

The Marsh Messenger

• Summer 2010 • www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Students Graduate from The Marsh

The annual spring celebration was recently held at The Marsh Foundation. This day is a very special one for the students, staff and trustees of The Marsh. The day included several festivities, most notably, four Marsh Foundation students earned their high school diplomas.

All three Marsh Foundation trustees, Gerald Thatcher, Bob Gamble and Gary Corcoran were on hand for the celebration. In addition, recently retired trustees Wally Purmort and Don Sutton also attended. During the celebration, Sutton was honored for his retirement over this past winter. After spending some time in Florida, this was his first trip back to The Marsh campus.

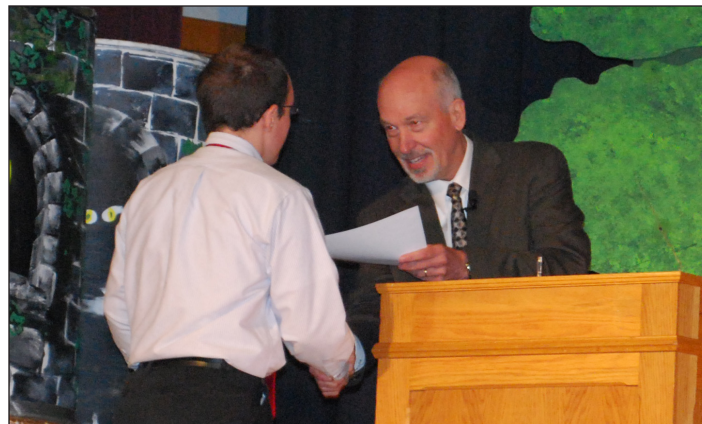
Sutton was presented with a plaque honoring his 22 years of service to the organization. He has now been named an Honorary Trustee of The Marsh Foundation in gratitude for his dedication over the past two decades.

The students of The Marsh worked very hard in preparation

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Above: Roy is recognized and receives his high school diploma during the spring celebration. Below: A student receives his academic certificates during the awards ceremony.



THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

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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

2010 Alumni Reunion Right Around the Corner

By now, all alumni should have received their invitation to the alumni reunion this summer. The reunion will be held the weekend of August 7 and 8.

Included in the invitation was an RSVP postcard which is due back by July 15. Please complete and return it as soon as possible!

There will be a Saturday evening meal as well as a large meal on Sunday afternoon. The alumni meeting and presentations

from trustees and executive staff will be held on Sunday afternoon in the auditorium.

Group photos will be taken and a large open house is planned for Sunday afternoon as well.

The Marsh will be showcasing its past, present and future with interactive activities throughout the campus. The Marsh staff and youth will be involved with presenting and engaging alumni in demonstrations and

presentations. There will be things to do and see at each renovated group home, the garden, greenhouse, administration building and farm.

In addition, The Marsh will unveil a new video showcasing the history and services of The Marsh Foundation.

You won't want to miss this weekend full of fun, great company and good food. We hope to see you here in August!

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

From the executive's desk ...

We have just finished the 2009-2010 school year, culminated by the awarding of diplomas to four students on May 28 during the spring celebration. Our spring celebration is usually a great day, and this year was no different. We wish Eric, Annie, Thomas, and Roy well in all their future endeavors. In addition to their diplomas, these four graduating seniors received \$350, with the promise of receiving another \$350 in six months if they are doing well.

We also are conducting a six week summer school for our students. Classes are held Monday through Thursday. This summer the students will be studying reading, art, music and math. The students also will be working with Sherry Grone during class time in the garden and greenhouse. Summer school is always a fun time for staff and students. By design, the workload is typically less intense than the regular school year, and the more relaxed atmosphere lends itself to bonding between the instructional staff and students. Summer school will end July 15 and a picnic at the pond honoring two graduating students, Libby and Christina, will be held July 14. Summer school offers remediation and provides the opportunity to earn much needed credits. We also will be taking a school wide field trip to the Toledo Zoo on July 8.

Our teachers face some definite challenges during the course of the school year. Being a treatment facility,



Roger Salisbury

"Fortunately, all departments of The Marsh Foundation work well together."

—Roger Salisbury

students come and go throughout the year with little warning. We group our students by group home, meaning for instance, that all of the boys living in Vance Hall are together during the school day. While this has many advantages, it can make instruction difficult when we have a 3-12 grade range.

Instruction is individualized to the students' ability and grade level, similar to an old fashioned one room school house. We work very closely with the counselors and group homes, trying to stay in touch with the issues that each student is facing. As students work through serious and intense issues, behaviors often begin to escalate during these "break-through" times. These times definitely call for a team approach in order for the child

to grow. Fortunately all departments of The Marsh Foundation work well together.

Most of our students reside on The Marsh Foundation Campus. We do enroll a limited number of day students, however. Some of the day students are referred from Lincolnview, while others are former campus students who have moved back into the community. It is our goal for all of these students to eventually transition back to their regular school building.

As a school, we also often must work with the student's "district of residence." When a student is admitted from another school district, we must communicate with the student's home district. We send for school records. Then Lincolnview's central office will notify the home district that they will be charging tuition to the home district. This tuition in turn is used to offset our teacher's salaries. Also, if a student receives special education services, I must involve the home district in the IEP process. There is much work and communication that goes on behind the scenes when a student is enrolled in The Marsh School.

We have a very cooperative and caring staff at The Marsh Foundation, and I remain proud to be part of the Marsh Team.

Roger Salisbury

The Marsh Foundation
School Principal



Above: The Marsh Foundation School students put on a musical production of *The Wizard of Oz* during the annual spring celebration. Below: Trustee Gerald Thatcher congratulates a student on her awards during the awards ceremony.



A commitment to excellence



Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently full with 10 girls. Last month, as a result of one successful completion, a youth moved into the Independent Living Foster Care Program. A new youth was admitted soon after, bringing the home to full capacity.

The girls at Clymer have been busy finishing up the academic school year, practicing for the play and getting ready for summer school.

One youth in the home competed on the Lincolnview Junior High Track Team. She had a successful season and even

broke a school record. Her peers were very excited for her accomplishments.

The girls in Clymer Hall also worked hard to raise money for The Marsh's Relay for Life team. They sold candy bars on campus and in the community and were able to raise \$900 for the team.



Marsh Matters

The boys at Marsh Hall have had a very busy spring. Currently, there are two openings with eight boys living in the home.

These boys also actively raised money for the Marsh's Relay for Life team. They sold

pinwheels as a fundraiser. They also used the pinwheels to make a garden at Jubilee Park in honor of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. The project was just one of many community service activities in which the boys have been involved.

This spring, the house also took a fun trip to the Newport Aquarium near Cincinnati. It was a trip enjoyed by all!

One youth in Marsh Hall recently completed his empathy project. He baked pies for all of the Marsh Foster Parents as a way to say thank you for what they do for kids.



Vance Voice

There are currently nine boys living at Vance Hall, leaving one opening at this time. The boys have been busy with several activities and projects.

They spent a lot of time during their spring break from classes working on the nature trail and area on campus. They also visited Camp Clay and spent time on the climbing wall and had a picnic.

The boys are gearing up for summer. Again this year, some youth from Vance Hall will be participating in the 4-H program and will have projects at The Van Wert County Fair.

Two youth from the Vance Hall program received their high school diploma at the recent Spring Celebration. Both youth had been part of The Marsh's Program for several years. Congratulations boys!

Hands On: *Making a Difference One Day at a Time*

Admittedly, working with troubled youth isn't the easiest job in the world. It takes dedication, patience, understanding and persistence.

Matt Tuttle, the program manager at Vance Hall, knows that and he and his staff embrace it.

Youth at The Marsh can struggle with a multitude of things. They often have trouble accepting consequences, respecting adults, forming relationships with peers and so on.

Many of the youth also struggle in school and with their academics. One such youth who recently went through the

program at Vance Hall had a time where he refused to do his homework. *Randy** would lay his head down on the table and refuse to complete his assignments.

Obviously, this became a point of frustration for him, his teachers, parents, treatment team and family teachers. So, Tuttle got creative.

While sitting at the table one day when Randy was refusing to complete his homework, Tuttle pulled a crossword puzzle out of his stack of assignments and started reading through it. Out loud, he easily completed the first question. "Oh, that's

easy, I know that one," he said.

Tuttle started to struggle on the next question. "Hmm, that's tough," he said. Then, he turned to Randy. "Do you think you could help me with this one?" Randy offered the answer.

Tuttle immediately gave him a lot of praise and encouragement, issuing positive points for helping with the answer. Again, there was a difficult question and Tuttle asked Randy for help. He again offered the answer and the praise and positive points continued.

"By taking away the power struggle I was able to get the

youth to engage and eventually ask for help," said Tuttle.

By the end of the interaction, Randy was completing the puzzle and asking for help when he needed it. He also went on to complete the rest of the assignments in his stack.

According to Tuttle, he saw a huge turn around in the issue Randy had with homework from that point on. "Long term homework was no longer an issue. We went eight months before his discharge without having homework issues," he said. "He can now ask for help and be successful."

**The youth's name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.*

Greene County Children's Services Evaluates The Marsh

The Marsh Foundation contracts with and provides services to many agencies throughout the State of Ohio. Greene County Children's Services is one of those agencies. Youth from that county are currently receiving group home and foster care services from The Marsh Foundation.

Greene County is required to conduct an annual evaluation of each facility that they contract with. The Marsh recently received a copy of that annual evaluation.

"We typically send a copy of the evaluation to the facility," said Chad King, foster care specialist with Greene County. "It can be a pat on the back, or a useful tool to talk about issues that there may be," he said.

In the case of The Marsh, it was a pat on the back. "We have a really good working relationship with The Marsh and that is the reason why the evaluation was the way it was," said King. Greene County rated The Marsh a 4 (good work) or 5

"The Marsh definitely provides quality placement options for our children and we look forward to continuing this positive working relationship."

—Chad King

Greene County Children's Services

(outstanding) on all areas of the evaluation. Areas evaluated included productivity, job knowledge, cooperation, judgment, communication skills and reliability.

"We are very proud of the work we do here at The Marsh Foundation," said the executive director of The Marsh Foundation's Child and Family Services, Kim Mullins. "It was very gratifying to receive this evaluation and be acknowledged for our staff's hard work and commitment."

The completion of the evaluation is a combined effort on the part of Greene County caseworkers and foster care specialists. The foster care specialists

complete the form after gaining feedback from the various staff members who work with The Marsh.

King noted the role that Tim Dull, The Marsh's intake and recruitment director, plays in ensuring a strong working relationship between the two agencies. "Tim is excellent at providing timely, quality placement options for the children of our county. We appreciate his prompt return of phone calls and willingness to address concerns of clients as they arise," King said.

The evaluation indicated that all four of the contract's goals are being met. This includes things like providing

timely responses for areas of concern or referrals, returning financial agreements within three business days, consistently providing competitive per diem rates and consistently providing quality case management services as evidenced by weekly or monthly client visits and prompt submissions of all reports.

"We take our work with youth very seriously," said Mullins. "We work hard to make sure each youth has his or her individual needs met."

Mullins added that strong working relationships with referring counties are important. "We see better results with the youth in treatment when their home counties take an active role and work closely with us on treatment planning."

"We enjoy working with The Marsh Foundation and its staff," said King. "The Marsh definitely provides quality placement options for our children and we look forward to continuing this positive working relationship."

Students Graduate From The Marsh

..... Continued from page 1

for the spring celebration. The day included piano recitals as well as a musical production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Following the play, more than 40 students were honored for their accomplishments throughout the year. Many of the students' friends and families, as well as community members attended the awards ceremony.

The ceremony concluded

with the presentation of four high school diplomas. The students were recognized for their hard work by school principal, Roger Salisbury. Two more students are expected to earn their diplomas after their completion of summer school in July.

The day concluded with a luncheon in the school cafeteria for students, staff, trustees, friends and family. A wonderful day was had by all.

Right: More than 40 students were recognized for their accomplishments during the past school year during the recent spring celebration.





The Marsh Foundation youth have been busy with several activities! Clockwise from top left: Youth spent spring break busy with several activities, including time at Camp Clay on the climbing wall. Recently, the youth participated in a talent show. In between talent acts, youth had the opportunity to compete in 'Minute to Win it' type challenges like undoing a knot behind their back. Following the spring play and awards festivities, the youth had the chance to go outside for a fun, campus-wide kickball game. All students at The Marsh School received awards recognizing their hard work throughout the year during the annual spring celebration in May. The youth at Marsh Hall created a pinwheel garden at Jubilee Park in April to honor National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Staff Spotlight

Meet Laura Beckett-Avery

Laura Beckett-Avery has worked at The Marsh Foundation for the past 11 years in various capacities. She started as a family teacher in Clymer Hall, moved to school family teacher and now is a CPST, or community psychiatric support treatment worker.

She is currently working on her master's degree in social work at The Ohio State University. Four more classes and she'll obtain her degree. She already holds an associate's degree in human services and a bachelor's in addiction studies. "I wanted to get my master's degree so that I could counsel," Beckett-Avery said.

Now, as a CPST, most of her responsibilities revolve around skill building. She meets with youth individually on a weekly basis. Together they work on building skills to prepare them for when they go back home, to foster care or out on their own.

As CPST, her responsibilities include making sure all off-site treatment team members are aware and kept up to date with youth progress. This includes arranging and leading monthly treatment team meetings for each of her clients.

Because of her current school work, she's recently obtained a social work training license. She facilitates and co-facilitates various counseling groups on campus.

Beckett-Avery works frequently with the independent living group at The Marsh. These youth are specifically working on skills that will help them live on their own in the near future. Together with activities coordinator, Sherry Grone, she works with the garden crew and arranges on-campus summer jobs for youth. These on-campus jobs are an important step for youth preparing to have a job in the community.

According to Beckett-Avery, she does a lot of research. "I try to advocate for each client and make sure that they have what they need when they leave here," she said. This includes things like transitional housing, college visits, mental health services and much more. "We try to do anything we can to help bridge that gap between here and the adult world."

She admits that there is a big difference between her earlier responsibilities as a family teacher and now as a CPST, although both are equally important. As a family teacher, she said, it was easier to see immediate change in behavior. Now, she sees the youth once a week and doesn't necessarily see that immediate change. However, she said, it's the quality of time spent with youth that outweighs the quantity. She feels that the one-on-one time she spends



Laura Beckett-Avery is a CPST worker at The Marsh Foundation. She works one-on-one with youth to help them be successful after they leave The Marsh.

with youth is very important for their treatment and progress.

"My favorite part of working at The Marsh is really seeing the kids progress," she said. "Comparing and contrasting them from the time they come here until when they leave and seeing what they've accomplished and overcome is rewarding."

Beckett-Avery said she feels good about the work she does here and feels as though she's seen a lot of success stories. "Sometimes it's small suc-

cesses, but I think most of the kids have gained knowledge and new insight from being here."

In addition to taking classes and finishing her degree, Beckett-Avery enjoys photography, scrapbooking and facebooking in her free time. She also enjoys supporting her kids in their activities. She is married to Damon and they have two children, Destiny, 11 and Chase, 5. Destiny participates in dance, soccer, band and volleyball.

Chase wrestles and plays soccer.

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation recently hired three new family teachers to work with youth in the group homes on campus. They are:

- Jeremy Rode
- Melissa Stemen
- Lisa Washam

A Day in the Life of ... *a Marsh Hall family teacher*

There is no typical day in the life of a family teacher at The Marsh Foundation. Because of their role to provide direct care and consistent implementation of a behavior plan for youth, their days can vary widely.

Ben Marsee has been a family teacher at Marsh Hall for the past two years and feels he has learned a lot in that time. Generally, family teachers work four long days during the week. "At first, I wasn't confident and didn't feel like I was very good at my job, so the days seemed long," he said. After getting more experience and getting a better handle on the routine, he said the days go much quicker.

During the school day, he works on paperwork and errands. He's responsible for tracking the spending budget at the house and the allowance program for the youth. So, he spends time on the computer recording receipts and balancing budgets. He and the other family teachers also run errands for medications, doctor appointments and other supplies.

When the youth are home from school, Marsee and the other family teachers are completely responsible for their care. The Marsh Foundation utilizes concepts from the Teaching Family Model, a behavioral model which is known for its organized approach to providing

humane, effective and individualized services.

"The Teaching Family Model skills take practice," said Marsee. He said when he was trained he was told it would take at least a year until he really had complete confidence with the skills. "I didn't believe it, but it was true, I felt way more confident after a year than even I did after six months," he said.

Marsee admits that it is tough to work with the youth during an extreme emotional outburst. "The reward comes when they are calm and you see that they understand and have made some progress."

Because of his 'less than ideal' childhood, Marsee thought he would like to work with youth at The Marsh. Kathleen Davis, director of residential services, said Marsee displayed some good characteristics at his interview. "His passion for helping youth was evident in every aspect. His calm demeanor, balanced with the understanding of the need for structure in a child's life, showed us that he possessed the skills to become a great family teacher," she said.

"I've used my experiences growing up to relate to the youth here," he said. "Giving them realistic reasons to make good choices seems to cause them to have the 'a-ha' moments." Marsee said it all comes down to forming



Marsee talks with a youth in the cafeteria and congratulates him on the success he's had during this school year.

relationships with the youth.

"I try to let them see that I'm a real, normal person," Marsee said. He plays basketball with them, participates in activities and even works with them when they are cleaning or doing community service.

"Sometimes it's a struggle, but I just try to make them feel wanted and cared for, not just like I'm a disciplinarian who takes privileges away," he said.

Marsee said that he's learned a lot over the past two years too. "I'm constantly learning new ways to relate to kids

and their different issues." And, he's learned to have a more positive outlook on life. "I've learned empathy while trying to teach it, and learned that life could always be worse," he said.

Respect has also played a large role in his position as a family teacher. "I show them respect and then they're more likely to show it to me in return." Having a youth say thank you, Marsee said, is the most rewarding.

"Helping a kid grow and understand and seeing them become happy and healthy again is a great feeling."

Joke Corner

Q: What did the candle say to the light switch?

A: Can we go out tonight?

Submitted by Marsh Hall youth.



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Marsh Foundation Hosts Successful Relay for Life

The Marsh Foundation was once again proud to host the Relay for Life on campus. Despite less than ideal weather, this year's event was a success.

The Marsh Foundation's team raised more than \$2,000 for the fundraiser. The team held a spaghetti luncheon, sold cookies, donated a gift basket for auction, took donations and also raised money by selling luminaries in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Several hundred people from the community visited The Marsh campus that weekend. The Marsh is proud to be an active member of the Van Wert community!



THE MARSH
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Visit The Marsh
Foundation
website at:

www.marshfoundation.org

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- The campus' summer equestrian program will run from May 25 - August 20.
- The Marsh Foundation Summer School will run from June 7 - July 15.
- The Marsh Foundation School will visit the Toledo Zoo on July 8.
- The Marsh Foundation 2010 Alumni Reunion will be held on campus on August 7 and 8.
- The annual horse show will be held on August 13.
- The Marsh Youth will attend a Fort Wayne Tincaps baseball game on August 21.
- The first day of school for the 2010-11 school year will be August 25.



For more information about any event, visit www.marshfoundation.org.

Attention Marsh Foundation Alumni

Are you an alumni 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.