

The Marsh Messenger

• Fall 2020

• www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Former Marsh Foundation Youth Uses Skills to Succeed

Every child that is placed in a Marsh Foundation foster or group home has their own unique story. Each child uses their experience at The Marsh differently. Tori Petersen has used her year at The Marsh as a catalyst for advocacy and raising awareness for the restoration of family. Now a wife and mother, she has faced a challenging road to success.

When she first arrived at The Marsh Foundation, Petersen said she felt like she didn't belong, which made her even more bitter and angry. However, after some counseling sessions she began to see how her upbringing was affecting her. "She [counselor] was so sweet to me but she was also very serious about showing me how my mental health and behaviors could be better. I realized I had a serious anxiety issue and had never addressed any of the trauma I had faced while living with my abusive biological mother," she said.

At the age of four Petersen went into foster care because her mother was selling drugs with her boyfriend. Prior to coming to The Marsh, she was deemed 'unplaceable' by her caseworker. According to Petersen, one of



Former group home resident, Tori Petersen, recently visited The Marsh Foundation campus.

her biggest lessons while in the group home was that she had leadership potential. "One of the most impactful ways The Marsh Foundation changed the way I viewed myself, is that it framed me as a leader. For the first time, I understood that I was a leader and I led the young women through my choices and actions. A person's behaviors can change an entire culture,"

she said.

"It was at The Marsh that I came to understand that hurt people hurt people, which made me grow in empathy," she said. "But I witnessed healed people heal people; and as I stepped into the genesis of my healing journey, I wanted to do whatever work in myself necessary to

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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

The Marsh Foundation
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From the Executive's desk ...

Zoom meetings, masks, social distancing, staying home when sick, washing your hands, don't touch your face - all the new normal. The summer of 2020 will go into the history books as one of the most difficult for business, staff, children and our normal way of life. The Marsh Foundation was not immune to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Marsh had a few minor scares with contractors and staff close to Covid, but nothing of major consequences due to the leadership of Executive Director of Child and Family Services, Ms. Kim Mullins and Director of Education/Principal, Mr. Robbie Breese. These two directors kept our Marsh children and staff safe while continuing to teach, educate and assist them to become better citizens. Great job to all the staff on our front lines, with the children every day. Group home, office staffs, maintenance, custodial – everyone on campus stepped up to continue to keep our campus running and children safe.

While dealing with the Covid-19; business kept on going. The Marsh gymnasium, kitchen, weight room, pond and Marsh grounds were being renovated and constructed during this pandemic.



Jeff Grothouse

The Marsh Foundation has a brand new 15,000 square foot facility which houses our gymnasium, kitchen, locker rooms, restrooms, gym office and storage areas. The entire project will be complete and ready for an open house this December 2020, unless Covid-19 dictates we are unable. We will certainly let everyone know of the open house so we can proudly show-off our beautiful facility.

The Marsh Foundation pond has the beginnings of a face lift for our Marsh students. The Marsh Trustees have provided the funding to replace the aged and rusted fencing and removal of the barb wire for a more inviting play space for our students. The Marsh has added restroom doors and painted outhouses, sand volleyball court, two docks for fishing and docking canoes and paddle boats

"The Marsh Foundation has a brand new 15,000 square foot facility which houses our gymnasium, kitchen, locker rooms, restrooms, gym office and storage areas."

*- Jeff Grothouse
Executive Secretary &
Treasurer*

plus a sandy area for swimming. Trees are on the way this fall for planting to add the beauty of colorful trees and much needed shade. It is also planned to add a fire ring and swimming platform for the students and staff to enjoy.

The Marsh Foundation renovation included a weight room for our students and staff. The entire basement dining areas have been transformed into a fully functional weight and fitness area. The students have enjoyed the Marsh fitness room this summer as part of their summer school activity. Students and staff currently have access to the area. This has been a great addition to our campus.

Renovation on group homes is a continuing process every year. Replacing window lenses of the 1,300 windows on campus takes a lot of time to complete. Currently, Clymer Hall's east side is being worked on by our contractor.

Financial audit, cost report, day-to-day operations, maintenance, meals, custodial, payroll, H.R. and payables and receivables continue to serve to the staff and students at the highest quality. The Business Office is ready to provide the service the agency needs to fulfill our Mission to children. The Marsh Donation Board will be in the new Marsh cafeteria commons area. Recognition will be given in the form of a plaque on the wall for donation to the new project.

For more information, please contact Jeff Grothouse, Executive Secretary and Treasurer at: jgrothouse@marshfoundation.org

According to the visions and the mission of The Marsh Foundation, which is to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families, this campus must employ quality compassionate staff, continue to care for the campus grounds and seek out ways to help children and families. With the endowment of George H. Marsh and the vision of the Trustees, directors and staff this mission will be accomplished for many many years to come.

Jeffrey M. Grothouse
Executive Secretary and
Treasurer

A commitment to excellence

Project Believe Donates Back Packs and School Supplies to Marsh Students

Many things are different this school year. However, one thing that remained constant is the visit from Project Believe prior to the start of school. For the seventh straight year, Project Believe was able to visit campus and bring along a donation of backpacks and school supplies for Marsh Foundation youth. Project Believe is no stranger to The Marsh; the non-profit has also donated Christmas presents and Valentines for the past several years.

The organization, which originated in 2009, has continued to grow and expand. Tammie Rafferty, the group's founder, was inspired to help others by her own daughter's circumstances.

Project Believe donated backpacks for each student and inside were school supplies and items for the youth as they start off a new school year.

As always, The Marsh is extremely grateful for the items Project Believe donates to their youth. According to Megan Tuttle, director of residential



Pictured left to right are Tammie Rafferty and Nici McClurg from Project Believe and The Marsh's Director of Residential Services, Megan Tuttle.

services, the school supplies make a big difference for the students. "The backpacks and school supplies are valued by the youth and give them a sense of pride and belonging as they start the new school year," she said.

Over the past several years, Project Believe's contributions

have become a staple for the beginning of the school year at The Marsh.

Project Believe is already gearing up for the Christmas season, their busiest season of the year. Soon, a complete list of the items they are gathering for the Christmas holiday will be posted on their website,

www.project-believe.net.

Project Believe serves other facilities and could use your donation. You can learn more about Project Believe by visiting their website at www.project-believe.net. Or, you can contact Rafferty directly at projectbelieve@live.com.

Need to Make a Referral?

We are currently accepting referrals to our foster homes and our residential group homes on campus. If you would like to make a referral to one of these programs, please use the contact information to the right.



THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

Residential/Group Home Referrals: Call Kelly at 419.238.1695 ext. 360 or kgross@marshfoundation.org

Foster Care Referrals: Call 419.238.1695 option 3, then option 1.

After Hours/Emergency: 419.605.8056

fostercarer referrals@marshfoundation.org

Marsh IDL Program Teaches Life Skills

The Independent Living Program on The Marsh campus continues to be a strong contributor to the outcomes and progress seen in youth. Christina Flinn, CPST, facilitates the program and is able to include requests from the youth. Recently group members requested to work on job maintenance skills, and more specifically how to handle workplace scenarios in a mature, professional way.

Flinn was able to get all of the staff at The Marsh involved in the project. She asked employees to submit various scenarios for the youth to review. They were a mix of realistic and more outlandish situations, which gave the students an opportunity to think critically about how they would react or handle a certain occurrence.

The youth appreciated the practice and also the advice and support provided by those working at The Marsh. Preparing youth for the workforce has many facets. The IDL program works to address as many of them as possible.

Another recent project involved budgeting. The youth were given an assignment to develop a budget for themselves. It was to include bills and food for the month as well as extra money for things such as savings, entertainment or charitable giving. It went a step further and



required youth to develop a menu for the month to determine how much it would cost to feed themselves. They were given a worksheet to help create a menu that would work for their budget. The purpose, said Flinn, was to get them thinking about how much things actually cost and how to live within a budget.

The family teachers in the homes helped the youth work through the project, which was very beneficial for everyone. At the beginning of the project, some youth budgeted \$15 a week for food while others put \$37.50. Balanced, healthy meals were encouraged. As a result, the youth learned more about living within their means and planning ahead for things they'd like to purchase.

Former Marsh Youth continued from page 1

contribute to the latter. I lived with nine other young women who had severe mental health issues or poor behaviors and I knew I could either be a part of the hurt or the healing.”

The lessons she took with her were many. This isn't to say that all of Petersen's difficulties were immediately and permanently resolved. She said she has realized that her reactions to situations are often severe. "Words of affirmation send me soaring while criticism pummels me to the ground. Neither reactions are healthy," she said. Though this remains my greatest

struggle to date, it was at The Marsh Foundation I became aware that my mom's words in her times of mentally-ill-mania damaged me and I had, and still have, a lot to heal from.”

When asked for words of advice for today's youth, she said that suffering can lead to positivity. "Adversity will sharpen you," she said. "Use those sharp edges to sharpen yourself and others, rather than cut people the way people cut you. The things we do don't have to be big and grand. Most of our glory is not found on the stages or when everyone is watching. It is hidden

in our rooms, during the times it is easiest for the trauma to show its face.”

Petersen and her husband Jacob have a toddler son and are expecting a baby girl. They mentor and foster a young man who was at risk of deportation. They are also currently working to launch a nonprofit with the hopes of helping young people develop leadership and life skills. She uses her voice as an influencer on Instagram @torihopetersen and torihopetersen.com where she raises awareness about the foster care system, adoption and family.

Updated 2020 - 21 Marsh School Calendar

Monday, Aug. 17

Teacher Work Day

Tue. - Fri. Aug. 18-21

Staff In-Service

Wednesday, Aug. 24

First Day for Students

Monday, Sept. 7

Labor Day (No School)

Friday, Sept. 18

Staff In-Service (2 hr. delay)

Monday, Oct. 12

Staff In-Service - No School

Friday, Nov. 6

Staff In-Service - No School

Saturday, Nov. 7

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Wed. - Fri., Nov. 25-27

Thanksgiving Vacation

Wed.- Fri., Dec. 23 - Jan. 1

Christmas Vacation

Monday, Jan. 4

Classes Resume

Friday, Jan. 15

Staff In-Service (early dismissal)

Monday, Jan. 18

MLK Day - No School

Monday, Feb. 15

President's Day - No School

Friday, March 5

Staff In-Service - No School

Mon. - Fri. March 15-19

Spring Break - No School

Thursday, April 1

Staff In-Service (early dismissal)

Friday, April 2

Good Friday - No School

Saturday, April 17

Parent- Teacher Conferences

Friday, May 21

Last Day for Students

Monday, May 24

Teacher Work Day



Clockwise starting at top: The Marsh Foundation Marsh Grown program offers youth the opportunity to work in the campus garden through the summer. They then get the opportunity to sell their produce at the Marsh Grown Market on campus. The market is open to the public every Wednesday from 3 -5 p.m. Some recent items spotted at the market include peppers, green beans, tomatoes, okra, eggplant, and of course garlic. This summer, The Marsh has been working hard to improve the campus pond for youth and staff. A sand volleyball court was built and the youth have enjoyed playing on it. In addition, docks have been put in to improve fishing. Additional improvements are planned for the pond including a fire ring, planting of more trees and a swimming platform.



Summer Equestrian Program Concludes with Show

The youth at The Marsh Foundation recently concluded their summer equestrian program with a show for staff, trustees and families. The program, which began in May, gave the youth opportunities to ride at least four times per week.

For the program, The Marsh leases horses from The University of Findlay and hires on-campus riding instructors to lead the riding sessions with the youth. In addition to riding, the youth also learn how to care for and demonstrate respect for the horses.

Pictured are youth showing off their skills at the show in August.



New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff member:

- Katherine Eblen - Family Teacher
- Chelsey Opasik - Family Teacher
- Abigail Neville - Family Teacher

Kudos

The Marsh Foundation offers a tuition reimbursement program for employees who would like to continue their education. This additional education and licensure benefits The Marsh because it increases their ability to take on new responsibilities. Recent recipients include:

- Kelly Gross, LSW: Master of Science of Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University; licensed social worker.
- Lauren Calvert: Master of Social Work from The Ohio State University. Currently awaiting licensure exam.



Clymer Chat

There are currently no openings at Clymer Hall. The ten girls had a fun and busy summer and now are adjusting to the back-to-school schedule and routine. They are doing well despite the new mask and social distancing regulations that have been put in place.

The girls at Clymer enjoyed many activities over the summer. Things like swimming and riding bikes kept them busy during their free time. During the day, they participated in a summer school program which included library and technology time. They also had the opportunity to use the new fitness room on campus.

School time was followed by group counseling each day. A favorite summer activity is the horse program and this year was no different. The girls enjoyed riding daily and learning a lot about the care of the horses. They were proud to show off their skills at the annual horse show in August.

The girls are looking forward to a busy and successful school year!



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall's intensive treatment program currently has nine boys in care with one opening. Referrals are being accepted by calling 419.238.1695 ext. 360. The boys had a successful summer and are looking forward to a successful school year as well.

Several boys participated in the Independent Living program on campus and worked on the Marsh Grown garden crew throughout the summer. This gives the youth hands on work experience not only in the garden, but also at the farmer's market. This year, the program continued with their market stand right on campus (open to the public) on Wednesday afternoons.

By selling the produce they grow in the garden, they also learn money management and sales skills.

As summer comes to an end, the boys will miss their extra free time spent outside. However, their days will be filled with new and exciting projects as school gets underway and the new activities schedule starts.



Vance Voice

There are nine boys at Vance Hall, leaving one current opening. Referrals are being accepted by calling 419.238.1695 ext. 360. They had a good summer, participating in a wide variety of fun and educational activities.

A highlight of the summer was the horse program. It concluded with a great horse show and all of the boys appreciated the opportunity to show off their new skills.

The boys also enjoyed spending time outdoors throughout the summer. They spent downtime shooting baskets, riding bikes or fishing at the pond. These activities are not only enjoyable for the boys, but they also give them an opportunity to work on relationship building and various social skills with their peers.

Like the other youth on campus, the boys at Vance are looking forward to the upcoming school year. Even though it will look a bit different, The Marsh School is prepared for a year full of learning, fun and skill building.

Welcome Autumn!

The Marsh Foundation
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Did You Know? We offer adoption services!

The Marsh Foundation has the ability to license homes with a dual foster care and adoption license. This means that families that may be interested adopting their foster children in the future can simplify the process with The Marsh Foundation.



This allows The Marsh to provide additional support to families. Families that think they may be interested in adoption can complete the necessary steps up front, with very little additional work. Many families that are interested in becoming foster families are interested in accepting young children that may be available for adoption in the future.

If you are interested in more information, contact The Marsh foster care department at 419.238.1695.

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

Calendar of Events

September 2020 - December 2020

- School will be on a two hour delay, Sept. 18 for a staff in-service.
- There will be no school Monday, Oct. 12 or Friday, Nov. 6 because of staff in-services.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences for The Marsh School are Saturday, Nov. 7.
- The Marsh Foundation School will not be in session Nov. 25 - 27 and the CFS and Business offices will be closed Nov. 26-27 for Thanksgiving.
- The Marsh Foundation School will not be in session Dec. 23 - Jan. 1 for Christmas break.



For more information about any event, visit 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, we have a directory of alumni? To view the directory, or sign up yourself, visit the Alumni page online at www.marshfoundation.org.