

The Marsh Messenger

• Spring 2014

• www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Loss of Dedicated and Loved Foster Mother Takes Toll on Marsh Family



The Marsh Family misses Faye Lepper terribly. She is pictured here at the 2013 Christmas party with foster sons, Isaac (left) and DJ. Please continue to keep Faye's family in your thoughts.

In January, The Marsh Foundation family suffered the loss of a near and dear friend. Faye Lepper was fatally injured in a car accident on 224 in Hancock County.

Faye had been part of The Marsh family since 2002 when she came to work as a family teacher at Marsh Hall.

She had previously been a foster parent with SAFY and soon after coming to The Marsh, took over the Independent Living foster home on campus.

During her time with the program, she served over 60 foster kids in her care, not to mention the dozens she'd already served through SAFY and at Marsh Hall. She meant so much to so many.

Faye lived on The Marsh campus and was very much a part of our everyday lives. She

will be greatly missed not only by the staff and other foster parents, but most of all by the youth she served.

"Words can't describe what she did for me," said her foster son DJ. "Faye was a blessing to all of us. Every child she helped both past and present. She was a wonderful woman with a kind heart. She will have a special place in my heart and in everyone else's lives that she touched."

Faye had a heart of gold and worked tirelessly to help kids gain the skills and education they needed to go out into the world.

Fellow Marsh foster parent Shana Fryer said her best memory of Faye was rooming with her at a conference several years ago. "I miss Faye dearly, and am a better person for knowing her,"

she said.

The four boys that were living with Faye at the time of her death are doing well and adjusting admirably. They miss Faye and talk of her often.

"Faye helped me get over my anger. If it wasn't for her, I would be the mean, ugly monster that I used to be," said her foster son Isaac. "She had a great deal of compassion for kids and loved what she did. She was willing to help anyone that would take it."

Thanks to Pamela Reagan, foster care consultant, who volunteered to be the temporary, live-in family teacher at Senior Hall, they've had a familiar face step up and care for them during this difficult time.

Another current foster son simply said, "she never gave up on us."



THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

Please Share

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 Clay
 - Gary Corcoran
 - Robert Gamble
- **The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:**
 - Kim Mullins
 - Roger Salisbury
 - Jeff Grothouse

The Marsh Foundation
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Van Wert, Ohio 45891

From the Trustee's desk ...

As the newest trustee of The Marsh Foundation, I have spent the past few months trying to absorb as much information as I can about the current operations of The Marsh. Growing up in Van Wert, I thought I knew a lot about The Marsh Foundation and their beautiful facilities. When I drove by The Marsh I was always impressed by the well maintained buildings and the beautiful setting.

During family gatherings I used to listen to the "good old days at The Marsh Foundation" stories from my father-in-law, Dan Jerome, who used to work there. On several occasions, during my conversations with my friend Ron Bagley, I had the opportunity to garner a lot of additional information about the rich history of The Marsh Foundation and the benevolence of Mr. George Marsh.

Upon my appointment to the board, several of the former Marsh students made an effort to welcome me to The Marsh family and told me of their fond memories of growing up at The Marsh.

I soon realized that the common thread of my conversations with all of these different people was the pride they had from being associated with The Marsh Foundation. But I also garnered from them that they felt The Marsh is different today than it was years ago.



Gary Clay, Trustee

"I soon realized that the common thread of my conversations with all of these different people was the pride they had from being associated with The Marsh Foundation."

— Gary Clay

From what I have learned from my short time on the Marsh board, I would agree that the young people who are part of The Marsh Foundation today are different from those who were there years ago. Most young people, no matter where they are, are different today than the young people who grew up years ago. Society has changed and the breakdown of the family structure has impacted a

larger number of children than in years past; young people are suffering severe emotional and physical damage because of it.

As much as I wish we could go back to the good old days we can't, nor can we ignore the charge Mr. Marsh placed before us in 1922 "to help provide effective training and support to children and families in a safe, secure environment."

During my short time on the board I have been tremendously impressed by the dedication, energy and emotional care demonstrated by The Marsh staff. This is essential for the educational and emotional development of these young people. I have witnessed the staff making personal sacrifices during a tragedy to help the students at Marsh cope with a difficult situation while they themselves were suffering.

The employees also went the extra mile when winter storms shut down most of the community to make sure the students were safe and well cared for, and the facilities could maintain close to normal operations.

Even though the youth of today may be different from the youth of past years in some respects, the care given to the young people at The Marsh Foundation is still the same excellent care that they were given years ago.

In closing, I would like to

take this time to thank The Marsh Foundation staff and the Marsh students, both former and current, for making me feel so welcome. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Gary Corcoran and Mr. Bob Gamble, board of trustees members, in addition to Mr. Jeff Grothouse, Mr. Roger Salisbury and Ms. Kim Mullins for taking the extra time to explain the many complexities of The Marsh. Thank you all for allowing me to be part of The Marsh family.

Gary Clay
Trustee,

The Marsh Foundation

You're Invited:
Please Join Us
May 28



This year's Spring Celebration and Graduation ceremony will take place on Wednesday, May 28 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

Project Believe and Van Wert Community Club Increase Christmas Joy at The Marsh Foundation

The Van Wert Community Club stepped up and donated stockings filled with gifts for all 50 of the youth in group home and foster care at The Marsh Foundation. The generous donation is making the holiday a little more special for many.

The stockings included things like slippers, toys, candy and movie passes for the children. Club members Leilonnee Taylor and Deb Pearson were on hand to deliver the items to The Marsh last week. “The Marsh does so much for the community and we see the kids out in the community giving back, so we wanted to be able to do something for them,” said Taylor, the organization’s current president.

Dawn Berryman, marketing and public relations specialist, noted that the gifts are being kept until Christmas morning for the youth. “These stockings and gifts will put a lot of smiles on the kids’ faces on Christmas morning, we’re sure of it,” she said. “We really appreciate everything that the club does for the community and especially this very kind donation.”

The Van Wert Community Club very active. They are a non-profit service organization made up of volunteers who donate their time to support activities, fellowship, and goodwill in Van Wert and the surrounding area.

Their mission is to benefit the citizens of Van Wert, Ohio and those from surrounding areas by sponsoring various public work projects, organizing public events, making charitable donations and other activities that benefit the public. You can



Above: (L to R) Leilonnee Taylor and Deb Pearson with the Van Wert Community Club visited The Marsh Foundation before Christmas to drop off stocking donations for the 50 children in care. Below: (L to R) Minda Springer, Tammie Rafferty and Matt Wunderlin (far right) from Project Believe present Christmas presents for Marsh Foundation youth to Dawn Berryman, marketing and public relations specialist at The Marsh Foundation.



learn more about the Van Wert Community Club by visiting their website at www.vwclub.org.

For the second year in a row, Project Believe has helped to make Christmas a little brighter for youth at The Marsh Foundation. The organization, which originated four years ago, has continued to grow and now delivers hundreds of presents to children in Ohio.

Tammie Rafferty, the

group’s founder, was inspired to help others by her own daughter’s circumstances a few years ago. Then, gifts were wrapped and sorted in her living room. This year, more than 100 volunteers gathered at a local school gymnasium to sort and wrap.

Gifts include things like pajamas, slippers, blankets, socks, gloves, books and other goodies. Each group home also received a bag of items like

games and puzzles to share among the house.

“Donations like this mean a lot to our kids,” said Dawn Berryman, marketing and public relations specialist. “Christmas is often a difficult time for those missing family and organizations such as Project Believe help to ease that. We are so excited to have established a relationship with such a generous and thoughtful organization.”

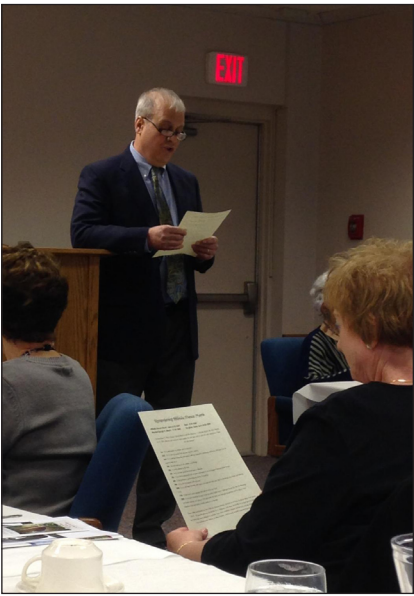
You can learn more about Project Believe by visiting their website at www.projectbelieve.net.

Spring Plant Sale and Homestead Tours in May

The Marsh Foundation ‘Marsh Grown’ garden program will be holding their annual spring plant sale on Saturday, May 10 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in The Marsh greenhouse. All proceeds will go to the campus youth garden program. The historic Marsh Homestead will also be open for public tours at noon, 1 and 2 p.m.

Ron Bagley, former Marsh Director and current Marsh Foundation Historian, will be giving tours of the Homestead. Tours are open to anyone interested in learning more about the history of The Marsh and seeing the home where George, Hilinda and Katie lived. Tours are free and will be provided on a first come, first served basis.

For more information, please contact activities coordinator, Sherry Grone at 419.238.1695 ext. 270 or via e-mail at sgrone@marshfoundation.org



Clockwise starting at top left: All the snow this winter season has meant the youth have had several opportunities to go sledding at the local reservoirs. They've really enjoyed this activity, and so have the staff! Recently, historian Ron



Bagley spoke to the Twig II group at the Van Wert County Hospital. He shared the story of Hilinda Marsh and her impact on George and the creation of The Marsh Foundation. The heavy snowfall also meant there were times some staff couldn't make it into work. Others quickly stepped up. Above, Kim Mullins, executive director and Tracy Collins, clinical secretary, make grilled cheese sandwiches on one of the snow days. Some boys from Vance Hall recently had the opportunity to visit the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton. The educational trip was enjoyed by all.



Clockwise starting above: Thanks to Project Believe and the Van Wert Community Club, the Christmas trees at each group home were overflowing this year! Some youth had the opportunity to visit Science Central in Ft. Wayne during one of their many days off of school. The annual oil painting workshop was held in art class recently. It is always enjoyed by the students. This year, they painted polar bears and penguins. One student showcases what he started with and what his painting became at the end of the day. The annual poinsettia sale was held in December. It is organized by Marsh Foundation activities coordinator Sherry Grone (pictured at right) and raises money for the Independent Living Garden program on campus.



Marsh Foundation Licenses Senior Hall as Group Home

Due to the untimely passing of foster mother Faye Lepper, Senior Hall has been licensed as a group home. Plans are still in the works for the home, however, The Marsh is currently seeking a live-in staff person or couple to serve as program manager for the home.

The person would have 48 hours of time off per week and manage the scheduling and day-to-day operations of the home. Someone that has experience working in a behavioral setting with youth is preferred. An excellent pay and benefit package is provided. For more information, call 419.238.1695 ext. 340.



The Marsh is currently in search of live-in staff for Senior Hall.

Clay Named Newest Marsh Foundation Trustee

The Third District Court of Appeals named Gary L. Clay as the newest member of The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees in January. He is the 18th Trustee to serve on the board since it was established in 1922. He replaced retiring Trustee Gerald Thatcher, who served as a Trustee since July of 2002.

Clay brings a wealth of experiences to his new position and said he is excited about the opportunity to serve The Marsh. He will join Bob Gamble and Gary Corcoran who are currently on the board. "I'm really excited about this because I think it is a great opportunity to make an impact on young people's lives," Clay said. "I know kids at The Marsh have had their struggles but giving them the opportunity to

succeed is what I think is really important. I'm going to do the best I can to help The Marsh in any way," he added.

Clay is a lifelong resident of Van Wert who graduated from Bluffton College with a double major in accounting and business administration. He is currently the president of Van Wert Federal Savings Bank and is a member of the bank's board of directors. He is the secretary of the Van Wert County Hospital Board of Trustees, the vice-president of the Business Development Corporation Board and also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Van Wert County Foundation, Huntington University President's Advisory Board and the Van Wert City tax abatement

committee.

In the past, Clay has served as president of the Van Wert Chamber of Commerce and the Van Wert Sertoma Club, as well as the boards of the United Way, Junior Achievement, Van Wert Historical Society, Habitat for Humanity, Crime Stoppers, Family Caring Center, Pregnancy Life Center,

Van Wert County Extension Advisory Board and Van Wert Band Parents. He is also an active member of Trinity United Methodist Church.

Gary and his wife Melissa have 4 children, Erica Clay, Lydia Mendenhall, Laura Scott and Andrew Clay. They also have five grandchildren; all of whom reside in the Van Wert area.

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Carol Andrews - Family Teacher
- Julie Hartsock - Family Teacher
- Zach Weber - Family Teacher
- Christy Thees - Family Teacher
- Elizabeth Pleasnick - Foster Care Consultant



Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently home to 10 girls as all beds are full. A couple of openings are anticipated this summer as a few of the girls plan to transition to foster care.

The girls have been anxiously awaiting the arrival of spring and are looking forward to spending more time outdoors.

During the winter months, they've spent time sledding, which they've enjoyed. They also enjoyed some on-campus learning activities where they had the opportunity to knit. They attended a local pottery

workshop and had the chance to try something new.

Several of the girls were involved in the poinsettia sale before Christmas and are looking forward to continuing working in the greenhouse and garden this summer with the on-campus garden crew.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall had a recent graduation when one youth completed the program and a new youth has already filled that open spot. The boys are all adjusting well and looking forward to spring activities.

Nicer weather means the bicycles and fishing poles will soon be making their appearance. The boys have been working hard to prepare for the annual spring production of the Wizard of Oz. The play and graduation ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 28. Please plan to join us!

One Marsh Hall youth had the privilege of attending the annual Big Brothers Big Sisters awards ceremony with his Big. His Big was honored at the dinner as 'Male Big of the Year'!



Vance Voice

Vance Hall had a new intake this week and is currently full with 10 boys. A couple boys are on track to complete the program early this summer, creating some possible openings.

The boys have enjoyed sledding and building forts in the snow this winter. But, they are also looking forward to warmer temperatures and outdoor games like kickball and baseball.

Vance Hall boys have had some fun opportunities for day trips this winter as well. Some boys were able to visit the Air Force Museum in Dayton, while others visited Science Central in Fort Wayne.

As the school year wraps up, the boys are anticipating summer school and other fun summer activities like the horse program. They are excited for the Wizard of Oz production and their piano recitals in May.

Foster Care Parents in Training

As you know, The Marsh has actively been recruiting new foster families. Recently, two couples received their licenses. Josh and Lindsay Tissot, and Ron and Paulette Ottomeier are now both officially licensed. The Ottomeiers are mainly looking to provide respite care, while the Tissots are currently awaiting their first, full-time placement.

Inquiries continue to come in. Currently, there are four additional families undergoing the training and home study process with the anticipation of being licensed in the coming months.

2013 Annual Report

Have you seen the 2013 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.

Garden Assistant Needed

The Marsh is currently in search of a person to assist with the daily functions of the youth garden program this summer. The person will work alongside our activities coordinator in organizing and managing the summer garden program and youth involved. They will assist in greenhouse work of seed starting and plant growth maintenance, assist in outside garden work of planning, planting, weed management, harvesting, and marketing of garden produce for sales and assist in maintaining garden market records, youth payroll, and media records.

A high school diploma is required and experience in working with troubled youth and/or youth development is preferred. The selected person must have knowledge and experience with gardening and plant production.

The position will be temporary, running from May/June through August/September, depending on the person's availability. The assistant needs to be at least 21 years of age and able to work unsupervised with youth. A standard background check and fingerprinting will be required, as well as a TB test. A valid driving license is required, as is first aid/CPR training.

Those interested should send a resume to sgrone@marshfoundation.org by April 15.

The Marsh Foundation
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Things We've Heard Recently

"[Youth name] is doing very well. We greatly appreciate the Marsh's huge part in this!" Caseworker quoted on a recent satisfaction survey following youth's discharge and completion of the program.

"Very nice facility and program. I continue to be impressed by The Marsh Foundation. I cannot say enough about how awesome your program is. It fit the need perfectly and helped accomplish goals. I look forward to working with you again." Caseworker quoted on a recent satisfaction survey following youth's discharge and completion of the program.

"I'll do it. Teach me how!" Recently overheard by a school family teacher when a youth was trying to accomplish something in class.

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 and give us a 'like.' Then, encourage your friends to do the same!

*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 24 - 28 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- April 4, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.
- May 10 - Spring Plant Sale at the Greenhouse from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- May 10 - Living the Legacy tours of the historic Homestead. Noon, 1 and 2 p.m.
- May 28, 10 a.m. - Spring celebration and graduation ceremony held in The Marsh Auditorium
- May 30 - The last day of school
- June 9 - July 11 - Summer School



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.