

# The Marsh Messenger

• Spring 2013

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

Serving children and families since 1922

## Project Believe Made Christmas Even Merrier at The Marsh Foundation

Three years ago, Tammie Rafferty's own daughter was spending Christmas in a residential mental hospital. That year, Rafferty was able to provide Christmas gifts for her daughter and the others in her unit. Each year her efforts have grown, and now her organization Project Believes delivers hundreds of presents to children around Ohio.

"There are more than 30,000 children being treated for emotional, behavioral and mental health issues in residential treatment centers across America," Rafferty said. "Project

Believe ensures they never feel forgotten."

The Marsh Foundation was blessed this Christmas season when Project Believe called, offering to provide some small Christmas presents to the youth on campus. "The response was overwhelming," said Rafferty. "So many people came forward wanting to donate."

Each youth living at The Marsh is getting pajamas, slippers, a blanket, socks, underwear, hats, gloves, a scarf, books, a stuffed animal, a stocking and other goodies. Project Believe also generously donated a bag

of goodies for the staff in each group home.

"I'm sure when the kids open these presents on Christmas morning they will be beyond thrilled," said Kim Mullins, executive director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh. "We are blown away by the generosity of Project Believe and their donors."

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).



**THE MARSH**  
FOUNDATION

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Please pass The Marsh Messenger along to others in your office or family who would like to read it. Thank you!

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### Leadership

- **The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees:**
  - Gary Corcoran
  - Robert Gamble
  - Gerald Thatcher
- **The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:**
  - Kim Mullins
  - Roger Salisbury
  - Jeff Grothouse



(L to R) Jeannie Boesenberg, Minda Springer and Tammie Rafferty from Project Believe present Christmas presents for Marsh Foundation youth to the executive director of Child and Family Services, Kim Mullins and group home consultant Marcus Boatman.

*The Marsh Foundation*  
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## From the executive's desk ...

The 2012-2013 school year is near the end of the third nine weeks. We began the year with 32 students, 15 returned home or moved on to other placements, and we have admitted 18 additional students during the course of the year. We currently are serving 35 children in school, and have educated 50 youngsters during the course of the current school year.

At this time I thought I would share some of the behind the scene activities that occur when a student is admitted to The Marsh Foundation with regard to education. When a child is admitted, my secretary, Holly Myers, and I review the student's application that is forwarded to us from our coordinator of admissions and training, Kelly Gross.

Within the application is school related information such as a records release form that allows us to send for the student's records. There also is a school information section that provides important information such as the school district of residence, last school attended, current grade, and when applicable, special education information.

Holly then sends the records release form to the appropriate school(s). We often have to make several calls to gather current records, as many of our students have been in multiple placements before being at The



**Roger Salisbury, Principal**

*"Many individuals are involved with the admission of a student at The Marsh Foundation, with many activities taking place before the child sets foot on our campus."*

— Roger Salisbury

Marsh. For example, we recently enrolled a high school student that had earned credit from five different high schools, and we are currently trying to uncover credits from a sixth school.

Once the records are in, Holly then enters the information in the DASL computer information system. She also sends the information to Dianna Ashbaugh and Judy Dotson at Lincolnview's central

office. Judy is the EMIS Coordinator and she enters the student information into the EMIS computer information system and also notifies the district of residence that the student is now enrolled in the Lincolnview Marsh School. Dianna is responsible for collecting tuition for The Marsh School, and twice a year bills the districts of residence on the Marsh's behalf. Dianna often will contact the various case workers to obtain court documents to assist in the billing process.

On my end, the first thing I look for in a student's application and/or records are transcripts and IEP's (Individualized Education Plans). If the student is a high school student I complete a credit history form and then develop the student's class schedule based on this history and our current graduation requirements. Holly in turn must enter the current schedule and credit history into DASL.

If the student is close to graduation, or close to turning 18, I attend the next treatment team meeting for the youth and together as a team we develop an educational exit strategy, often coordinating the student's diploma with the student's 18th birthday and discharge. If a student is on an IEP (currently 3/4 of our students have an IEP) to receive special education programming, Holly and I then review the plan, and send

a copy of the IEP to the school staff for review. If the student is not in the custody of a parent I must assign a Surrogate Parent for Special Education purposes. We also note if the youth is to receive speech or occupational and physical therapy services and if so, Holly notifies the appropriate therapist to establish a schedule to meet with the child here at school.

As you can see many individuals are involved with the admission of a student at The Marsh Foundation, with many of the before mentioned activities taking place before the child sets foot on our campus.

Our current school year ends on May 23. Our Spring Celebration and Graduation is on Wednesday, May 22. Please stop by and help support our children on this day. The festivities begin at 10 a.m.

*Roger Salisbury*  
Principal,  
The Marsh Foundation School

**You're Invited:**  
Please Join Us  
May 22

This year's Spring Celebration and Graduation ceremony will take place on Wednesday, May 22 in The Marsh Auditorium. Please plan to join us. There will be piano recitals, the annual production of The Wizard of Oz and graduates will be recognized. A luncheon will follow. All are welcome.

A commitment to excellence

## Stephens Family Returns to Foster Parenting at The Marsh Foundation

Scott and Joan Stephens have been foster parents for 20 years. In that time, they've cared for over 200 children in their home. Some were long-term placements and some were respite placements and only stayed for a weekend.

The Stephens have dedicated their lives to helping children in need. They were originally licensed by The Marsh Foundation and have also served children through the Mercer County Department of Job and Family Services. Recently, they returned to The Marsh and since have taken in four new teenage boys.

The couple has six children of their own, ranging in age from 25 down to 6-years-old. Six years ago they adopted their youngest from the very first foster child they had from The Marsh Foundation. The mother was then homeless and she pleaded with the Stephens to take her baby in. "At that time our youngest was only six, so it was crazy to us to start over but we felt we needed to do this. It took some adjusting but are so glad we did!" said Joan.

Scott works as a job site superintendent for construction jobs and Joan is a nurse part-time. However, she said her passion is to be at home with all of her kids. Though they've had many children in their house, they try to maintain contact with most of them, especially those who are local.

"We look at being foster parents as a mission," she said. "A lot of people go on mission trips far away, but this is our mission in our home place. We just love having kids around,



**Scott and Joan Stephens have been foster parents for approximately 20 years and have more than 200 foster children spend time in their home.**

the more the merrier!"

The couple loves to see the kids' smile, especially when they have the opportunity to try something new, or have a new experience that they haven't been fortunate enough to have in the past. "Sometimes it is playing a sport, to going out to eat, riding a jet ski or vacationing. They get so excited about it," she said. "That is my reward; seeing this on their face and hearing them talk about it for several days after."

According to Joan, one of her favorite things about being a foster mom is the hugs. "I love when the foster kids come up to me and initiate hugs, especially teenagers," she said. "One specific moment recently, we were going out to eat and I was sitting in the back seat with

my boys and they were fighting over who was going to sit by me and the one that did put his arm around my shoulder the whole ride to the restaurant. It was so cute!"

The Stephens admit that with a foster family there are good times and bad, just like with any biological family. And, it can sometimes be discouraging to watch them go back to less than ideal family situations. However, they still encourage anyone that is considering fostering to get more information and see if it is a good fit for them. "The rewards while we have them and continuing contact after they get older and seeing the seeds that have been planted are well worthwhile," Joan said.

## How You Can Make a Difference in the Lives of Children

One of the most meaningful things you can do in life to help a child is to become a foster parent. However, it is a decision that requires a large commitment.

The Marsh Foundation offers a continuum of care that includes a Foster Care Program. The majority of foster kids are placed in homes as a step-down in their treatment plan from the Group Homes on campus. However, we also receive many direct referrals from surrounding communities.

The Marsh believes that all children have the right to love, protection and to be cared for by a committed family. Many of the children served have suffered abuse and/or neglect and The Marsh seeks out potential foster parents who can meet the needs of these children.

All foster parents go through extensive training before a child is placed and are required to undergo continuing training to maintain their license. Foster parents can be married couples or single individuals.

Consultants are assigned to each foster parent and are available 24 hours, seven days a week. They help create the youth's treatment plan, offer support and are available in crisis situations. Foster parents are substantially reimbursed for costs associated with caring for a foster child.

In order to become a foster parent there is a lengthy application and assessment process required. If you are interested in learning more, contact The Marsh Foundation at 419.238.1695 ext. 360. Or, visit [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org)



## Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently home to 10 girls. A recent admission filled the only open bed. The girls have been working hard to make the two new girls feel welcome.

Several girls at Clymer Hall participated in the Black History month projects. Three of them even won awards in the competition.

Several of the girls have been participating in the life learning classes presented through the activities on campus. They have enjoyed them very much. The

girls were also very proud of the scarves, drawings and other projects they've competed through the program.

Clymer Hall, like all of us, is looking forward to spring and warmer weather and the spring production of "The Wizard of Oz"



## Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall is currently full with 10 boys. All of them have been working hard during their school day and the third quarter is nearly over. They will finish the school year on May 23 and

summer school will be in session from June 3 - July 11.

Many of the boys enjoyed participating in the Black History Month festivities. Several completed projects, some helped with food for the carry-in and two were on the student panel for the game show "Are you Smarter than a Teenager?" modeled after the TV version of "Are you Smarter than a Fifth Grader?" Staff served as the host and contestant and everyone enjoyed the educational and fun afternoon.



## Vance Voice

Vance Hall is currently at capacity with 10 boys. The boys are enjoying rehearsals for the production of "The Wizard of Oz" and determining which parts they'd like to audition for.

The entire group completed a video project for the Black History Month competition. They acted out the Rosa Parks act of defiance on the Montgomery, Alabama bus in December, 1955. Youth played various roles and then took turns speaking about why discrimination is wrong and how it makes people feel. The group won second place for their efforts.

The boys are looking forward to spring and warmer weather. They are anxious to spend time at the pond fishing and more time outdoors playing sports and riding their bikes. They are also looking forward to 4-H and the many other activities that come with summertime

## The Marsh Has Ties to Negro League Baseball Player

Robert "Bob" Wiggins passed away at the end of 2012. He was a member of the Negro American Baseball League (NAL) and played in 1959 and 1960. He was also the grandfather of Tonya Branson, Marsh Foundation school family teacher.

Branson helped bring Wiggins to The Marsh on two different occasions to talk to the youth about baseball, discrimination and rising up against the odds.

Wiggins played in the NAL 12 years after Jackie Robinson broke the big-league color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers. However, African Americans still weren't widely accepted in baseball. Many black baseball players, like Willie Mays and Hank

Aaron, still started their careers on NAL teams.

Wiggins played for the Raleigh Tigers and the Kansas City Monarchs. He relayed stories about eating and sleeping on the team bus because often players in the NAL weren't welcome at many restaurants or hotels.

And, the black players usually weren't paid much money. They often just wanted the chance to play. Often, they played well. Wiggins was invited to try out for the White Sox in 1958 after playing for semi-pro teams in Chicago. The Sox didn't sign him, so he went on to play for the two NAL teams. Later, after his own playing career, he also helped coach the South Shore



**Robert Wiggins visited The Marsh on different occasions to speak to the youth about his experiences. Many staff and students had the opportunity to meet him first hand. Here, he is pictured with family teacher Emery Rogers.**

Railcats team in Gary, Ind. Wiggins' message to the youth at The Marsh was inspirational. You can read a full article about Wiggins and his life experiences on the Chicago Sun Times'

website at <http://www.suntimes.com/news/obituaries/16642349-418/outfielder-passed-up-by-sox-made-his-mark-in-the-old-negro-leagues.html>.



Clockwise starting above: Staff Laura Beckett-Avery and Tonya Branson review youth projects for Black History Month and place their votes. Mr. Mayes and Mrs. McClure accompany the youth during their Christmas production of "Scrooge." Matt Temple from the Wassenberg Art Center teaches a life learning class on drawing to youth on campus. The Trustees hand out gift cards to youth during the annual Christmas party at the Willowbend Country Club. A group of special education students from Bluffton University were on campus this winter to tour The Marsh with Mr. Salisbury and learn more about our programming.



## Activities Program Introduces Life Learning Classes

The activities program has recently introduced a new section entitled "Life Learning Classes." The concept is to allow the youth to try out a new skill in hopes that it will inspire them into a life long interest or hobby.

The fall-spring classes have included knitting your own scarf, drawing, beginner wood carving, blue bird house making, creating clay beads and bike riding safety.

If you have a hobby or skill that you would like to teach and share with our kids, please contact activities coordinator, Sherry Grone at: [sgrone@marshfoundation.org](mailto:sgrone@marshfoundation.org) or call her at 419.605.2512.



Volunteers, Jennifer Waltz and Jeanine Roediger teach Marsh Foundation youth the basics of knitting a scarf.

## 2012 Poinsettia Sale Successful

The Marsh Foundation 'Marsh Grown' garden program concluded for 2012 with the annual sale of poinsettias. The successful sale generated more than \$500 in profits for the garden crew. A total of 147 plants were sold.

There were eight youth that participated in the sale and worked a total of 26 hours. Job responsibilities included sales, marketing, organizing orders, delivery and working the day of the open house at the greenhouse. Each member of the team will receive a check for their hours worked. In addition, one youth was presented with a small gift for being the top seller.

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 through-out the season. In addition, the program serves as



Two members of the garden crew work to organize poinsettias before the Greenhouse Holiday Open House and poinsettia pick-up.

a catalyst for youth to develop important job skills for future employment.

Participants in Marsh Grown garden crew are youth who are a part of The Marsh Foundation's Independent Living Group. They are all 15 ½ years of age or older and are working on skills that will help them be successful as adults. The garden program is an opportu-

nity for them to interact with peers and adults, develop quality job skills and learn how to grow healthy food.

The group will also host a spring plant sale on May 11. For more information, please contact activities coordinator, Sherry Grone at 419.238.1695 ext. 270 or via e-mail at [sgrone@marshfoundation.org](mailto:sgrone@marshfoundation.org).

## New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Marilyn Diller - Family Teacher
- Lori Shriver - Overnight Family Teacher
- Jay Miller - Family Teacher
- Brent Burk - Family Teacher
- Mackenzie Basil - Family Teacher

## Black History Month Celebrated

The Marsh Foundation once again offered a variety of projects to celebrate Black History Month. Activities were planned to involve both staff and youth on campus.

For several weeks, youth at The Marsh worked on creative projects to honor Black History Month. There were a wide variety of projects turned in, including posters and essays. The boys at Vance Hall even filmed a live portrayal of Rosa Park's act of defiance on a bus in 1955. All youth on campus put a great deal of work into their projects. First, second and

third place prizes were awarded to three of the top projects.

In addition, a special cultural luncheon was held that gave youth the opportunity to learn about African American cuisine. The activities concluded with a game show in the auditorium, 'Are you Smarter than a Teenager?' Staff members served as the host and contestant, while a group of youth acted as the panel. Questions revolved around black history and provided for an entertaining yet educational afternoon for staff and youth.



Marsh Foundation Trustee and real estate agent Bob Gamble speaks to the independent living group about finding affordable housing in the community.

## Independent Living Program Goals

This spring, the independent living group on campus is focusing on housing and community resources related to that. Topics being discussed are issues related seeking/ maintaining housing, homelessness, community resources, community responsibilities, etc.

Bob Gamble, Marsh Foundation Trustee, also owns a local real estate agency and has many years experience working within the housing field. Recently, he spoke to the independent living group about finding and securing affordable housing once they become adults. It was an educational and eye-opening experience for the youth involved.

## Living The Legacy Tours

On Saturday, May 11, the historic Marsh family Homestead will be open for public tours. Tour times are noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Anyone interested in learning more about the history of The Marsh Foundation and seeing the home where George, Hilinda and Katie lived, is welcome to attend.

Tours will be directed by Ron Bagley, former director of The Marsh Foundation. Tours are free and will be provided on a first come, first served basis. They will last approximately 30 minutes. The home itself was completed in 1865 and has been a visual icon in Van Wert ever since. The interior has been preserved to look much like it did when the Marsh family occupied it in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The tours are being held in conjunction with Living the Legacy, an annual youth program designed to honor to good deeds of Hilinda Marsh.



Vance Hall program manager Matt Tuttle served as the host of "Are you Smarter than a Teenager." Coordinator of admissions and training, Kelly Gross was the contestant. She had some help on the trivia questions from a panel of six youth, two from each group home on campus.

## 2012 Annual Report

Have you seen the 2012 Annual Report produced last month by The Marsh Foundation? If you did not receive a copy, you can request one by contacting Dawn Berryman, marketing and public relations specialist. She can be reached at 419.238.1695 ext. 233 or [dberryman@marshfoundation.org](mailto:dberryman@marshfoundation.org).

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## Words of Thanks

A Marsh Foundation program manager recently received this e-mail in his inbox from a thankful caseworker. *"I just wanted to take a moment and make sure that I thank you and your staff for everything you guys do on a daily basis. I have worked with Marsh Foundation for several years now. I sometimes take for granted all of the things everyone does to ensure a child's needs are being met. I expect that our children's basic, medical and therapeutic needs will be taken care of and have never been disappointed by anyone at Marsh. I also realize staff go above and beyond what many other agencies do for children in order to make them feel safe, special and cared for. You guys really make my job so much easier when I know I don't have to constantly call to see if our kids are eating, getting their basic and emergency medical care and so forth. It is quite obvious that everyone truly cares about their job and the children they are responsible for on campus."*

## Have You Liked Us Yet?

For a little over a year, The Marsh Foundation has had its own Facebook page. Have you liked us yet? You can stay atop of current happenings, get updates about events, or connect with friends you used to live with. Please, visit our page at [www.facebook.com/MarshFoundation](http://www.facebook.com/MarshFoundation) and give us a 'like.' Then, encourage your friends to do the same!

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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

March ~ July 2013

- March 25 - April 1 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- April 5, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.
- May 11 - Spring Plant Sale at the Greenhouse from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- May 11 - Living the Legacy tours of the historic Homestead. Noon, 1 and 2 p.m.
- May 22, 10 a.m. - Spring celebration and graduation ceremony held in The Marsh Auditorium
- May 23 - The last day of school
- June 3 - July 11 - Summer School



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).