 per day. The home will be a bridge between the group home and the community and offer another step down option for the boys being served in the other group homes on campus.

There will be three staff dedicated to Senior Hall; one live-in program manager and two family teachers.

The boys in the less restrictive group home program will have increased privileges and be encouraged to attend public school and find jobs in the community. A curriculum based independent living program will be implemented. The house will work hand in hand with the clinical program already established on campus.

In addition, there will be a large focus put on budgeting, life skills and job readiness for the youth living in Senior Hall.

Those interested in making a referral to the program, can contact Kelly Gross at 419.238.1695 ext. 360 for more information, or complete the application located at <http://marshfoundation.org/referrals/>



Senior Hall on The Marsh Foundation Campus will reopen soon as an Independent Living based program for boys ages 15 1/2 and over.

## Garden Crew Hosts Season's End Harvest Meal

The Marsh Foundation 'Marsh Grown' garden program celebrated the end of the summer growing season with a Harvest Meal for staff, peers and Trustees. The meal was held recently at the First Presbyterian Church in Van Wert and featured many items grown in The Marsh Foundation garden as well as other local products. It was entirely prepared by the garden crew.

According to Marsh Foundation activities coordinator, Sherry Grone, this year's program has been very successful in her eyes. "Our crew has had the chance to grow in maturity, responsibility and respect through our garden program," she said. "I also hope they have



The meal featured many items grown in The Marsh garden.

grown in respect for themselves as they develop new confidence through their job skills. One of the program's goals is to guide them to a hope for their future; to help them connect to the larger community and find their place and maybe even their passion in the process."

The Marsh Grown youth

garden program is dedicated to helping young people develop a sense of land stewardship and learn the importance of healthy food. Participants are taught valuable gardening skills throughout the season. In addition, the program serves as a catalyst for youth to develop important job skills for future

employment.

Throughout the summer, the garden crew grows vegetables and sells them at the farmer's market for income. The group will continue to be at the Van Wert Farmer's Market on Fox Road on Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. through October.

Participants in the Marsh Grown garden crew are youth who are a part of The Marsh Foundation's Independent Living Group. They are all 15 1/2 years of age or older and are working on skills that will help them be successful adults. The garden program is an opportunity for them to interact with peers and adults, develop quality job skills and learn how to grow healthy food.

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# SAVE THE DATE!

## 2015 ALUMNI REUNION

The next Marsh Foundation Alumni Reunion is right around the corner! Mark your calendars now so that you don't miss this awesome opportunity to reconnect with your past and see old friends!

The 2015 Alumni Reunion will be held on Saturday and Sunday, August 1 and 2, 2015 on The Marsh Foundation campus in Van Wert. There will be an evening meal on Saturday and a meal, tours and open houses on Sunday afternoon. If you know of alumni who are not on our mailing list, please share this information and encourage them to register for our mailings online at [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org) via the Alumni page.

Also, follow The Marsh Foundation's official Facebook page for updates and event information! Visit [www.facebook.com/MarshFoundation](http://www.facebook.com/MarshFoundation) and click like! See what is happening at The Marsh!



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*The mission of The Marsh Foundation is to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families.*

## Calendar of Events

October - December 2014

- Marsh Foundation representatives will attend the National TFA Conference Oct. 5 - 8 in Charlotte, North Carolina.
- The first nine weeks at The Marsh School ends Oct. 17
- Parent-Teacher Conferences for The Marsh School are Saturday, Nov. 1.
- The Marsh Grown garden crew will once again host their poinsettia sale this November. Stay tuned for details.
- The Marsh Foundation School will not be in session Nov. 26 - 28 or Dec. 23 - Jan. 2 for Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.



For more information about any event, visit [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org).

## Attention Marsh Foundation Alumni

Are you an alumnus of The Marsh Foundation? Did you know that on our website, [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org), we have a directory of alumni? To view the directory, or sign up yourself, visit the Alumni page online at [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org).