

The Marsh Messenger

• Summer 2011 • www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Family with Ties to The Marsh Foundation Return for Service

Over the Easter weekend, a family now living in Charlotte, NC returned to Van Wert to give back to an organization that helped their own family many years ago. In the 1940s Shirley Haight came to live at The Marsh. In 2011, her daughter Cindy Henderson and grandson Ian returned with the hope of giving back.

Although Haight passed away in 1988, Henderson never forgot how much The Marsh had meant to her. "Mom always talked very positive about The Marsh and often told us stories about living here," she said. So, when it came time for her 16-year-old son to pick a spring service project for school, she thought The Marsh would provide a wonderful opportunity.



Over Easter weekend, the family of Shirley Haight traveled to The Marsh to sponsor an Easter egg hunt for the youth. Those who attended were (l to r): Lori Linser, Ian Henderson, Cindy Henderson, Cathy and Don Anderson.

Ian has already done several service projects as part of his private education, but he said he has enjoyed The Marsh the most. "I've had a lot of fun and it's much more family oriented here," he said, comparing it to some of his past projects. Ian planned an Easter egg hunt for the youth on campus as well as provided baskets for everyone that included candy, gift cards and other treats.

Following the hunt on Saturday afternoon, the youth presented Ian with a picture of his grandmother and voiced their thanks. "We got so much more out of this than them," Cindy Henderson said.

The Hendersons were also

joined in Van Wert by Cindy's sister Lori Linser, and sister and brother-in-law Cathy and Don Anderson. The family had the opportunity to see the campus on Friday evening and was provided a tour of the historic Homestead. They also had dinner and spent some free time with the boys at Marsh Hall. "It was a good time," said Ian Henderson. "We got a great tour of the house, I enjoyed dinner and we had time to play some video games together."

According to Cindy, the family definitely enjoyed their time at The Marsh. "We hate to leave," she said. "But, we will definitely be back."



Youth at The Marsh presented Ian with a picture of his grandmother that they all signed in appreciation during his visit to campus.



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

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From the executive's desk ...

If you are a Midwest or East Coast resident, I for-one hope you forget the long cold wet winter and the excessive amount of ice and snow it brought. Now, Mother Nature has provided us with wet and cool months for April and May. But, it is spring on The Marsh Foundation campus. The trees are beginning to bloom; flowers are showing their color and grass is growing so fast it is difficult for the staff to keep up. With this new season also begins the 2011 maintenance staff projects at The Marsh.

The current year's maintenance projects include the following: replacement of insulation on water lines in the group homes and administration building; clean, deodorize, change filters and do a maintenance check on the heat and air units in the group homes and administration building; replace or repair the storm water sewers, drainage around the building, sidewalks and landscaping at The Marsh Homestead; eliminate water in the tunnel system on campus; improve The Marsh exterior sign; repair the campus sidewalks; paint the exteriors of The Marsh warehouse building and plant trees on campus.

The long-term capital improvement projects for the campus include the



Jeff Grothouse

"According to the mission of the Marsh Foundation ... this campus must employ quality compassionate staff, continue to care for the campus grounds and seek out ways to help children and families."

—Jeffrey Grothouse

construction of a gymnasium for our kids to enjoy physical exercise activities; an elevator in the administration building to link the basement, first and second floors and replacement or restoration of the blacktop driveways on the north and south side of Lincoln Highway.

A question I am frequently asked is, 'How much does the endowment contribute to the functions of The Marsh Foundation?' The Marsh Foundation is divided into three separate divisions contributing to achieve the same goal ... taking care of children and families.

The residential staff cares for the day-to-day needs, home, transportation, food, time and praise, nurturing or discipline of the children.

The school staff provides the students their educational needs.

The business office staff provides the 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 June 30. Once the individual budgets are approved, the entire budget comes together to form The Marsh Foundation Income & Expense Budget.

Currently, the investment portfolio of George H. Marsh provides approximately 36 percent of the income. The leases, farm ground and other farm incomes provide approximately 16 percent of the income. The Residential Services, Clinical and

Foster Care incomes from State, County and Local governmental assistance and Medicaid provides the other 48 percent of income needed to provide the children with quality, professional and safe care. The breakdown of expense percentages by division are approximately Business Office 21 percent, School 7 percent and Residential Services, Clinical & Foster Care 72 percent.

According to 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 Board of Trustees, directors and staff, this mission will be accomplished for many, many years to come.

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

Jeffrey M. Grothouse
The Marsh Foundation
Executive Secretary & Treasurer

A commitment to excellence

Living The Legacy: *Spring Program a Huge Success*

In April, The Voices of Unity Youth Choir performed at The Marsh Foundation. The internationally recognized choir capped off a month-long program on The Marsh campus entitled; Homeless and Hungry: Becoming Part of the Solution.

The Choir performed a variety of songs for more than an hour. They incorporated several genres of music as well as testimonials about their own experiences. The group consists of youth ages 6 – 19 from the Fort Wayne, Ind. area, many of whom are underprivileged. It is under the umbrella of the Unity Performing Arts Foundation, Inc. which provides training in dance, public speaking and other arts in addition to choral instruction.

The founder and director, Marshall White, prides himself on not only leading the choir, but being a life coach as well. Many of his messages hit home with The Marsh Foundation youth in the audience. He encouraged youth who may be struggling or at a rough point in their lives, to focus on improving the choices they make. "Life is

what you make it," he said.

In July, 2010, Voices of Unity was invited to represent the United States of America, competing at the highest level, in the 6th World Choir Games in Shaoxing, China. The World Choir Games is the largest choir competition in the world and over 400 choirs, comprised of 27,000 singers from 80 countries competed in various categories. VOU won two gold medals, one in the popular choral music category and one in the gospel and spiritual category, and were also named champions in the gospel and spiritual category.

Admission to the concert was free, with the donation of non-perishable food items. All items collected were then donated to Van Wert area food banks. The youth had been collecting food donations on campus throughout the month of March. A total of six large barrels of food and paper items were collected. These items were donated to Trinity Friends Church: Banquet Table Food Pantry; First United Methodist: Methodist Cooperative Ministry Food Bank; and Salvation Army Food Bank.



The Voices of Unity Youth Choir from Ft. Wayne, Ind., performed at The Marsh Foundation in April.

The campus wide food drive served as an empathy project for one Marsh Hall youth. All youth in that program must complete a project that shows empathy for others in order to complete.

Robert* thought a food drive would be a good project and enjoyed the planning, collection, tallying and delivering of the food. "It went really well and it made me feel good to help others," he said.

Starting with the food drive, the service project evolved to include several other aspects throughout the month of March. The youth also volunteered their time at local food pantries and soup kitchens. "That was a totally new experience for me," Robert said. "But it was definitely a good thing to see and experience."

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 consistently works to continue that legacy and this spring's events were designed to honor the Marsh family and the legacy that they left behind.

As part of the day's events, tours of The Marsh Homestead were also open to the public. Tours were given by Ron Bagley, former Marsh Foundation director, and nearly 100 people participated.

**Robert's name has been changed to protect his privacy.*



Living the Legacy also included tours of the historic Homestead which were open to the public. Tours were given by former director, Ron Bagley.



Clymer Chat

Currently, there are two openings at Clymer Hall. With the school year coming to a close, two of the girls have been able to transition home.

The girls at Clymer Hall are looking forward to a fun-filled summer. Summer school will be in session through the middle of July, in the mornings, Monday through Thursday. However, swimming, 4-H and several day trips are also planned.

One youth at Clymer Hall has participated in the Lincolnview track and field team throughout the spring. She has had fantastic success. She has broken the school record that was on the books for more than two decades. After that, she went on to break her own record. She was also interviewed by reporters and featured on the area news during the sports segment.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall currently has one opening. The nine boys in the home are excited and gearing up for summer. Many are looking forward to the horse program which will run through August 19. The horses have already arrived from the University of Findlay and are ready to go. The program not only teaches youth how to ride, but also how to care for the animals.

Job opportunities for youth on campus have become a staple of the summer. This year, three Marsh Hall youth have secured part-time, summer positions. One youth will be working as a kitchen assistant, one as a mechanic assistant and another will serve as a custodial assistant. The jobs give youth a way to learn skills while still on campus and earn an income as well.



Vance Voice

Vance Hall is currently at capacity with all 10 beds full. There has been some transition lately, and the youth are working to form new relationships with those who are new.

The boys are looking forward to the summer months and have already been busy fishing at the pond, taking bike rides and playing games outside. They are also looking forward to the several day trips and activities planned throughout the summer.

After Four Years at The Marsh, Youth Ready to Spread His Wings

When he came here three and a half years ago, Brian Fitch had no idea how The Marsh Foundation could or would change his life. He was just 14-years-old and came from foster care in Miami County. Now, he feels as though The Marsh has helped him a great deal.

According to Fitch, all the programs and staff have helped him mature. "I really enjoyed the horse program in the summers and showing rabbits in 4-H," he said. "I really like

the staff. They have taught me things and showed me right from wrong."

Fitch said that his time at Vance Hall has helped him mature and grow so that he knows how to handle certain situations.

He left The Marsh following the annual spring celebration, where he received his high school diploma. In fact, he's already started a job in Miami County.

School at The Marsh was also

a positive for him. "I enjoyed school here and feel like I've learned a lot," Fitch said. Because of his hard work he was able to graduate and earn his diploma.

Fitch said that he is going to miss The Marsh Foundation "I'm going to miss my friends and all the staff," he said.

However, he also said he feels as though being at The Marsh has taught him how to make friends and he's confident that he'll easily make some new ones.



Brian Fitch

Have a great summer!



Clockwise starting at top left: Former director of The Marsh, Ron Bagley, spoke at the Living the Legacy concert about the legacy that George and Hilinda left in the Van Wert community. The youth on campus participated in an Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Henderson family. Due to excessive rain, the hunt was held in the auditorium. Afterwards, youth had the opportunity to thank Ian and his mother for their donations. During the annual Spring Celebration, students of The Marsh Foundation School received a variety of academic awards for their accomplishments throughout the year. Three students also received diplomas. The Spring Celebration also included a production of *The Wizard of Oz*.



A Letter of Thanks

This letter was written by a youth who recently spent a year at Marsh Hall. He read it during his completion party.

“I’d like to thank my peers for being by friends throughout the times I was immature you gave me chances and saw the positive in me and not just the negative. I think that without you I would never been able to be who I am today.

And the staff I can never thank you enough or repay you for what you’ve done for me. All I can do is go out there and show you that all you taught me didn’t go to waste and also me being the best person I can be.

But the people who helped me the most and I’ll be forever in debt to them is Steve, Mike, Laura, Annette, my team and my county for giving me a chance and not just putting me in jail and say deal with it. No, they sent me here to learn and learn I did. And now it is time for me to do the second part of my county’s wishes which is for me to graduate and using what I learned out in the community and be a valuable member of society.

But I think out of everybody here, Steve and Mike have gone through good and bad and they were the main people who made me who I am today along with all of Marsh Hall staff and Marsh Foundation staff, too. And, so I say, thank you for making me who I am today.”

Marsh Foundation Staff Certified

The Marsh Foundation recently recognized nine employees for receiving their first or second certification for their expertise in the Teaching Family Model of care. The certification acknowledges that the family teachers have demonstrated excellent skills within the model, which is used for behavioral treatment on campus.

The Marsh certified six family teachers for the first time; Lisa Miller, Kyle Hainline, Michele Bird, Ben Marsee, Laura Sanford and Thressa Adams. And, The Marsh certified three additional family teachers for the second time; Kelly Gross, Christina Villarreal and Ray McCoy.

According to Kathleen Davis, the director of residential services at The Marsh, this is a marketable accomplishment nationwide. “These family teachers have demonstrated an exceptional level of treatment to the youths they serve,” she said. “The youths and referring agents, as well as The Marsh Foundation recognize their diligence in inspiring hope, teaching and caring for children and families. We are very proud of their accomplishments.”

The certification can take a year or more to complete and requires much training and evaluation. According to Bird, the process meant more to her than the certification itself. “I’m glad I’m certified, but to me, learning from the evaluations



Above: Family teachers certified for the first time include (l to r): Lisa Miller, Kyle Hainline, Michele Bird, Ben Marsee, Laura Sanford and Thressa Adams. **Below:** Family teachers certified for the second time include (l to r): Kelly Gross, Christina Villarreal and Ray McCoy.



and feedback was more important,” she said. “The process of observation, evaluation and feedback is a continual tool here at The Marsh and is a key part of us being a successful program for youth; not necessarily the act of being certified,” she added.

According to Sanford, the certification process ensures consistent treatment strategies for the youth. “Getting certified keeps our whole team focused on the common goal of helping

the youth in the most professional way. Being certified allows our teaching styles and answers to youth questions to be very similar because we are all educated with the same material,” she said.

Villarreal said she is proud to be certified. “It is nice to be recognized when you do your job well,” she said. “I think being certified is a tangible symbol of our dedication to our youth.”

A Day in the Life ... of a Marsh School Teacher

It takes a special person to be a teacher. In a classroom that can contain students in grades two through 12, there are even more challenges and demands on the teacher.

Suzie Hall has been a teacher for many years. First, teaching second and third grades in Ohio City, then returning to substitute teaching after taking time off to raise her children. In 1994, she was asked to come to The Marsh School as a one-on-one aide for a struggling student. The next year, retirement created an opening and she joined the staff full-time.

She currently teaches the subjects of social studies and Title 1 reading. Her biggest challenge, she said, is the diversity within each class. Because of the way that The Marsh's program is structured, a class can be made up of students with varying grade levels and a wide range of abilities. "It's very similar to a one room school house," Hall said. "For 10 different students, I have 10 different lesson plans, sometimes 10 different books and 10 different abilities and levels of functioning."

Hall estimates that more than half of her students have an IEP, or individualized education plan. Meaning students may be functioning at a level that is very different from their age or grade level. This creates another challenge when writing lesson plans and choosing activities.

Finding balance in the classroom is another challenge faced by Hall. "The school family teachers play a vital role in the classroom," she said. The family teachers are a part of the



Suzie Hall has been a teacher at The Marsh Foundation School since 1995. She teaches social studies and Title 1 reading to her students which can range from grade two to 12.

Teaching Family Model and the behavior treatment program on campus. One school family teacher attends class with the students to help curb negative behaviors and provide assistance to the teacher so that the room can stay focused on academics.

Despite the challenges, Hall said she enjoys her job very much. "I've always loved kids and the challenge that they present," she said. "You have to love what you're doing to teach. I'm not saying that there isn't stress, but it's still possible to love the challenge."

One of the things Hall enjoys most is seeing the impact she can make in students' lives. It's especially rewarding, she said, when they come back to visit after leaving the program. "By visiting they admit that The Marsh Foundation had a positive impact on their life and it's their way of saying thank you," she said.

Hall also enjoys seeing academic progress in her students. A student that increased two reading levels this year was especially satisfying to her. The Accelerated Reader program is used in her classes and Hall feels it has a great benefit to her students. "They are able to choose what they read based on their reading level and get points for each book," she said. Hall feels this encourages more reading. Throughout the year, her approximate 35 students have read more than 900 books. "I think that is just wonderful," she said.

A typical day for Hall begins when she arrives for school at 8 a.m. and begins teaching at 8:15. Her mornings include a conference period and social studies classes. After lunch, she teaches Title 1 reading until the day ends at 3 p.m. Each day ends with study hall, which gives the students an extra chance to get help from the

teachers on items they may be struggling with.

This time of year means it's time for summer school. The classes run Monday through Thursday in the mornings before lunch, allowing afternoons and Fridays for summer activities and day trips. Hall said there are many benefits to the summer school program. "So many students are behind academically, summer school can really give them a boost. Plus, it also provides them with much needed structure."

All three teachers at The Marsh School hold their master's degrees in education. Hall received her master's in the art of teaching from Mary Grove College. In her free time, Hall has four children and six grandchildren who she enjoys spending time with. She also enjoys reading, gardening and loves to travel.

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Relay for Life Held in May

Due to the excessive wet weather, this spring's Relay for Life was moved from The Marsh Foundation to the Van Wert County Fairgrounds. The event was held Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7. The Marsh was still heavily involved in the event. Aside from The Marsh team, youth also participated by walking and volunteering at the pancake breakfast. The Marsh is proud to support this event and looks forward to its return to our campus next year.

Marsh Foundation Alumni Wanted

We know that several Marsh Foundation alumni are not on our mailing list and do not receive newsletters or updates. If you are in contact with other former students of The Marsh Foundation, please encourage them to contact us. They can fill out the alumni form on our website, www.marshfoundation.org, or they can contact Dawn Berryman, dberryman@marshfoundation.org, to be put on the mailing list. We would like all alumni, no matter what years they attended The Marsh, to be on our contact list.

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

Calendar of Events

June 2011 - September 2011

- June 1 - Last day of school
- June 7 - July 14 - Summer school
- June 6 - August 19 - Horse riding
- July 4 - Holiday, no activities and business and Teaching Family offices closed.
- July 7 - Toledo Zoo trip
- July 13 - Summer picnic
- August 12 - Horse show at 10 a.m.
- August 23 - First day of school
- August 27 - Fort Wayne Tin Caps baseball game
- September 5 - Labor Day, no school. Business and Teaching Family offices closed.



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.