

# The Marsh Messenger

• Spring 2023

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

*Serving children and families since 1922*

## Marsh Foundation Executive Director Receives Statewide Leadership Award

The Ohio Children's Alliance is celebrating its 50th anniversary and recently held their annual conference for childcare professionals throughout the state of Ohio. At the conference, they presented The Steve Plottner Award for Leadership in Child Welfare. Kim Mullins, Executive Director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh Foundation, was the honored recipient.

Formerly known as the Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies, the Ohio Children's Alliance is Ohio's premiere membership organization for community agencies who serve vulnerable children and families. The Alliance presents the award to a person who demonstrates leadership for children, families and the direct care workforce of the Ohio child welfare system. The award aims to honor an advocate who has made outstanding contributions to the field of residential care or other intensive treatment programs, benefiting Ohio's high-risk youth.

Mullins said she is grateful and honored to receive this award. "It is difficult to say thank you when I know there are many others deserving of this award, though I am so grateful and honored," she said. The mission of The Marsh Foundation is to inspire hope,



**Pictured are Lt. Governor Jon Husted and Chief Executive Officer for the Ohio Children's Alliance, Mark Mecum presenting the award to Mullins.**

to teach and to care for children and families. "I have the pleasure of working with an amazing group of people whose life goals are wrapped around this mission," Mullins said. "They truly inspire me."

Mullins began her career as a school music teacher. Her life drastically changed when she and her husband decided to move into a group home to work with teenage girls and their families many years ago. "That experience completely changed my life," she said. "Since then, I have been amazed by the resilience and self-determination of youth and families when they are inspired by people who care."

The Marsh Foundation has

been working hard to inspire youth for more than one hundred years. Their comprehensive treatment programs span the continuum of care to serve community clients, foster children, group home residents and their families. Daily, they strive to make a difference in the lives of Ohio's at-risk youth.

Mullins appreciates the Alliance and the continued support that they offer agencies. "I would like to thank the Alliance for their ongoing support and for the way they advocate for quality services for children and families," she said. "I would also like to thank my husband David for a lifetime of unwavering support and love."



## 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

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## From the Executive's desk ...

Spring on The Marsh Foundation campus is beautiful. The trees are beginning to bloom; flowers begin to show their color, grass grows so fast it is difficult for the staff to keep up. Soon it will be warm and kids will be out of school. With this new season begins the 2023 maintenance staff projects for the Marsh campus.

Logan Gross, Maintenance Supervisor, and his team; Randy Patterson, Eric Price, Dan Tinnel, and Bill Wiechart will begin working on the projects for 2023. The current year's maintenance projects include the following: the replacement of water lines and sanitary sewer lines in the administration building, replacement of the copper lines to black pipe areas, routine maintenance checks, cleaning of the heating and air conditioning units in the group homes and administration building, daily repair of doors, windows, electrical and glass around campus and the selection and planting of trees to add to The Marsh campus.

The long-term Capital Improvement Projects for the Campus include the construction of an indoor arena for



Jeff Grothouse

our kids to enjoy in conjunction with their clinical services. This would allow equine assisted learning and therapy to be incorporated into the youth's treatment on a year round basis. The summer of 2022 included an expansion of the traditional horse program to Equine Therapy. The program proved to be a valuable tool for the treatment of our youth. This summer's program will provide valuable information on the treatment, financial stability and staffing for this new therapeutic intervention that Marsh will add to their menagerie of services.

The new gymnasium and weight room provides our

*"With the endowment of George H. Marsh and the vision of the Trustees, Executive Directors and staff, this mission will be accomplished for the next 100 years."*

- Jeff Grothouse  
Executive Secretary &  
Treasurer

students with physical activities, Marsh was unable to provide previously. The joy on these boys faces playing basketball, pickle ball, and lifting weights is inspiring. The staff also uses the facilities for their own personal health.

The Marsh Foundation is divided into three separate divisions contributing to achieve the same goal...taking care of children and families. The residential staff care for the day-to-day needs, home, transportation, food, time, praise and nurturing of the children. School staff meet the students' educational needs. The business office provides support for the campus,

such as paying the bills, payroll, maintenance issues, food preparation, and cleanliness. These three separate divisions provide their own budgets to follow for The Marsh fiscal year ending in June. Once the individual budgets are approved, the entire budget comes together to form The Marsh Foundation income and expense budget.

The Marsh has survived 100 years. Congratulations to the many past staff, supervisors, directors, and Trustees who have made this happen. According to the vision 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, Executive Directors, and Staff this mission will be accomplished for the next 100 years.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and thank all current Marsh Foundation Trustees, staff, employees and teachers for their professionalism and dedication to the mission of George H. Marsh.

Jeff M. Grothouse  
Executive Secretary &  
Treasurer

A commitment to excellence

## Marsh Foundation Wellness Case Manager Making Strides

The mission of The Marsh Foundation is to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families. By incorporating innovative strategies and services, this mission continues to serve as the foundational component for the continuum of care that The Marsh provides. As The Marsh Foundation continues to evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of children and families, a natural evaluation of treatment needs was recently assessed. To better meet the social-emotional needs of youth receiving clinical services, an interdepartmental position of Wellness Case Manager was developed. Abigail Neville was recently promoted to Wellness Case Manager. Her unique skill set in fitness and equine-assisted learning is currently being utilized to enhance not only the clinical division but the school as well.

Over the past several months, she and two youth trained and prepared for a



**Marsh's Wellness Case Manager Abby Neville joined forces with two youth and placed third in the recent CrossFit "Get Tanked" competition in Tiffin, Ohio.**

CrossFit competition. Neville's certification as a CrossFit Level 1 trainer, Bergener Weightlifting Level 1 and in CrossFit Kids was integral in teaching these youth valuable skill sets such as teamwork, perseverance and self-worth. With Neville's guidance, and support, the trio was able to place third at the "Get

Tanked" CrossFit competition in Tiffin, Ohio. "The process of preparing for this competition has been a journey in and of itself and I believe that it has given the boys an opportunity to work towards a substantial goal," said Neville. "Reaching this goal has given them a sense of pride and accomplishment which will help them as they face challenges in the future." Neville takes an individualized

approach to teaching youth skills based on their ability and needs. She utilizes various methods and physical activities tailored to specific youths to address issues they may be struggling with. Neville has been able to use her unique skill set to teach youth self-regulation and problem-solving techniques. Additionally, topics Neville works on with the youth are managing emotions, communication, spatial awareness and goal setting.

Over the past year, Neville and the rest of the clinical team have been working closely with The Marsh Foundation School. In this collaborative effort, the two divisions have developed innovative ways to teach the skills above during the school day. Through classroom activities, field trips, community service projects, physical education and other educational forums, this initiative has highlighted the significant growth the youth have made physically, behaviorally and academically. Neville believes, "The cohesiveness of the clinical, residential and school

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### Need to Make a Referral?



**THE MARSH**  
FOUNDATION

**Residential/Group Home Referrals:** Call Kelly at 419.238.1695 ext. 360 or [kgross@marshfoundation.org](mailto:kgross@marshfoundation.org)

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

**After Hours/Emergency:** 419.605.8056

[fostercarereferrals@marshfoundation.org](mailto:fostercarereferrals@marshfoundation.org)

### New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Crista Markward      Family Teacher
- Christopher Elder-      Family Teacher
- Austin Eustler      Family Teacher
- Cory Pinson      Overnight Family Teacher
- Jessie Lewis      Family Teacher



## Marsh Foundation Utilizes Animal Assisted Therapy within Clinical Division

The Marsh Foundation is constantly exploring new methods of therapy and educating its clinicians on ways in which they can better serve their clients. Many of these clients have unique needs that require more innovative approaches to treatment.

Recently, clinician Elspeth McCoy and her dog, became certified in Animal Assisted Therapy. Already a counselor with a master's degree in social work and an LISW license, McCoy felt that incorporating dogs into her work might be an effective way to reach some of the boys she was working with.

Working with traumatized youth can be intense and overwhelming. The goal McCoy has when incorporating animals, is to calm and comfort the youth. "The overall goal is assist kids with becoming more comfortable sharing difficult thoughts and feelings and there has been a lot of research that shows that animals can really aid in this process," McCoy said. "Many of my clients have experienced traumatic events and I have seen how the dogs can be very calm-

ing to the kids when processing these things," she added.

Both McCoy and her dogs had to go through classes and a certification process. After multiple training classes, a therapy dog test was administered by Pet Partners to officially certify them. "I also had to do a lot of work with them out in the community to prepare to pass the test," McCoy said.

Another counselor on campus is certified in Equine Assisted Learning and facilitated a therapy program throughout the summer using horses. The clinicians are seeing positive results from the new programming options. "I have seen kids be much more engaged in the session as well as look forward to sessions more knowing they'll get to spend time with a dog," McCoy said. "One of my dogs, Getty, does very well in group counseling with the kids. He works his way around the circle of kids for a full hour stopping and spending time with each one. I have seen that this has helped bring a more calming atmosphere to the groups."



Counselor Elspeth McCoy is pictured with her dog, Getty, who works with her at The Marsh Foundation providing Animal Assisted Therapy.

### *Wellness Case Manager .... continued from page 3*

divisions has been better than ever and has offered a new level of support in focusing on our children's individualized goals." As The Marsh continues to support Neville in the newly implemented Wellness Case Management position, a continued focus

on equine assisted learning and fitness will ensue. With the implementation of this new position paired with Neville's expertise this will provide multiple opportunities for growth and expansion to reach more children. "We have experienced significant

success through our equine and fitness initiatives," Neville said. "We hope to continue to grow these programs to serve more children in our community."





Summer is here and the boys kicked it off with some fun time at the pond. The annual summer horse program is about to start and the boys are becoming acquainted with the animals. The Marsh hosted Kindergartners from Lincolnview as part of their farm day field trip. Students and staff participated in an Earth Day activity in April and cleaned up trash along Stripe and Marsh Roads. The large task took a lot of teamwork to accomplish. Thank you to the Davis Family for funding a reward pizza party! Who is the best egg hatcher? There was a friendly sibling competition on campus this spring with Mr. Longstreth and Mrs. Loser both incubated eggs and hatched baby chicks. Students had the opportunity to learn about the dairy industry earlier this week on a field trip.





## Marsh Foundation Celebrates Foster Care Month

The month of May is National Foster Month. The Marsh Foundation, along with organizations across the nation, take the opportunity in May to thank those families who selflessly give to help children and families in need. In the United States, there are 391,000 children in foster care, according to the U.S. Children's Bureau. Foster families make a tremendous difference in the lives of these children.

"Being a foster parent offers a child a safe place to live during a time in their life which is so uncertain," said Marsh Foundation Foster Care Consultant Jennifer Meyer. "It gives a child the chance to develop healthy relationships, build trust and provides the opportunity to learn important life skills."

According to Meyer, a foster home provides safety and security. "When a child comes to a foster home, they know they will have their basic needs met and they know they are safe from the circumstances that brought them into the foster care system," she



The Marsh recently honored six foster families for reaching the five-year milestone with the organization. Together, they have served 54 children.

said. Foster parents should never underestimate the role they play in a child's story.

Although it is difficult to adequately thank foster families for their sacrifice and dedication, The Marsh facilitates events throughout the year to show appreciation. This month, there

will be a picnic including food and games for all the families. Those foster families who are celebrating five years with The Marsh will receive a plaque in recognition of their tenure, a pizza party and their choice of a family outing event.

"Here at The Marsh, we treat

our foster families as extensions of our own families," Meyer said. "We love to recognize and acknowledge them and celebrate how they positively impact children's lives." Those interested in learning about fostering should call 419.238.KIDS for more information.

### *Marsh Continues Annual Horse Program With Equine Assisted Therapy*

Over the past year, clinicians at The Marsh Foundation had the opportunity to go through the certification process in equine assisted learning and/or equine assisted psychotherapy. Equine assisted therapy incorporates a variety of treatments that involve activities with horses to assist in the promotion of physical and mental health for troubled youth. This certification will allow therapists, case managers and equine

personnel to work together to provide an enriched therapeutic learning experience for the boys on campus.

With this addition to The Marsh's summer horse program, it will provide a hands-on experience for the youth to showcase what they have been learning in treatment and apply it in the arena. As a result, the youth learned complex communication skills, "real-time" problem solving techniques and

how to effectively work as a team. "Watching the kids take everything they had been learning and apply it in a different arena was priceless, stated clinical supervisor Annette Herrmann. "The pride that the kids had in what they had accomplished was truly unmatched."

Equine assisted learning teaches youth how to effectively manage their emotions and behavioral responses.



## Clymer Chat

This school year was a great success for all of the students on campus. Several fun activities were planned by the student council throughout the spring. Spirit Week included a beach day, dress in green day, dress as your favorite book character and a coffee bar among other activities. Recently, they also organized a pond day. Hamburgers and hotdogs were grilled, volleyball was played and fun was had by all.

The student council has been a welcome addition to the programming at The Marsh. It promotes inclusivity, teaches leadership and empowers the students. Recently, two boys were running for Student Council President and a debate was held in the auditorium. It was a great opportunity for them to practice public speaking skills as well as advocate for themselves and things they would like to see at The Marsh School.



## Marsh Matters

The arrival of spring has been met with much excitement from the boys at Marsh Hall. They have been spotted frequently outside, shooting hoops and taking walks.

Springtime means that the IDL garden work will soon begin. Many of the boys are looking forward to participating in the Marsh Grown garden program this spring and summer. The group planned and hosted their annual spring plant sale recently. The summer program will culminate with a farmer's market on campus, which is a great teaching opportunity for all.

One Marsh Hall youth recently hosted a 28-day push up challenge for students and staff. There were several levels, beginner all the way up to elite. For the elite level, participants were challenged to do a total of 5,600 push ups throughout the 4 weeks. The event created some friendly competition between youth and the staff who participated.



## Vance Voice

The boys at Vance Hall had a great school year and are looking forward to the summer months. One of the school year highlights for them, like everyone on campus, was receiving Christmas gifts from Project Believe.

Now, they have been gearing up for summer and looking forward to evenings fishing at the pond or taking bike rides around campus.

One Vance Hall youth has a passion for helping animals and organized a fundraiser on campus to benefit the Van Wert Humane Society. He was able to collect and donate more than \$200 worth of supplies to the organization. The Marsh is proud of their students who take initiative and demonstrate their leadership skills, not only on campus but also in the community. This is a great example of the positive attributes we are instilling in those we serve.

If you are interested in making a referral, please contact Kelly Gross at 419.238.1695 ext. 360.

# Welcome Summer!

The Marsh Foundation  
1229 Lincoln Highway  
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Van Wert, Ohio 45891

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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

June 2023 - November 2023

- Tuesday, June 6 - Community Safety Event at the Foster Care Office, 1151 Westwood Drive.
- The 2023-24 school year will begin at The Marsh Foundation School on Thursday, August 17.
- The Marsh Foundation School will not be in session and the CFS and Business offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 4 for Labor Day.
- The Marsh CFS and Business offices will be closed Nov. 23 and 24 for the Thanksgiving holiday and The Marsh School will not be in session.



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).