

The Marsh Messenger

• Summer 2020 • www.marshfoundation.org

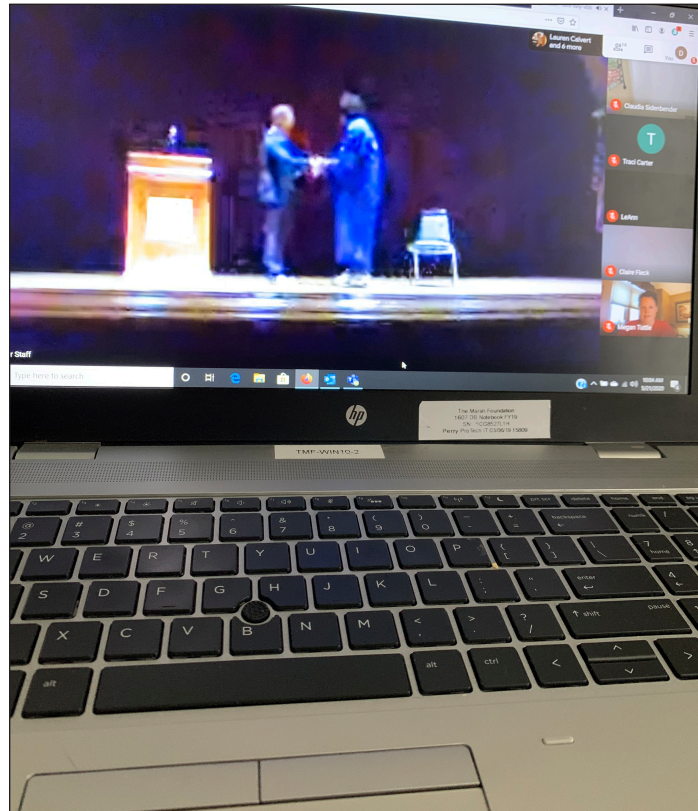
Serving children and families since 1922

Marsh School Finishes Unconventional Year with Unique Graduation

Like schools across the country, The Marsh School students participated in distance learning following the state mandated school closures. Each group home was designated a classroom in the school building where they did their learning. Our teachers communicated with our students daily, providing lessons and learning material over the computer. The students followed a schedule that allowed them to meet with each teacher for 30 minutes every day.

Principal Robbie Breese praised the student and teachers' efforts. "It was amazing how well our students adapted to this adverse situation and even more amazing how well our teachers did in providing engaging material with such little time to prepare," he said. "Although the school closures were not ideal, I truly believe our teachers and students became better educators and learners as a result."

This year there are two graduates from The Marsh School, one from Clymer Hall and one from Vance. Each were honored in an online virtual ceremony. The graduations were held in the Bagley Auditorium and they were presented with their diploma.



Like other schools, The Marsh School finished the school year in a unique way and honored its graduates with a virtual celebration.

In addition to their family, those from their home and that have worked with them were permitted to attend. Everyone else was invited to watch via Google Meets.

The students have already started their summer programming. Students are rotating

between the school library, horse lessons, and fitness time. Students and staff are excited to be holding fitness time in the newly renovated fitness room in the basement of the administration building.



Please Share

Please share The Marsh Messenger with others in your family or office who might like to read it. Thank you!

Inside

- Letter from the Executives **Page 2**
- Community Members Donate Masks **Page 3**
- Marsh School Hires Teacher **Page 3**
- Marsh Donates Hearts to Honor Essential Workers **Page 4**
- Marsh Celebrates 10th Annual Egg Hunt Thanks to Donors **Page 4**
- Photo Book **Page 5**

Leadership

- **The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees:**
 - Gary Clay
 - Gary Corcoran
 - Robert Gamble
- **The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:**
 - Robbie Breese
 - Jeff Grothouse
 - Kim Mullins

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

From the Executive's desk ...

Change can be scary, but change is good when it causes organizations to rethink how they operate. Change can bring about new opportunities and lead to improvement and growth in an organization. The Marsh Foundation Child and Family Services has changed over the years to meet the needs of an ever-changing population of children and families.

On February 9, 2018, President Trump signed into law the landmark bipartisan Family First Prevention Services Act, or FFPSA. FFPSA emphasizes the importance of children growing up in families and helps ensure children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting possible. Funding will now be geared toward prevention services to help children stay with parents or relatives with fewer placements in group care. FFPSA seeks to limit the use of group care and instead places more emphasis on family foster homes.

With limited exceptions, the federal government will not reimburse states for children placed in group care settings for more than two weeks.



Approved settings, known as Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP), must use a trauma-informed treatment model and employ registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff. A child must be formally assessed within 30 days of placement to determine if his or her needs can be met by a family member, in a family foster home, or in another approved setting such as a QRTP. If approved, youth may stay longer in a QRTP, but there must be an assessment for continued need every 60 days. The Marsh Foundation must now adjust and modify services to work more closely with families. Our group homes will become QRTPs with an emphasis on more intensive work with families, relatives or foster families.

"Our mission to inspire hope, teach and to care for children and families will be even stronger as we move into new opportunities to help make better the lives of children and families."

- Kim Mullins
Executive Director of
Child & Family
Services

Video conferencing for more frequent visits with family and the provision of counseling via telehealth is another positive change to services here at The Marsh. While we continue to do face to face services, many families live too far away to visit as frequently as they wish. Family counseling can now occur more frequently and with ease via telehealth.

The tasks ahead will promote growth and will require more training, certifications, and practice. Though some of our professional staff are trained

in trauma-informed treatment models, FFPSA requires that the entire organization be trauma informed. We must choose one evidence-based model to train the entire staff. This is an important step in continuing to serve children and families in a consistent yet individualized manner. Foster children experience trauma far more often than others, and this trauma can shape not only their behavior but also their worldview. According to a 2017 Generations United study, "Children in foster care are at least five times more likely to have anxiety, depression and/or behavioral problems than children not in foster care." We are hopeful and excited about augmenting our services to provide the best to so many children who have endured adverse experiences.

Making changes and enhancements to our services will continue throughout the future of The Marsh Foundation. There is much work ahead of us. Our mission to inspire hope, teach and to care for children and families will be even stronger as we move into new opportunities to help make better the lives of children and families.

Kim Mullins
Executive Director, Child &
Family Services

A commitment to excellence

Community Members Donate 100 Masks to Marsh Foundation Youth and Staff

Those living in communal situations are at a higher risk of contracting COVID 19 because of their close proximity to others. When The Marsh expressed a need for protective masks, community members were quick to respond.

Director of residential services, Megan Tuttle, was impressed with the immediate offers to help that she received. "I love how in a time of need you can reach out to individuals and they selflessly help both the youth we serve as well as the employees that work at The Marsh Foundation," she said. "Thank you is not a big enough declaration to express our gratitude for their generosity! It is so comforting to know that people care so much for our

essential workers."

Deb Bergdorf and mother – daughter team, Becca and Bryar Suever sewed and donated more than 100 masks between them. The masks will be used by both youth and staff in situations where there might be risk for exposure. "We are limiting off campus activities and doing as much as we can to avoid exposure, but we must be prepared for what might come," Tuttle said.

Bergdorf said she is proud to be able to help The Marsh. "Everyone deserves to feel protected and safe during these uncertain times and to have access to protection," she said.

Becca Suever echoed those sentiments. "As cliché as it sounds, I decided to make masks to donate to set an



Pictured are some of the masks donated to The Marsh Foundation by community members.

example for my kids that when you can give, you do," she said. She is happy that it became a family activity with her daughter. "It makes my heart happy to know that in 20 years when

everyone talks about this time in history, her story will be how we spent time together sewing masks and donating them to help keep people safe and healthy."

Marsh School Hires New Teacher

Lauren Calvert is no stranger to The Marsh Foundation School. Hired by The Marsh residential division as a family teacher in 2016, she has worked in the school as a school family teacher since 2018. Now, she has been hired as a full-time math and language arts teacher. Calvert holds a bachelor's degree in family studies, with a minor in psychology of human development as well as a master's degree in social work. She recently completed testing and coursework to obtain her Alternative Resident Educator Licensure in order to teach. Because of her work with the



Lauren Calvert

youth at The Marsh Foundation, Calvert is uniquely qualified for a teaching position within the school. She said she finds working with the youth rewarding and is looking forward to reaching them in a new way. "I have a passion

working with the youth that we serve at The Marsh Foundation," she said. "I have found how rewarding it is to see them progress in their treatment, grow in confidence and leadership within the group home, and also being able to see them feel proud when they earn good grades and understand what is being taught to them." Calvert said that she hopes her background in social work and family systems, combined with her experience working in the group homes will give her an advantage in the classroom. "Because I am new to teaching, my main goals are to continue

to learn and grow, try new and different things, and to do my best to ensure that the students are successful," she added. Principal and director of education Robbie Breese is happy to have her expertise and experience in the classroom. "Lauren's experience, education, willingness to grow, and her desire to work with the youth we serve made her a great candidate for this position. I am confident that she will continue to be a great asset to our school team and look forward to watching her grow in this position," he said.

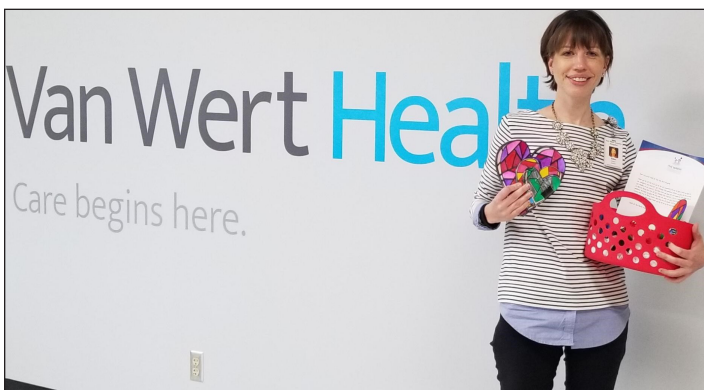
Marsh Foundation Youth Color Hearts for Essential Van Wert Caregivers

The boys residing at Marsh Hall on The Marsh Foundation campus are more than aware of the current global pandemic and its affects on the community around them. As a thank you, they decided to color hearts and send them, along with a thank you note, to the Van Wert County Hospital.

The note began by saying, “Thank you for all the work you do for our community. We are all glad to have you guys as our caregivers and we could not get through this pandemic without you.”

Megan Tuttle, residential director at The Marsh was impressed by the boys’ initiative. “Empathy is one of the skills that we work on here at The Marsh. It was exciting to see the boys put that into practice in a relevant and kind way,” she said.

Each youth at Marsh Hall cut out and colored unique hearts to be displayed all over the hospital with the goal of bringing hope to the essential staff of the hospital. The note finished with, “We have made you these hearts. We hand colored each one and they are all special. Once again, thank you for all you do for our community.”



Pictured is Ellen Rager, Director of Patient and Community Relations at Van Wert Health, accepting the donation of hearts from The Marsh Foundation youth.

Need to Make a Referral?



THE MARSH FOUNDATION

Residential/Group Home Referrals: Call Kelly at 419.238.1695 ext. 360 or kgross@marshfoundation.org

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

After Hours/Emergency: 419.605.8056 fostercarereferrals@marshfoundation.org



Youth enjoy their Easter goodies provided by the Shirley Haight family.

Marsh Celebrates 10th Annual Easter Egg Hunt Thanks to Donors

Again this year, Easter was an extra special holiday on the campus of The Marsh Foundation thanks to generous donations. For the 10th year in a row, the Shirley Haight family sponsored an egg hunt, basket donations and gifts.

According to Megan Tuttle, residential director, this year looked a little different because of the COVID 19 pandemic. “The family delivered items in March and our staff saved them for Easter morning delivery to the kids,” Tuttle said. “We really missed having their family here this year but were so thankful for everything they provided.”

The Easter celebration has become an annual tradition on The Marsh campus that youth and staff both anxiously anticipate. Tuttle said that the donations meet several needs. “First

and foremost, they put a smile on our kids’ faces,” she said. In addition to the happiness they bring, the generous donation helps The Marsh’s existing resources go even further. Haight’s daughter, Cindy Henderson and her family, went above and beyond again this year to make Easter even more special for youth currently residing at The Marsh Foundation. The family’s generosity and creativity are extremely thoughtful, even down to the smallest details. The donation included gift cards, candy, bags, and fun-filled eggs. In the 1940s, Shirley Haight came to live at The Marsh. Now, her daughters and grandson continue to give back to the campus at Easter time. Although Haight passed away in 1988, her family has made a tradition out of donating.



Clockwise starting at top: The Marsh Foundation campus is always beautiful but there is something about spring that makes it a little extra special. Everyone at The Marsh is becoming increasingly excited about the completion of the new fitness and dining facility. A recent tour for staff members showcased the building's progress. The project is currently on schedule and the gym floor is ready to be installed. The concrete exterior pads and excavation

work has been completed. The black top is scheduled to be complete this month. The completion and occupancy date for the facility is the end of July. In addition to delivering hearts to the main Van Wert Health campus, the boys at Marsh Hall also made hearts and delivered them to Van Wert North. Pictured is Tonya Mitchell (in red), the school family teacher at Marsh Hall, delivering the hearts to Van Wert Health North staff.



Marsh Alumni Conquers Citizenship and Education Goals

When youth arrive at The Marsh Foundation they are often struggling with a variety of problems and challenges. Itzel Jarrett was no different when she arrived on Halloween morning at the age of 14. That was seven years ago and a lot has changed since then. Jarrett has grown into a successful young woman and she said it is because of the strong influence The Marsh and its staff have had in her life.

According to MacKenzie Basil, program manager at The Marsh, Jarrett really blossomed and found herself during her time at the group home. “She has been the most rewarding kid to see flourish,” Basil said.

“She found herself at The Marsh and discovered her own, unique personality.” She was successful at The Marsh and graduated the program at Clymer Hall in less than two years.

Jarrett credits The Marsh with a lot. “It was the first place I ever called home. It was the first time someone trusted me and actually loved me for who I was,” she said. “I didn’t have to pretend to be something I wasn’t anymore to survive.”

Right after graduating high school, Jarrett enrolled in college. She is currently attending Wright State University with the goal of becoming a social



Itzel Jarrett was officially named a United States citizen on February 26. Because of the influence of The Marsh Foundation, she is currently completing her degree at Wright State University in hopes of becoming a social worker herself. She is pictured with (l to r) her mentors Jana, Kyle, Dominique and her college roommate Crystal.

worker and eventually hopes to work at The Marsh full-time. She feels as though because of her background and experience in the group home herself she can relate to the kids in the group homes. “I want to be a family teacher because the family teachers I had when I was here had a huge impact on me and I want to have that impact on kids,” Jarrett emphasized. “If I become a family teacher, I will be a walking example to all kids that they can make it too. I made it, so can they. They deserve to see that it’s possible,” she added.

Adopted, Jarrett grew up being told she was a United States citizen. However, that was not the case. Basil and other staff at The Marsh, helped her to process this information and deal with the trauma she endured while with her adoptive parents. This experience motivated Jarrett to turn her life around and aim for success. In addition to enrolling in college she also has pursued her citizenship.

On February 26, Jarrett officially became a citizen of the United States. She said the process was nerve-racking, wondering if she would be denied. Thanks to her support system through The Bridges program and The Marsh, the paperwork and application process was relatively easy. “I needed my green card. The funny thing is I

was about to throw it away freshman year of college because I didn’t think I needed it but something told me I should keep it and I’m happy I did,” she said.

Last summer and this upcoming summer Jarrett will be employed at The Marsh doing seasonal work. When universities shut down because of the Covid 19 pandemic, Jarrett didn’t have anywhere to go. The Marsh was able to open the summer apartment she was scheduled to occupy this summer. “To all the people that helped me, I want to say thank you for having a great impact and showing me the proper tools to make it,” she said. “Each person that walked in my life while at The Marsh helped me become this strong woman I am today. I wouldn’t be where I am today if I didn’t have The Marsh’s support.”

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff member:

- Greg Roberts - Group Home Custodian



Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently home to nine girls. There is one opening available for a girl between the ages of 10 and 17. For referrals, contact Kelly Gross at 419.238.1695 ext. 360.

The girls were able to adjust to the early ending of the traditional school year and the transition to e-learning. The girls took turns with the other group homes using a classroom and were able to successfully complete the year. They are looking forward to hopefully returning to a normal school year in August.

The girls have now started a summer schedule rotating between fitness, library time and horse riding, which is keeping them busy. They have also been spending time outside enjoying the beautiful early summer weather. A couple girls have also been interviewed for the summer garden crew and are looking forward to the opportunity to earn an income.

Horse riding is one of the most loved activities of the summer. The girls are hopeful they will still be able to showcase their skills at the annual horse show despite unknown Covid-19 restrictions.



Marsh Matters

There are 10 boys living at Marsh Hall leaving no current openings. The boys did well transitioning to an unusual end of the school year and were able to complete it successfully.

A few of the boys have been interviewed for the summer garden crew and will participate in the Marsh Grown program. The season kicked off with a spring plant sale and now the garden is planted. Youth will work in the garden during the week and then sell their produce at an on-campus farmer's market. The garden crew is an extension of the Independent Living Program on campus where youth learn practical life skills that will benefit them in the future.

The boys have already been seen outside playing basketball and have been down to the pond to go fishing. They are also excited to have started the summer horse program. They have the opportunity to ride each day and are also learning care for the animals. They are looking forward to a fun summer and the completion of the new fitness and dining facility on campus.



Vance Voice

Vance Hall has no openings with ten boys currently residing in the program. They finished a successful school year, despite the strange circumstances. They were disappointed not to have the traditional Wizard of Oz production and spring celebration.

Some of the boys at Vance have been involved with the recent budgeting and bill paying project through the Independent Living Program. They have covered several topics including, but not limited to; pay stubs, saving, balancing a checkbook and rental agreements. It has been a very educational and beneficial program for the youth. Headed up by the clinical department, the group home staff have been instrumental with hands-on help.

Summer is now in full swing and the boys are busy with summer school and some are having the opportunity to participate in credit recovery classes. There is also plenty of time for outdoor activities like visiting the pond, riding their bikes or playing basketball.

❁ Hello Summer ❁

The Marsh Foundation
1229 Lincoln Highway
P.O. Box 150
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 2020 - September 2020



- Summer school programming is now through July 3.
- The Business and Child and Family Services Offices on campus will be closed on Friday, July 3 in observance of the Independence Day holiday.
- Friday, July 10, representatives from The Marsh Foundation will participate in the MAV youth annual golf outing at the Mercer County Elks
- The Business and Child and Family Services offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7 for the Labor Day holiday.

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.