

The Marsh Messenger

• Winter 2011-12 • www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

A Year in Review: 2011 at The Marsh Foundation



In March, 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.

2011 has been another year full of growth and excitement at The Marsh Foundation.

One of the year's highlights was in March when the youth participated in a month-long program entitled; Homeless and Hungry: Becoming Part of the Solution. Throughout the month, the youth learned about the homeless population, their struggles and how to help.

They also organized a food drive on campus. The drive concluded with a concert by the Voices of Unity Youth Choir from Fort Wayne, Ind. Admission to the concert was free with the donation of a non-perishable food item.

The day of the concert also included tours of the historic Marsh Homestead. The event as

a whole, was designed to honor the legacy of the Marsh family. George, Hilinda and Katie Marsh left a strong legacy by being compassionate and helping the less fortunate in the Van Wert community. Hilinda, espe-

cially, left behind writings that were very spiritual in nature. The Marsh Foundation consistently works to continue that legacy.

2011 was full of other fun and meaningful activities. 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. The family provided an Easter egg hunt and other goodies for the youth on campus.

In November, a new sign was unveiled in front of the administration building. Read the full story on page 6.

Thank you for your continued support of The Marsh Foundation and our mission!



A new sign now sits in front of The Marsh Foundation.



THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

Please Share

Please pass The Marsh Messenger along to others in your office or family who would like to read it. Thank you!

Inside

- Letter from the Executive **Page 2**
- Deceased alumni and former employees **Page 2**
- Letter from the Alumni President **Page 3**
- Annual Letter from The Trustees **Page 3**
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Needs Volunteers **Page 3**
- House Happenings **Page 4**
- Photo Book **Page 5**

Leadership

- **The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees:**
 - Gary Corcoran
 - Robert Gamble
 - Gerald Thatcher
- **The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:**
 - Kim Mullins
 - Roger Salisbury
 - Jeff Grothouse

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

From the executive's desk ...

Who are the children at The Marsh Foundation?

While it is impossible to speak to you specifically about every child or youth here at The Marsh Foundation, I can tell you briefly about the qualities, background, and challenges that are common to most of the children and youth we serve.

Our children, like all other children possess many qualities which they have either acquired from experiences, or have discovered once they were placed here. Some are athletic and enjoy competing in sports; many are not afraid to be assertive. They are often affectionate and eager to please adult caregivers. Artistic qualities seem to thrive among many of our children.

They are adventurous and courageous as they show an undue willingness to try new skills, or face great personal challenges. Children are resilient and possess unexpected strengths and qualities even after years of abuse, neglect, various traumas, and movement from caregiver to caregiver.

In terms of background, our children have very different histories than those of most children. Their history of neglect, abuse and inconsistent care begins early in life. They are very often placed in foster homes prior to the age of 10, with many being placed while they are yet in their primary years.



Kim Mullins, P.C.C.

"We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope."
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Foster home disruption is frequent and as a result, they move into more restrictive and intensive care, (group homes, residential centers, detention centers). This type of movement only serves to deepen their pain and despair.

Relationships are desperately needed by our children if they are to heal and grow but serious behavioral issues and constant movement interfere with the formulation of lasting, trusting relationships.

We see them engage in a variety of destructive and self-destructive behaviors/symptoms/coping mechanisms whose function is to try to make life bearable. As they grow older, they continue to try to develop relationships but experience a cycle of conflict, heartbreak, jealousy, violence and abandonment.

Our mission to inspire hope has become one of the overall goals of everything we do here at The Marsh Foundation. Hope, however is nonexistent without trust or faith in someone. Relationship development becomes one of the biggest challenges in a child's tenure here at The Marsh. The road to recovery and progress is long and hard but our children persist and endure. How encouraging it is to see a child who has lost all hope begin to trust again.

I am hopeful that the preceding words helped you to know a little bit more about the children and youth we serve here at The Marsh. They are very much worth our while and deserve a chance to make their lives better. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers this season and always. Merry Christmas to everyone!

Kim Mullins

Executive Director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh

You're Invited: Please Join Us Dec. 21!

The annual Christmas celebration will be held on Wednesday, December 21 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 for a fun morning on The Marsh Foundation campus!



Deceased Marsh Foundation Alumni and Former Employees

Notifications in 2011 of Deceased Alumni :

Mr. Raymond Geisman (former employee) 06/17/2010

Mr. Dan R. Jerome (former employee) 11/10/11

Mr. William Dorse Swoveland (former employee) 03/26/2011

Mr. Wilbur Glenn Warner (former employee) 10/02/2011

Mr. Richard J. Longworth (Alumni) 07/20/2011

A commitment to excellence

Annual Letter from The Board of Trustees

To The Marsh Family From The Trustees;

It is our pleasure to extend best wishes to you for a joyous Christmas season. Hopefully you can overcome the stressful moments that holidays tend to produce and enjoy your family and friends more than ever this year.

To have such a dedicated, talented and caring staff as you is truly gratifying. Our children are extremely fortunate to be in your care. We say THANK YOU from the bottom of hearts for all that you do.

Christmas time comes at the end of another very business year. It is at this time that we tend to reflect on our personal and professional lives. As Trustees, we reflect upon our mission and constantly seek the best way to achieve it.

We have many assets that are utilized in accomplishing our mission, but none more important than the great people that are a part of The Marsh



The Marsh Foundation Trustees from left to right: Mr. Robert Gamble, Mr. Gerald Thatcher and Mr. Gary Corcoran.

Foundation.

Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote many years ago these words of wisdom:

“Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas time.”

As we thank our Creator for the many blessings we have, let’s also become child like in spirit this Christmas season to

more fully appreciate the joy and happiness available to us on this earth.

To the entire Marsh Family—employees, retirees, alumni, students, foster parents and families we extend wishes for a peaceful holiday season and a prosperous new year.

With Warmest Regards,

*The Marsh Foundation Trustees
Mr. Gary Corcoran
Mr. Robert Gamble
Mr. Gerald Thatcher*

Big Brothers Big Sisters in Need of Volunteers

The Marsh Foundation partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mercer, Auglaize and Van Wert Counties to provide a Supper Club Program for youth on campus.

The Marsh youth are matched with adult volunteers from the community. We are inviting you to consider helping with this worthwhile program which is unique to Van Wert County.

The program consists of supper and an activity on the first and third Thursday of every

month from November through May. These ‘suppers’ occur at various locations in Van Wert and at The Marsh Foundation.

The program also consists of a monthly visit. The volunteers choose a weekend day when they can spend about an hour with the youth.

The program is tremendously beneficial when it comes to teaching the youth about relationship building. Following the program’s completion in May every year, youth are asked to complete a survey about their

experiences. Last year, a youth comment on the survey said “Thank you for the first friend I’ve ever had.”

Please consider helping with this meaningful program. If you, or someone you know, is interested in participating, contact Sherry Grone at The Marsh Foundation (419.238.1695) or Nancy Eberle at the BBBS office (1.866.670.2227).

From the Alumni President: Jeannie “Hisey” Snyder

Merry Christmas to all Alumni, Students, Faculty and Trustees:

I would like to tell you how proud I am of some of our alumni’s career successes. We have alumni that have become doctors, college professors, school principals, teachers, business executives, medical massage therapists and served in the military. And, they’ve become the very best wives, husbands and parents.

George H. Marsh would be very proud!

I treasure my phone conversations with some of our alumni this year, so please keep on calling!

Hope your holidays are filled with joy!

Happy Holidays!

Jeannie “Hisey” Snyder
Your Alumni President



*Merry Christmas
and Happy
New Year
from everyone
at The Marsh
Foundation!*





Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall currently has one opening. A youth on campus recently completed her program and moved into our foster care network.

The girls have had a busy summer and fall. During the summer, they enjoyed activities such as swimming, a trip to the zoo and a trip to the lake.

The girls were especially excited about a special art workshop held this fall where they were able to complete an oil painting.

Girls from Clymer, along with other youth on campus

that are a part of the Independent Living Group, were instrumental in putting together the poinsettia sale and greenhouse open house for this year. In addition to selling poinsettias, girls helped design flyers and advertisements for the sale. They also distributed the flyers around Van Wert.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall is always a busy place! There are currently two beds open in the house due to a couple of recent successful discharges.

The boys at Marsh Hall are

routinely busy with various community service projects. Earlier this year, the boys spent time making blankets for the Pregnancy Life Center in Van Wert. After making the blankets, the boys went to the organization's office and made a presentation to the director.

The school year is off to a great start for the boys as well. Three boys from the house made the honor roll for their first quarter grades.

The boys at Marsh Hall are looking forward to a fun holiday season with many fun activities planned.



Vance Voice

Vance Hall is currently full with 10 boys living at the house.

The boys have had an active summer and fall and are still participating in outdoor activities as long as the weather will permit.

This fall, they were excited to participate in an art competition at the annual Apple Festival in Van Wert. Two boys from the house received special awards for their projects!

The boys at Vance Hall, and all the youth at The Marsh Foundation School, have been working hard to prepare for this year's piano recitals and production of 'Scrooge'. The Christmas celebration will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 21 and we hope that you'll be able to join us and witness another fabulous production!

Thanksgiving Poem

Each year, The Marsh Foundation School has an acrostic poem writing contest at Thanksgiving time. Below is this year's winner.

T is for the toughness of the turkey (my aunt can't cook)
H is for the ham hocks that taste better than they look
A is for the apple pies my brother tries to make
N is for the nap I failed to take
K is for the kids running all around
S is for the sweet smells and loud, silly sounds
G is for the games we all play
I is for the icing my family loves when I make
V is for the very strange uncle I have
I is for the incredibly long bubble baths
N is for the neck bones I love to eat
G is for the gravy my grandma makes so sweet

Youth Do Well at Apple Festival Art Competition

The youth at The Marsh Foundation recently submitted projects completed in their art classes to the art competition at the annual Apple Festival. In the contest, youth were competing with students from all Van Wert County schools. There were more than 140 entries. Marsh Foundation youth won a total of five awards in various age categories.

Award winners were:

- Zac – First Place (\$20)
- Dan – Second Place (\$15)
- Kalaeb – Fourth Place (\$5)
- Roger – Outstanding Award



Zac's first place project.

- Brianna – Outstanding Award

The Marsh Foundation youth would like to thank the Van Wert County Fruit Growers Association for hosting the competition and providing the opportunity to have their work showcased.



Clockwise starting at top left: The annual Fall Festival was recently held at The Marsh Foundation. Youth, staff and families participated in a costume contest and pumpkin decorating contest. The 'Marsh Grown' youth garden program once again sold holiday poinsettias this year. All proceeds went to benefit the garden program and the independent living group youth who participate in it. Throughout the months of October and November, The Marsh Foundation family watched as the organization's old sign was removed and replaced with a newly constructed one. The small sign was replaced with a brick structure and a piece of limestone that alone weighed nearly two tons.

Marsh Foundation Unveils New Outdoor Sign

A long-term goal of The Marsh Foundation finally became a reality when a new sign in front of the administration building was unveiled last week. After months of planning and research by The Marsh staff and Board of Trustees, a new sign was chosen and constructed.

“We’ve known that the sign needed updated and it’s been a long discussion,” said Gerald Thatcher, trustee. In the past couple of years, The Marsh has undergone a rebranding of sorts and among other things, implemented a new logo and mission statement. “We really wanted a sign that would reflect the true vision of The Marsh Foundation,” he said.

The final product was a team effort and would not have become a reality without the help of local businesses, Wellman Brothers, Inc. and Swan Memorials. “We have a long-standing relationship with Wellman Brothers and are always pleased with their professional work,” said Jeff Grothouse Marsh Foundation executive secretary and treasurer. Wellman Brothers was responsible for the construction and masonry of the sign.

“We do a lot of masonry work, but this was our first actual sign,” said Blair Walls, owner of Wellman Brothers, Inc. “We couldn’t be happier with how it turned out.”

“Swan Memorials was also fabulous to work with,”



The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees and Executives pose in front of the new sign with representatives from Wellman Brothers, Inc. and Swan Memorials. From left to right: Jeff Grothouse, Blair Walls, Connie Boley, Trustees Bob Gamble, Gary Corcoran and Gerald Thatcher, Marsh Foundation School Principal Roger Salisbury and Executive Director of Child and Family Services, Kim Mullins.

Grothouse said. “They really worked hard to ensure that the stone was engraved and painted in a professional and timely manner. They did a great job,” he said.

Connie Boley, owner of Swan Memorials, said it was an exciting community project for her team to work on. “The piece of Indiana limestone weighs 3,900 pounds and is the heaviest we’ve ever worked with,” she said. The engraving alone took 14 hours and the paint used was mixed by hand to ensure the correct color was created.

The sign, which will

undoubtedly stand for generations to come, is a symbol of the steadfast history of The Marsh Foundation and the organization’s commitment to helping children and families.

The Marsh Foundation has been serving children and families since 1922. The organization’s mission is to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families.

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation recently hired new staff members. They are:

- Katie Miller ~ family-teacher at Clymer Hall.
- Jane Rogers ~ overnight family-teacher at Clymer Hall
- Gerald Gordon ~ campus maintenance staff
- Lyle Ulrey ~ campus maintenance supervisor
- Lisa Frank ~ overnight family teacher at Clymer Hall
- Keith Blass ~ family teacher

Relationship Building ... *One - on - One*

Many times, youth that are admitted to The Marsh Foundation lack a strong, relationship with their biological family. Sometimes, they have no significant relationship with any adult. Because of this, these youth often have difficulties building and sustaining relationships.

The Marsh Foundation is very conscious of this, and in the past several years, has implemented a one-on-one program to help these youth better work their treatment. After the youth's counselor deems it appropriate, youth are paired, one-on-one, with a specific family teacher working in their home.

According to Kathleen Davis, director of residential services at The Marsh, this increases the likelihood that a youth will respond positively to treatment. "National studies, as well as our own outcomes, have

shown that youth with a significant relationship in their lives are more likely to be successful in their treatment," she said. "Before they must learn how to attach to a stranger, such as a new foster parent, they are able to form a significant relationship in the group home with one adult."

The family teacher is chosen based on different criteria, such as their personality, common interests or an initial bond that is sometimes seen. It is also the goal for a family teacher to only have one, one-on-one relationship at a time.

"It can cause some difficulty with scheduling of staff," said Christy Kuhn, family teacher at Clymer Hall. Part of the one-on-one relationship requires that the staff and youth spend time together, by themselves, at least once a week, to aid with relationship building.



When deemed appropriate, The Marsh Foundation works to establish one-on-one relationships between youth and staff. The process helps youth develop better relationship building skills.

Kuhn currently has a one-on-one relationship with a girl living in Clymer Hall and she describes it as similar to a surrogate parent. "I'm there for her ups and downs," she said. "If she needs to discuss rules, or if she wants to advocate for a certain privilege, I'm the one she comes to."

She said she feels these relationships are beneficial to the youth. "This way the kids have a constant, someone that they know will care about them regardless," Kuhn said. She also said it makes the group home feel even more like a family setting.

"I'm really involved with every aspect of her treatment," Kuhn said. "I attend her treatment team meetings and we have counseling sessions together." The bond formed by these one-on-one relationships is strong. Kuhn said she sometimes gets calls on her days off, or will spend time with her youth on those days. She also still keeps in contact with a former one-on-one youth that has left the program.

Davis said she really values the family teachers who are willing to go above and beyond.

"They make themselves available, even when it's not within their work schedule," she said. "They oftentimes carry that relationship beyond the youth's time here at The Marsh."

These relationships can cause staff to form a strong attachment to the youth, which isn't always easy. "It can be difficult," Kuhn admits. "With that attachment, it hurts more when they act out and it is definitely harder when they leave."

The benefits outweigh that difficulty. According to Davis, these relationships provide hope for those kids who don't have anybody to trust. "Many times our youth have lost hope and don't have anything to look forward to. This helps them realize that there is hope and it's worth looking forward to their future."

"If youth have a significant adult caring for them, they learn that they are cared about," said Davis. "This relationship means that there is one person looking after the little details in their life, it provides the role of a parent that they've never, or barely known."

We're on Facebook!

In an effort to keep up with the growing interest in social media and online networking, The Marsh Foundation has started an official Facebook page. It can be found at www.facebook.com/MarshFoundation.

In addition to a variety of photographs from the past and recent events, the Facebook page features updates on current activities and various things happening at The Marsh Foundation.

If you are a member of Facebook, please stop by and 'like' our page. We'd love to see comments from alumni and friends of The Marsh. Also, feel free to invite all of your friends



to 'like' The Marsh Foundation. We are involved in a variety of community activities and our page is of interest to many, not just alumni and former employees.

There are several alumni already on our page, networking and having great conversations. Please join us!

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

Address Correction Requested
Return postage Guaranteed

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Van Wert OH
Permit No. 74

Learn About Marsh History

Are you curious about the history of George Marsh, his family and The Marsh Foundation? Ron Bagley, former director of The Marsh, is very knowledgeable on these topics and has materials that he presents to groups in the community. If your group is interested in hearing about George Marsh and the role his wife Hilinda played in forming The Marsh Foundation, contact Dawn Berryman at 419.238.1695 ext. 233. She can schedule a time for Bagley to present to your group, or provide a tour of the historic Marsh Homestead.

Marsh Foundation Alumni Wanted

Are you in contact with other alumni from The Marsh Foundation that aren't on our mailing list? Encourage them to fill out our contact form online at www.marshfoundation.org, and provide us with their contact information. 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

December 2011 ~ April 2012

- December 21 - The Christmas Play and luncheon begins in The Marsh auditorium at 10:15 a.m.
- December 23 - 31 - Marsh Foundation School winter break.
- January 7, 7:30 p.m. - Marsh to attend Mad Ants Basketball game in Fort Wayne.
- March 16 and 17, 7 p.m. - Lincolnview Class Play in The Marsh Auditorium
- March 18, 2 p.m. - Lincolnview Class Play in The Marsh Auditorium.
- March 26 30 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- March 30, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.



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.