

The Marsh Messenger

• Winter 2009-10 • www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

A Year in Review: 2009 at The Marsh Foundation



In April, The Marsh Foundation held a grand opening of the newly renovated greenhouse on campus. Above: The Board of Trustees, from left to right, Don Sutton, Gerald Thatcher and Wally Purmort are pictured with Sherry Grone, activities coordinator and Jeff Grothouse, executive secretary and treasurer.

2009 has been another exciting and busy year at The Marsh Foundation. There have been several notable accomplishments for the staff, youth and campus as a whole. Below you will find some highlights from 2009!

- In February, the new mission statement of The Marsh Foundation was approved by the Board of Trustees. It states "The mission of The Marsh Foundation is to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families."
- In April, the newly renovated greenhouse on campus was opened. The original structure was built in the 1930s. The renovation has allowed the garden program to expand and is now year-round.
- The Clymer Hall renovation project that began in February 2008 was completed in May of this year. The work was extensive, including completely new bathrooms and kitchen, restoration of the wood floors

and much more.

- In addition, all exterior renovations on campus are now complete. The bricks on the Administration Building have been resealed and the roof renovations have been completed.
- In May, the Van Wert Relay for Life was held on The Marsh campus for the first time. The Marsh is scheduled to be the host for at least the next four years.
- In July, The Marsh received word that CARF had accredited the organization for another three years.
- In August, the annual horse show was held. It marked the

end of a successful equestrian program over the summer where youth spent several days a week learning to ride and care for the horses.

- The Marsh Foundation foster families have been busy as well. There are currently 12 foster children living with seven different foster families. All of the families have been active and participated in many activities over the year. One family, the Birds, have done things like camping and fishing trips, hiking at Clifton Gorge, trips to the zoo, picnics and much more. The Renos frequently visit Lake Erie. The Fryers are always busy as well; they recently attended a Notre Dame football game.
- In 2009, three advanced workshops in the Teaching Family Model were held on campus to help ensure effective service delivery. They covered training, consultation and evaluation.
- In 2009, several new staff members also joined The Marsh team. We welcomed family teachers Joyce Dennie, Kyle Hainline, Stacie Sturwold, Jennifer Burley, Brad Petrie and music teacher Tom Mayes.



Foster parent Bill Bird and two foster children hike during a family trip to Clifton Gorge last summer.



THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

You're Invited

The annual Christmas celebration will be held on Friday, December 18 beginning at 10:15 a.m. The students will present their annual piano recital and production of 'Scrooge' in the auditorium; a holiday luncheon will be held in the cafeteria afterwards. Please plan to join us!

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Leadership

- **The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees:**
 - Paul Purmort
 - Don Sutton
 - Gerald Thatcher
- **The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:**
 - Kim Mullins
 - Roger Salisbury
 - Jeff Grothouse

The Marsh Foundation
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From the executive's desk ...

Jesus Christ said, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me." He followed by saying, "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck."

Those words inspire, motivate and sometimes create fear for many of us who are charged with caring for and working with children in the child care industry today. Evidently we are capable of causing children to sin or misbehave. That's interesting isn't it?

I believe, as much as anyone else, in personal responsibility, but I also believe that we as adults can be very influential in the lives of children. Just like parents, we make decisions every day about a child's future, health, welfare, education, living arrangements, privileges and etc.

We, at Marsh have the added responsibility of creating a nurturing atmosphere in which children can learn, feel loved and worthwhile. Those things are often automatically present in a loving family situation but must be replicated here at The Marsh Foundation. In addition to all of this, our children contend with physical and emotional disorders. The expectations for anyone working with children in this industry are daunting at best. We must be extremely conscientious about how we proceed with these precious lives.

Decisions made about a child's life must be made with



Kim Mullins, P.C.C.

great care and with input from the child and their family.

A decision made in a rush, without consideration or contemplation could influence a child grievously. Our staff has learned that a team approach seems to work best. Each month the child, parents, and members of their respective team meet together to discuss progress and future planning.

Trained Family Teachers are given the majority of responsibility when it comes to making day to day decisions with children. They also work with each child to help them learn to make good decisions and to solve problems. Family Teachers work very hard to develop good relationships with the children so their guidance is well received.

Counselors and CPST Workers (Community Psychiatric Support Treatment), have direct impact on children as well. They work with an individualized service plan to help them develop skills or address past traumas associated with emotional problems, abuse or from frequent moving around in the system, (multiple place-

ments in foster care or group care). They also are careful to include the children in planning and reviewing.

We can't forget to mention teachers. Most of us can remember a teacher or teachers who impacted our lives positively. They work with our children for a good part of the day and can have such a powerful influence on them.

You may think that administrators such as myself would have the least influence on a child's life. In some ways it is true. Administrators don't have the same type of influence on children as those who work directly with them. However, we are charged with making policy, procedural, personnel and financial decisions which will eventually impact the children here at Marsh. We don't see or talk with the children on a daily basis, therefore we must proceed with great caution.

Every worker here at The Marsh Foundation including Trustees, Business workers and Maintenance staff perform duties and responsibilities that directly or indirectly affect children. Children, though troubled or not, must be handled with great care and consideration. We must all strive to do our jobs with our children in mind so that we may impact their lives in positive, productive ways.

Kim Mullins

Executive Director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh

Trustee to Retire

Mr. Donald Sutton has been a trustee of The Marsh Foundation for nearly 23 years and as of December 31, he will resign.

He is stepping down to travel with his wife, Darlene and enjoy his family. He said he feels really good about his role as trustee at The Marsh and what the organization has been able to accomplish during his time here. In his resignation letter he stated, "I enjoyed serving for almost 23 years as a Trustee and wish the very best for The Marsh in the coming years."

According to Sutton, he has greatly enjoyed his time as trustee. "My greatest pleasure is seeing kids come in with multiple social problems and leaving with a better understanding of the world," he said.

Deceased Marsh Foundation Alumni and Former Employees

- Mr. Robert E. Conley
07/25/2009
- Mr. Paul Hiles
01/28/1996
- Ms. Dorothy June (Davis) Norton
12/06/2008
- Mrs. Barbara (Aldrich) Parker
01/26/2009
- Ms. Betsy Ann Perry
2006
- Mr. James M. Pohlman - former employee
05/14/2009
- Mr. Zane Clare Stamford
03/06/2009
- Mrs. Joanna Beemer Stoops
Former President of The Marsh Foundation Alumni Association
11/27/2009
- Mr. Gary Dean Wendel
03/23/2009
- Ms. Mabel Yoh - former employee
03/01/2009

A commitment to excellence

Annual Letter from The Board of Trustees

Christmas is a time to be especially thankful for the many blessings we enjoy on The Marsh Campus. We have been blessed with the challenges of working with youth, but also by making a difference in the lives of the many students who are presently in our programs. We are blessed by working with the professional Marsh staff who administers these program and the many Marsh graduates whose lives have been enriched by their Marsh experience.

To our present students, whether you are enrolled in our campus school, with one of our Marsh foster families or one of our families receiving consulting in your home, we wish each of you the very best this Christmas Season. We are all proud of the progress each of you is making as you work toward graduation.

We also send our greetings to our Marsh Foundation Staff. Your loyalty and dedication to the mission of George



The Marsh Foundation Trustees from left to right: Mr. Wally Purmort, Mr. Gerald Thatcher and Mr. Don Sutton.

Marsh and the youth of this campus is greatly appreciated. Each of you contributes in your own way to the success of The Marsh Foundation. When one reads Mr. Marsh's will and the great insight and wisdom contained in it, you can see how closely it resembles our Teaching Family Program.

To our many graduates, we want to extend a special invitation to attend the next Marsh Foundation Family Reunion on the weekend of August 7 and 8,

2010. Bring your family to see our completely renovated campus buildings and to visit with your classmates along with former and present staff. We look forward to hearing your stories and sharing past experiences.

May God's richest blessings be on us all, this Christmas Season.

The Marsh Foundation Trustees
Mr. Wally Purmort
Mr. Don Sutton
Mr. Gerald Thatcher

Clinical Supervisor Completing Specialized Certification

Annette Herrmann, M.S.W., L.I.S.W., clinical supervisor at The Marsh Foundation, has completed both the beginning and intermediate training in order to become a certified dyadic developmental psychotherapy therapist. She will be able to receive the certification following submission and review of 10 video-recorded therapy sessions with clients.

The training is offered by internationally renowned psychologist, author and educator, Daniel Hughes, Ph.D. Herrmann completed the beginner level training in 2008 and the intermediate level this summer. The clinical training focuses on the psychological treatment of

children with trauma and attachment problems.

This method of treatment was developed by Hughes after traditional methods proved unsuccessful for victims of abuse and neglect. "Typical parenting techniques do not work with these type of youth," said Herrmann. "Their behaviors are symptoms of difficulties which are internal. We have to help them understand these issues so that they can get better."

Herrmann attended the week-long training in Waterville, Maine at Colby College. "It was a very intense, hands-on training," said Herrmann. There were a total of 15 therapists in

attendance, some from as far away as Australia.

After attending the specialized trainings, Herrmann brings her knowledge back and shares it with staff and others who are working to help youth. She not only shares it with staff in her department, but also residential staff, foster parents and teachers.

According to Herrmann, this type of specialized training really benefits the youth on The Marsh campus. "It helps me understand where they are coming from and how they view situations," she said. That translates into more positive and effective therapy sessions.

From the Alumni President: Jeannie "Hisey" Snyder

The best gifts are the things we say and do for one another. These moments we can remember long after the Holidays have passed. These are the treasured moments that families will remember for a lifetime.

The Marsh wouldn't be where it is today without the unconditional love, support and guidance of the trustees, staff and employees. Thank you for your dedication to the students.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at The Marsh reunion on August 7 and 8. It will be a wonderful celebration!

You are all very special to me!

Jeannie "Hisey" Snyder
 Your Alumni President

Below is a photo of Snyder with her favorite singing group, The Letterman, when they performed at The Marsh Foundation.



Happy Holidays
from everyone
at The Marsh
Foundation!



Reader Survey

Please take a moment to complete this survey. If there are multiple people that share this issue, please make copies. Please return them to Dawn Berryman before January 31, 2010. You can return them by e-mail (dberryman@marsh-foundation.org), by fax (419.238.1747) or by mail (1229 Lincoln Highway, P.O. Box 150, Van Wert, Ohio 45891). All completed surveys will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to Wal-Mart. Thanks!

1. Do you enjoy receiving The Marsh Messenger?

	Yes	No
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2. Do you read the entire newsletter?

	Yes	No
--	-----	----
3. Would you like to receive the newsletter via e-mail? If so please provide your e-mail address.

	Yes	No
--	-----	----
4. What are your **favorite** features? (circle all that apply)

News	Calendar	Trustee Feature
A Day in the Life	Photo Book	Student Success
Staff Spotlight	House Happenings	
Letter from the Executives		Foster Care News
School News		
5. What are your **least favorite** features? (circle all that apply)

News	Calendar	Trustee Feature
A Day in the Life	Photo Book	Student Success
Staff Spotlight	House Happenings	
Letter from the Executives		Foster Care News
School News		
6. Do you feel as though the information provided in the newsletter is valuable and interesting?

	Yes	No
--	-----	----
7. Do you feel the quarterly publication of the newsletter is appropriate?

	Yes	No
--	-----	----
8. Do you feel the number of pages/amount of information included is appropriate?

	Yes	No
--	-----	----
9. Are there additional types of information/articles you would like to see included?

	Yes	No
--	-----	----

If so, what are they?
10. Would you like to receive more/less copies of the newsletter at your particular agency?

	Yes	No	N/A
--	-----	----	-----
11. Please list any ways that you feel we can improve The Marsh Messenger.

Your Name and Phone Number:

Meet Marsh Foundation Trustee Gerald Thatcher

Gerald Thatcher has served on The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees since 2002. He came on as a trustee shortly after his retirement from Central Mutual. He started his career as an accountant, working at Central for 46 years before retiring as senior vice president and treasurer.

While at Central, he was responsible for accounting and investments, which he said he truly enjoyed. Now, he has been able to bring that expertise to The Marsh. Since he became trustee, the board has reorganized the organization's investment portfolio which has created an increase in investment revenue. Because of this, The Marsh continues to be able to provide quality services to children at below average cost to clients.

"I really enjoy being involved in an organization that is helping young people get their lives turned around," Thatcher said. "It is great to see them provided with an opportunity to learn, grow and participate in so many meaningful activities."

Thatcher said that he also enjoys being part of the decision making process and the wide variety of situations the trustees are involved in.

During the past seven years, the trustees have accomplished many things. In addition to reorganizing the investment portfolio, several upgrades have been made to the campus. Air conditioning has been put in the group homes, new windows were installed and entire group homes were renovated. "We have restored and upgraded these buildings so they will last for years to come," Thatcher said.

He also noted that he is thankful for the management team in place at The Marsh.



Gerald Thatcher

"Our top management is strong and I am proud of that," he said. In addition, he noted that he is happy that there has been salary surveys conducted to ensure that The Marsh stays current and provides fair salary and benefits to staff.

Thatcher hopes that in the future The Marsh will continue to stay current and adapt to the ever-changing society. "It is my hope that The Marsh will continue to grow and adapt our programming to the evolving needs of children and families," he said.

According to Kim Mullins, executive director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh, the wisdom Thatcher has brought to The Marsh is greatly appreciated. "Gerald's knowledge and expertise has proved to be invaluable to The Marsh Foundation team," she said. "His leadership has been a blessing."

Thatcher has been married to his wife Esther for 53 years. Together they have three daughters and one son. Two of their daughters live in Arizona, one in Ohio and their son lives in Texas. The couple enjoys visiting and spending time with their family. They also have 14 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, one of whom is deceased.



Clockwise starting at top right: Each group home recently participated in a one day oil painting workshop in the art room. Each youth created their own oil painting. The Marsh Foundation donated a decorated tree to the Van Wert YWCA's annual Festival of Trees fundraiser. The project was coordinated by Laura Beckett-Avery and the independent living group on campus. In October, The Marsh held its annual Fall Festival for youth, staff, foster families and trustees. The event included dinner, a costume contest, a pumpkin decorating contest, karaoke and more. Here a youth is pictured with a family teacher. Staff members Erik Price, Ted Scaer and Mike Sheets are shown at the Thanksgiving luncheon that followed a short student recognition. Staff members Sue Bowersox, Joy Gordon and Katrina Rupert dressed as witches for the Fall Festival. Pamela Reagan, foster care consultant, talks with foster parents Bill Bird and Steve Reno during the annual foster care appreciation dinner. Marsh Hall program manager Susan Mihm and lead family teacher Ray McCoy enjoy the Thanksgiving luncheon.

Staff Spotlight

Meet Terry Geiger

In November, Terry Geiger celebrated her 20th anniversary working for The Marsh Foundation. Currently, she serves as payroll and benefits coordinator, a position she has held since 1991. Prior to that, she worked in both the business office and in the teaching family office.

When she first started at The Marsh, her responsibilities included doing typing for the counselors and directors. She was even the first staff person in the office to have a computer. Now, her responsibilities have grown immensely. She is responsible for payroll, coordinating insurance, benefits, taxes, worker's compensation claims and more.

When offered the position of payroll and benefits coordinator, she returned to school and attained her associate's degree in accounting through Wright State University.

According to Geiger, there are several things she enjoys about her position. "My job isn't routine," she said. "Each day there is variety and I never get tired from constant repetition." She also noted that she enjoys the people at The Marsh, her coworkers and the youth.

It's that fondness for the youth that led her and her husband, Keith, to become foster parents for The Marsh. "I became close to some of the children here and knew that they had no family, or even knew what having a family was like," she said. "We thought maybe we could show them."



Terry Geiger

Three years ago, the Geigers became licensed foster parents and have since served several children in their home. They have had four full-time foster children for various time periods and have also provided respite care for many others.

"We really enjoy the kids and the house always feels empty when they leave," said Geiger. Of course, foster parenting isn't without its challenges. All of the youth come with their own personalities and backgrounds and many have behavior issues. "We just try to show them that there is a different, better life out there," she said.

It is also difficult when the family becomes especially attached to a child and then they move on. "There have been a lot of tears," she said.

The Geigers have been married for 15 years. Together, they have four children and nine grandchildren. "They are the joy of my life," she said. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and gardening with her husband.

Clymer Chat

The girls in Clymer Hall have had a busy fall. The first nine weeks of the school year have come and gone. They have participated in the Fall Festival as well as the Thanksgiving celebration. On Thanksgiving Day, the girls prepared dinner for all the youth and staff on campus and hosted the gathering.

This year, the independent living group on campus planned, coordinated and decorated the donated Christmas tree for the YWCA's Festival of Trees fundraiser. The tree was a success, garnering a top bid of almost \$400. The group consists of some girls from Clymer Hall.

Currently, there are a couple of openings at Clymer Hall. The group home houses girls, ages 7 - 17 with various emotional and behavioral problems. If you would like to have a youth assessed for placement, please call Tim Dull, director of intake and recruitment at 419.238.1695 ext. 360.

Marsh Matters

The boys at Marsh Hall have had an active fall. A lot of time has been spent outside playing football after school on nice days. They have also been keeping busy with their community service and other activities. They especially enjoyed a recent school assembly that

explained some of the components of Native American dance. They even had the chance to participate.

The boys have also been busy preparing for the Christmas program and auditioning for speaking parts. The annual Christmas program and luncheon will be held on Friday, Dec. 18. Mark your calendars!

There are currently two openings in Marsh Hall. The group home serves male youth, ages 10 - 17, who have been adjudicated of a sexual offense.

Vance Voice

The boys at Vance Hall have also been busy in recent weeks. At school, two of the boys made the honor roll for the first nine weeks.

Recently, the class participated in a one-day oil painting workshop in the art room. During the workshop, each youth created their own oil painting of a winter scene. Their work was exceptional.

During the recent Thanksgiving celebration, one youth from Vance Hall was selected to have written the best Thanksgiving acrostic poem and read it at the assembly in front of his peers and staff. It is printed on the back page of this newsletter.

Due to a recent successful discharge, there is currently one opening in Vance Hall. However, it is slated to be filled in the next couple of weeks.

A Day in the Life ... of a Director of Residential Services

Kathleen Davis, L.S.W., has been working with youth at The Marsh Foundation since 1996. She holds a bachelor's degree in youth and human services from Salem College in West Virginia. Since 2006, she has served as the director of residential services. What that means is, on any given day she can be seen in administrative meetings, working one on one with a youth, leading a group counseling session, updating forms on her computer, or just about anything in between.

Davis said the majority of her responsibilities revolve around decision making. "Basically, I am helping to make the best decisions for quality care for the kids," she said. This can include anything from which doctor a youth should see to when is the best time for a youth to return home.

As the director of residential services, Davis is responsible for overseeing the three group homes on campus and the multiple foster homes in The Marsh network. This includes overseeing the day-to-day behavioral treatment that the youth receive and supervising the approximately 25-30 members of the teaching family staff on campus.

The Marsh uses the Teaching Family Model of care (TFM), which is a unique approach that is not a punishment or traditional counseling model. Rather, it emphasizes the positive teaching of functional skills and behaviors through a combination of low tolerance for poor behaviors and high praise for good behaviors. "I have been working with TFM for nearly 18 years and I believe that it makes a huge difference in the lives of our kids," said Davis. "Learning that behaviors have consequences, either positive or negative, helps the youth make decisions now to determine what their life

will be like in the future."

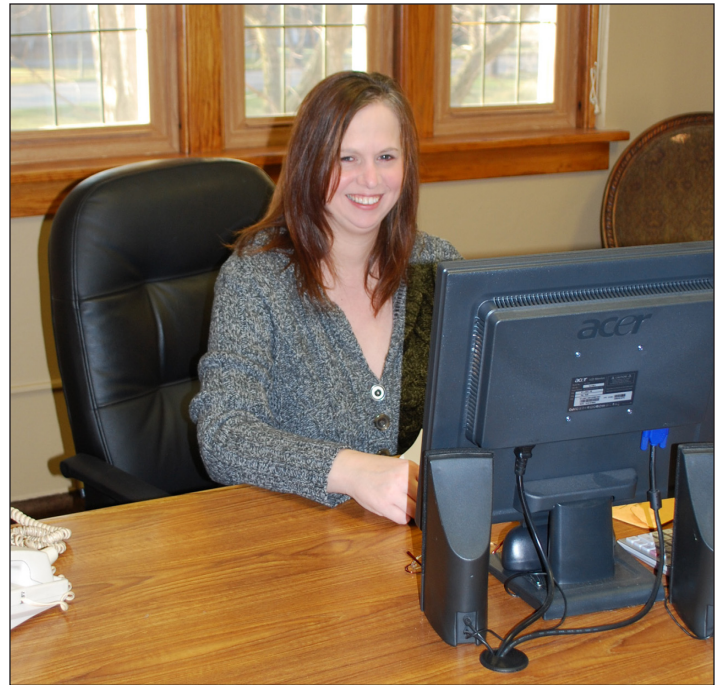
Since Davis is part of the administrative team, she does spend a good deal of time in meetings. However, she still has the opportunity to interact with the youth on a regular basis. She serves as the consultant for Vance Hall, meaning she is responsible for the direct supervision of the youth and family teachers in that home. She plays an important role in the forming of the youths' behavior plans and attends most of the monthly treatment team meetings for each of the 10 youth.

As part of that administrative team, Davis has her hands in a lot of responsibilities that aren't necessarily all her own. "I am part of a team, and part of a lot of administrative teamwork," she said. She is involved with making sure the group homes meet licensing requirements as well as the training of staff.

Days aren't always easy, and a position like Davis' comes with a variety of stresses and challenges. However, there is a silver lining. "The biggest thing for me is knowing the impact I have on kids and their lives," she said.

Since the age of 12, Jeremy* has lived at The Marsh Foundation. In May, he will graduate and move on. This is one of the greatest joys in Davis' job and yet one of the hardest parts too. "He has been here his entire adolescence and I know we are his family, he has no one else," she said. Saying good-bye will be extremely difficult.

Davis is also a licensed social worker and facilitates the weekly empathy group for the youth who live in Marsh Hall. Group counseling is a large part of the specialized intensive treatment program at Marsh Hall and the empathy group is just one in a series of groups for



Kathleen Davis, L.S.W., serves as the director of residential services at The Marsh Foundation. Her responsibilities revolve around making decisions that ensure quality care for the youth being served at The Marsh.

those youth. "The goal is for the youth to get in touch with others' feelings and learn how their actions impact others' feelings," said Davis.

Occasionally, there are days when Davis will get a phone call or a visit from a past youth. More than five years ago, Davis established a strong relationship with a youth on campus who had been here several years. When he left, she continued to keep in contact with him. Even though he spent a brief period in prison, and his life isn't perfect, he is trying to do better. Now, years later, Davis is still an influence in his life. She still sends cards on special occasions and he often calls her on holidays. Even though he has moved on, Davis said she is glad she can still be there for him. "He has no one else and I still feel as though I can have a positive effect on his life," she said.

Although Davis said that the large majority of youth that

leave The Marsh program are successful, one of the biggest challenges she faces is in regards to discharge planning and the number of children that simply have nowhere to go. "The group home program is designed to help children adapt to and live with a family, unfortunately many don't have families to return to," she said.

According to Davis, statistics prove that youth are tremendously more successful when they have a relationship with an adult outside of the group home. "This is why foster homes are so significant. It is so rewarding when we can step a youth down into a foster family that will be their forever family," she said. "There is a great need for committed foster families, those who are committed to making an impact and willing to stick through the tough times with kids," she added.

**Names of youth have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

The Marsh Foundation
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Student Thanksgiving Acrostic Poem

Togetherness with you
Happiness with you
Apples to eat
Nephews to meet
Kids to see
Scents so sweet
Grace to say
Indians to meet
Vegetables to pick
Living to spread
No school to go to
Gourds to cut and paint


Marsh Foundation Alumni Reunion

The dates have been selected for the 2010 Marsh Foundation Alumni Reunion. It will be held August 7 and 8 on The Marsh campus in Van Wert. After the first of the year, alumni can expect to receive more information in the mail as well as registration forms. Mark your calendars now! We look forward to seeing you in August 2010!

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

Calendar of Events

December 2009 ~ April 2010

- 
- December 18 - The Christmas Play and luncheon begins in The Marsh auditorium at 10 a.m.
 - December 21 - January 1 - Marsh Foundation School winter break.
 - February 4, 7 p.m. - County Spelling Bee in The Marsh Auditorium
 - March 20, 7 p.m. - Lincolnview Class Play in The Marsh Auditorium
 - March 21, 2 p.m. - Lincolnview Class Play in The Marsh Auditorium
 - March 26, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.
 - April 2 - April 9 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.

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.