

The Marsh Messenger

• Spring 2012 • www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Second Annual Living the Legacy Event to Focus on Homelessness and Hunger

On Sunday, April 1 at 2 p.m., The First United Methodist Senior Choir will perform a free concert in The Marsh Auditorium. The highly-talented local choir will cap off a month-long program on The Marsh campus entitled; Homeless and Hungry: Becoming Part of the Solution. The afternoon will also include tours of the historic Marsh family Homestead.

George, Hilinda and Katie Marsh left a strong legacy by being compassionate and helping the less fortunate in the Van Wert community. Hilinda, especially, left behind writings that were very spiritual in nature. In her funeral memorial it was quoted, "Many were the days when she went about in her

well-provisioned carriage, helping the sick and needy, in the very joy of her Master who went about doing good. In the church [she was] a humble and conscientious follower of the Christ; a leader for years in the Ladies' Society of the church. Our sense of loss is deep; we shall ever hold her services in grateful remembrance." The Marsh Foundation continues to build on and carry out that legacy. Activities on April 1 are designed to honor the Marsh family and the legacy that they left behind.

Admission to the concert is free, with the donation of non-perishable food items. All items collected will then be donated to Van Wert area food banks. The

choir is the adult group that serves choral musical needs for the 10:45 a.m. worship service at First United Methodist Church in Van Wert. The choir is under the direction of Paul Hoverman for the 19th year. The accompanists are Gloria Wendel on organ and Annette Hoverman on piano.

The choir has a rich tradition of excellence in music. Under L.W. Schaufelberger, the choir traveled and sang in England. In 2001, under Hoverman, the choir traveled to New York City and sang at St. John the Divine Cathedral under Dr. Simon Carrington, founder of the King's Singers. In the past, the choir has made several

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THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

You're Invited

The Marsh Foundation will hold its annual Spring Celebration and Graduation ceremony on May 25 at 10 a.m. in the school auditorium. A luncheon will follow in the cafeteria. All are invited.

Please Share

Please share The Marsh Messenger with others in your family or office 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



The First United Methodist Senior Choir from Van Wert will perform at The Marsh Auditorium on Sunday, April 1 at 2 p.m. Concert admission is free with the donation of non-perishable food items for our local food pantries.

The Marsh Foundation
1229 Lincoln Highway P.O. Box 150
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

From the executive's desk ...

There are several educational changes that are on the horizon, most of which will take effect in the 2014 - 2015 school year. However, districts are already participating in meetings and professional development opportunities to begin to prepare for these changes.

The first of these educational reforms will be new academic content standards coming in 2014 - 2015. The standards will not be state but national standards in English, language arts and mathematics. The other disciplines will develop new state standards. Teachers are already reviewing and studying cross walks available from the Ohio Department of Education between the present standards and upcoming new ones. Our teachers, along with others in Van Wert and Paulding, attended a one-day conference this fall introducing them to the changes.

Student assessment on state mandated tests is also undergoing a major face-lift. The testing will now take place online. Results will be turned around much quicker - multiple choice questions within seconds and extended responses within days. Districts will have to continue to find ways to have technology access available for assessments. These online testing options might use desktop or laptop computers,



Roger Salisbury

I-pads or smart phones.

In fact, a new version to the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) will be adopted, which has not been decided upon yet. Students will see more and more twenty-first century teaching methodology including more problem solving, creative groups and project work with much collaboration and communication and more use of technology skills. It is predicted by 2018 that 62 percent of the jobs will require a college education. This compares to 1973 when 28 percent of the jobs required a college education. Students will be competing for jobs internationally and globally and thus need to be more equipped educationally.

By 2014 - 2015 changes will also occur for teachers and administrators. Teachers will need to be more fluent in instruction with twenty-first

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—Roger Salisbury
The Marsh School
Principal

century skills and administrators will have to monitor that it is being carried out. Teachers and administrators evaluations will be reviewed 50 percent based on student growth and 50 percent on established teacher and administrator determined skills.

Given our unique student population at The Marsh School, these changes will be very challenging. Being a group home facility, our students come and go all throughout the year, with their discharge dates being centered around their progress in treatment and counseling in addition to consideration of their school performance.

Due to staffing issues, we utilize a "one-room school house" set up where a teacher can have students in grades 3-12 in the same period depending on our census at the

time. We try to group the students whenever possible, but a look at a recent social studies class saw six different subject levels being instructed during the same period. This is typical in our setting.

We also have many behaviors and issues to work through in a given day, as many of our students are working below grade level and are identified as emotionally disturbed special needs students. As students progress in treatment and counseling, many sensitive issues must be addressed and the students often feel vulnerable during these times. While many of our students have been in multiple placements, many others have been removed from their own homes for the first time and this creates increased anxiety as can be expected.

Regardless of the changes, I feel confident that our school is up to meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Our teachers will continue to work hard to provide each student with the best education possible in our setting. We know that we have the support of the entire Marsh Foundation organization, and we are proud to be part of a dedicated and hard working team.

Roger Salisbury

The Marsh Foundation
 School Principal

A commitment to excellence

Celebrating Black History Month

The Marsh Foundation spent the month of February busily celebrating Black History Month. Several activities were planned to involve both staff and youth on campus.

First, this month's educational in-service for the Child & Family Services division, focused on diversity. The presentation was interactive and informative.

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, essays, a screen play, t-shirts and much more. First,

second and third prizes were awarded to 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?' Questions revolved around black history and provided for an entertaining yet educational afternoon. The show involved staff as host and contestant and a panel of six youth representing each of the group homes on campus.



Matt Tuttle, Vance Hall program manager, served as the energetic host for The Marsh rendition of 'Are you Smarter than a Teenager' during our celebration of Black History month.

Marsh Foundation Youth Raises Holiday Turkeys



Marsh Foundation youth, Daniel Mathews, holds a part-time job on campus and also participated in the 4-H program this year by raising turkeys.

Early last summer, Cooper Farms donated five baby turkeys to Marsh Foundation youth Daniel Mathews. Following the summer-long 4-H program, one of the turkeys was used to feed The Marsh Foundation staff and youth at the campus' annual Thanksgiving celebration. Two were sold at the Van Wert County Fair auction and the others were used to supply meat for The Marsh's campus

Christmas gathering.

Mathews spent the summer caring for his turkeys, feeding them and keeping their pen clean. "I checked on them every day, made sure they had feed and water and that their equipment was clean," he said.

The Marsh Foundation allowed him to keep the turkeys in one of the barns on campus and he completed his 4-H project with the help of activities

coordinator Sherry Grone.

Mathews also holds a part-time grounds keeping job on campus, but he wasn't permitted to care for the turkeys when he was on the clock.

"His job responsibilities were separate and he spent his own time after work caring for and raising the turkeys," said Randy Patterson, agriculture/horticulture staff. Mathews dedicated a lot of his time to raising the turkeys. He took his two largest to show at the Van Wert County Fair last September.

He placed third. "I was proud of my accomplishment," he said. "I thought I did pretty well for my first time raising and showing turkeys."

"I'm grateful for The Marsh's help and the opportunities they give me to learn," he said. Mathews said he'd like to continue working with livestock, and might raise hogs next time. He has aspirations to work in the agricultural field following graduation.

Living the Legacy

Continued from page 1 ...

recordings and has commissioned numerous choral anthems which have been published and are sung around the world.

Currently, the Senior Choir is comprised of approximately 42 volunteer and professionally trained singers. Although they are primarily a traditional choir, they often blend spirituals, jazz, contemporary and gospel music and incorporate a variety of instruments to compliment the various styles of music they sing.

For those interested in learning more about the Marsh history and seeing the preserved Homestead, tours will be open to the public following the concert. Ron Bagley, former Marsh Foundation director, will be leading tours at 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tours are free and on a first come, first served basis. They will last approximately 30 minutes.



Clymer Chat

Currently, Clymer Hall has seven girls residing there, with three openings. Recently, successful program completions have allowed girls to step down into a foster care program or reunite with their families.

The girls have anxiously been awaiting the arrival of spring. In recent months, Sherry Grone, activities coordinator, has planned several activities aimed empowering our girls to become strong women. Activities focused on fitness, self-defense and self-esteem.

As an added bonus, Clymer Hall girls, along with other

women staff members were able to attend the Jenna Bush Hager lecture at the Niswonger PAC in January. Two lucky girls also attended a dinner with her beforehand. Hager was in town to speak on; Making a Difference: How the Power of Compassion Changes Lives. The program was enjoyed by all girls in attendance.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall currently has two openings and eight beds full. Transitions and recent completions have provided many learning opportunities for the boys and staff members.

Marsh Hall has already been taking advantage of the nice weather. Many boys have been seen outside riding their bikes and throwing the football. The nice weather has also provided an opportunity for outdoor community service which is a part of their treatment program.

Piano practice has started up again and so have rehearsals for the spring play which will be held in May. The boys have been practicing and some have decided to audition for parts in The Wizard of Oz. Please plan to join us on May 25 and see their performance!



Vance Voice

There are currently ten boys living at Vance Hall and they have been busy.

They were highly involved in the recent celebration of Black History Month. Most of the boys completed projects for the competition. First place and third place were both awarded to Vance Hall youth. The boys were all very proud of their accomplishment.

The boys have also been busy volunteering at the Angels for Animals animal shelter in Lima. The weekly trips have become so popular that they recently had to divide into two groups and start visiting twice per week. The boys spend time with the animals, feed them and help with cleaning the facility. The experience has taught the boys responsibility and respect for animals in a fun environment.

Strategic Planning Process Underway at The Marsh

In recent months, The Marsh Foundation has been undergoing an internal strategic planning process. After studying varying areas of need within the organization, four committees were developed to help strengthen and grow different Marsh Foundation programming and work systems.

The four committees are:

- aftercare/transition/independent living;
- communication;
- performance Improvement/outcomes; and
- foster care.

According to Child & Family Services executive director Kim Mullins, the strategic planning process is critical to the success of the organization. "Each committee has worked extremely hard studying the needs and growth potential. They've created some very detailed and exciting initiatives and action steps," she said. The committees developed initiatives based on internal and external feedback from consumers.

Each committee is made up of a combination of administration and front line staff. Employees not sitting on a commit-

tee have been surveyed for input and suggestions. The initiatives developed work to incorporate all departments and staff levels on campus. The overall goal is to work more effectively and serve children and families in the best, most caring way possible.

Initiatives address things like better communication between departments, recruitment of additional foster families, better utilizing statewide statistical data and extending support to youth who have aged out of or left The Marsh's on-campus programming.

"The strategic planning pro-

cess takes place every couple of years and it gives us an opportunity to take a step back and really look at the areas in which we're doing well and the areas where there is room for improvement," said Mullins. "It is great to have so many staff involved in the process, from brainstorming down to implementation."

The committees are currently compiling all of their initiatives to be presented to The Marsh's Board of Trustees. After approval, work will begin on specific initiatives and action steps later this spring.



Clockwise starting at top left: Last November, an all-day oil painting workshop was held and all students were able to complete an oil painting. Foster parents Bill and Michelle Bird are pictured at The Marsh Christmas party held at Willow Bend. The annual Christmas celebration featured a piano recital and all students performed. The annual Christmas party featured a comedian and ventriloquist for entertainment. The party was enjoyed by all! Tonya Branson, school family teacher, helps a youth with his painting during the oil painting workshop. At Marsh Hall, one youth's family brought in materials so all the boys could decorate and display a Christmas tree in their room.



Know Your Numbers Health Fair for Staff

The Marsh Foundation is committed to promoting good health to the youth on our campus as well as the employees. For the second year in a row, employees will have the opportunity to participate in a 'Know Your Numbers' Health Fair.

The fair is held on campus in The Marsh rec hall in April. Tests include total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure and body mass index.

By providing this opportunity for employees, The Marsh can help staff identify potential health hazards before they pose a large risk. Once they are aware of their individual risks, employees can work to lower them. The fair acts as a preventative method of improving employee health and can in turn lower health care and insurance premium costs.

To say thank you, The Marsh passes these savings on to employees. Those who participate earn a one percent discount on their health insurance premium for the year. That can amount to more than \$160 in savings for family coverage in 2012.



Marsh Foundation Staff Hold Weight Loss Competition

Employees at The Marsh Foundation recently concluded a 15-week weight loss competition on campus. More than 145 pounds were lost by 16 participating staff members.

In the spring of 2011, The Marsh Foundation staff underwent a health assessment provided by the organization's insurance carrier. The informational assessment confirmed that being overweight is a common problem for staff. In an effort to encourage healthier, more active lifestyles, some concerned staff developed a weight loss competition to be held on campus for employees.

Megan Tuttle, program manager at Clymer Hall, headed up the program. "We wanted to promote a healthy lifestyle through exercising and healthy eating," she said. "We really want to be good role models for the youth we serve and this program was a way for us to motivate and support each other in our goals."

The program began in August and included weekly weigh-ins for participants. All staff were invited to participate and those who did were charged an entry fee and small weekly weigh-in fee. Money collected was matched by The Marsh Trustees as an incentive.

Two monetary prizes were given to the top participants.



Jamie Miller (left) and Joy Smith (right) were winners of the recent weight loss competition held at The Marsh Foundation.

School family teacher Joy Smith won first place for losing 16.18 percent of her body weight. Family teacher Jamie Miller won second place for her loss of 15.12 percent. Smith won 70 percent of the money collected and Miller won the other 30 percent.

"Losing weight can be hard when you're doing it alone," said Tuttle. "We wanted to offer a challenge that provided friendly competition but also accountability and motivation by reward."

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation recently hired two new staff members:

- Tammy Rager ~ Family Teacher
- Lori Knapschaefer ~ Family Teacher

Marsh Grown ... *Garden Program Gears Up for Another Successful Year*

The Marsh Foundation 'Marsh Grown' garden program concluded for 2011 with the annual sale of poinsettias. The successful sale generated more than \$600 in profits for the garden crew. This was in addition to the money they earned during the summer sales at the farmer's market in Van Wert. Nearly \$1,500 was raised by those efforts.

The Marsh Foundation feels strongly that the on-campus garden program is a benefit to youth. On a recent survey, a graduating youth had this to say:

"What I learned from garden crew is how to grow and market our produce correctly, and where our feed comes from. And, how much work it takes and how hard work pays off. What I learned from Independent Living group is how life in the real world works; how to manage money, what realistic prices are for like rent and stuff, and how to get through a work day. Both of these things mean to me that I will become a better, healthier, more successful person in life, and that is what I believe I have become going through this experience."

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



2011 was a successful year for the Marsh Grown garden program. The group earned more than \$2,000 through weekly sales at the Van Wert farmer's market and their poinsettia sale in December. The group is gearing up for summer and will hold a spring plant sale in May.

The garden crew grows the vegetables and sells them at the farmer's market for income. The garden focuses on using sustainable and organic growing methods. The youth learn the importance of building living soil to grow healthy food and in turn have healthy people. They learn the importance of growing along with nature. On-site compost is done to illustrate the natural cycle of feeding the soil. A variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers are grown at The

Marsh.

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

The garden crew is already gearing up for summer. The

group will host a spring plant sale in May. That will take place on Saturday, May 19. An assistant will also be needed for the summer. For details, visit the Marsh website at www.marshfoundation.org and click on the Employment tab.

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

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Save the Date - Free CEUs!

Together with the Western Ohio Regional Training Center, The Marsh Foundation will host a training by Heather T. Forbes, LCSW on June 21, 2012. The free event will be held in The Marsh Foundation auditorium and CEUs will be available. You can learn more about Forbes and her latest book; Beyond Consequences, Logic and Control: A Loved Based Approach to Helping Children with Severe Behaviors, at her website www.beyondconsequences.com. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this outstanding training opportunity! More information will follow.

“Like” The Marsh on Facebook!

The Marsh Foundation's official Facebook page is www.facebook.com/MarshFoundation. In addition to a variety of photographs from the past and recent events, the Facebook page features updates on current activities and various things happening at The Marsh Foundation and in the community! Please stop by, like our page and tell your friends!



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

Calendar of Events

Spring 2012

- March 26 - 30 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- March 30, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.
- April 1 - Conclusion of Homeless & Hungry: Becoming a Part of the Solution, including tours of The Marsh Homestead and a concert in the auditorium at 2 p.m. Tours will be held at 3 and 4 p.m. The concert will feature First United Methodist Senior Choir from Van Wert.
- The Marsh School spring play and graduation ceremony will be held on Friday, May 25 beginning at 10 a.m. in the auditorium.



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.