

The Marsh Messenger

• Winter 2017-18 • www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

The Marsh Foundation to Open New Foster Care and Adoption Center

The Marsh Foundation has purchased the building at 102 W. Main Street in Van Wert and plans to utilize the space as the agency's new Foster Care and Adoption Center.

The three story building will undergo several renovations in order to turn the main level into office and training space for The Marsh's growing foster care and adoption division. "As our agency continues to grow and serve more children, it became apparent that we needed additional space that was more accessible to the community," said Kim Mullins, executive director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh.

In recent months, The Marsh has been focused on recruiting more foster and adoptive families. The increase in efforts has brought several new families onboard. As a result, more training events are taking place, more treatment meetings are being held and more children

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The Marsh Foundation has purchased the building at 102 W. Main Street in Van Wert. Melissa Gearhart, foster care and adoption supervisor (L) and Kim Mullins, executive director of Child and Family Services at The Marsh, are pictured in front of the future home of the agency's Foster Care and Adoption Center.

A Year in Review: 2017 at The Marsh Foundation

The Marsh Foundation continues to grow and prosper. 2017 was a year full of accomplishments and exciting moments. As the organization continues to serve children and

families in need, many services have been expanded and improved.

In March, the cultural diversity committee at The Marsh organized two guest panels dur-

ing Women's History Month. The focus was women in the workforce and featured females in traditionally male dominated fields.

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THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

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Leadership

The Marsh Foundation Board of Trustees:

Gary Clay
Gary Corcoran
Robert Gamble

The Marsh Foundation Executive Team:

Robbie Breese
Kim Mullins
Jeff Grothouse

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

Great Start to the School Year!

The Marsh Foundation School has had a very successful and very busy start to the 2017-18 school year. Thus far, we have had a group of students that have been very focused on their academics. At the end of the first quarter, we had the highest percentage of students on the A/B honor roll that we've had in 4 years.

We are currently focusing on test-prep for the end of course exams this December. Many of our high school students will be taking/retaking these exams to earn credit towards high school graduation. After our testing is complete, we will end our first semester with a talent show, Christmas carols, a Christmas meal, and a graduation ceremony honoring two of our seniors. Below is a brief summary of our first semester.

New School Staff

This fall, we welcomed Lisa Goodwin to our school staff. Lisa is our new school family teacher for Vance Hall. Lisa has worked in the group homes for 10 years as a family teacher, with 4 of those years being a lead family teacher. Lisa has fit in well and has quickly become an asset to our school.

Zoo Field Trip

As part of a cross-curricular project, students chose an animal from the Fort Wayne Zoo to research. The students



Robbie Breese

learned about their animal's classification, characteristics, how they adapt to their environment, region of the world they live, cost to take care of the animals, and other fun facts. We then took a trip to the zoo where the students found each of their animals and spent time looking at them in their small groups. Although we had monsoon conditions the morning of the trip, we still had a successful, enjoyable trip.

Apple Dolls

Our students spent a few weeks in Art class making apple dolls. Students then entered the dolls in a local art competition at the Van Wert Apple Festival. The apple dolls were entered in the 3-D category. The Marsh School had 11 award winners. The winners were recognized at our annual Thanksgiving celebration.

Veterans Day Assembly

This November, our students spent time learning about and recognizing our veterans. Our school bulletin board recognized staff, family members, and former students that have served or are currently serving in our military. The highlight in recognizing our veterans was an assembly in which two veterans, Ben Marsee and John Walls, came and shared their stories. Both Mr. Marsee and Mr. Walls spoke about their time of service and how they were affected both during and after their service. Both men were very open about their struggles, but reiterated that the safety and freedom that they helped provide for our nation are worth the struggles that come with the service. This humbling presentation was very engaging and ended with the students being able to view and hold military equipment and memorabilia.

Wonder

This year, our students read the book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. This book offers many opportunities for lessons about bullying, friendship, and overcoming challenges with our students. Students spent a lot of time reading, foreshadowing and summarizing the book. After reading the book, The Marsh School went to the Van Wert Cinemas to watch the newly

released movie that goes along with the book. After the movie, students spent time summarizing and comparing/contrasting both the book and the movie.

Thanksgiving Celebration

We held our annual Thanksgiving celebration in November. In preparation for Thanksgiving, our students completed projects that consisted of a cover page, an acrostic and an essay. The purpose of the projects was not only to learn about Thanksgiving, but to recognize things that we are thankful for. A common theme from project to project was, "although we may not be in the situation we want to be in at the moment, we do have a lot to be thankful for." Many students also mentioned how thankful they were for The Marsh Foundation and the people here that help them through their struggles every day. We had 10 project award winners and 6 of the award winners presented their project before our Thanksgiving meal.

Happy Holidays

I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Although the holiday season is a joyful time for most, it is a difficult for many of our students. I ask that you keep our students and staff in your thoughts and prayers over the holidays.

Robbie Breese

*Director of Education/Principal
The Marsh Foundation School*

A commitment to excellence

Marsh Foundation Highlights the Need for Adoptive Families

Governor Kasich Declares November Adoption Recognition and Recruitment Month in Ohio

National Adoption Month is an initiative to increase national awareness and bring attention to the need for permanent families for children and youth in the U.S. foster care system.

Each year, the initiative focuses its outreach and awareness-raising efforts around a new adoption-related theme. This year's theme, "Teens Need Families, No Matter What," highlights the importance of identifying well-prepared and committed families for the thousands of teenagers in foster care. Many of these young people are less likely to be adopted, often because of their age, and will too often age out of the system without a healthy, stable support system.

Having permanent family connections provides teenagers with the critical legal and emotional support that all young people need as they transition into adulthood and possibly continue their education, seek employment, start new relationships, and find their way.

Governor Kasich released a proclamation declaring November 2017 'Adoption Recognition and Recruitment Month.'

National Adoption Month is an initiative sponsored by the Children's Bureau, in partnership with AdoptUSKids and Child Welfare Information Gateway. Each November, National Adoption Month brings awareness to the needs of children and youth waiting for a "forever family." This year the theme is building an effective local response system to support prospective families in the initial stages of considering a teen adoption—and the later stages of preparing for and adjusting to it—by offering support services at every step. Teenagers are often hard to place, but they are as much in need of permanency as younger children and risk exiting the foster care system without any legal or emotional ties. A young person bereft of any family ties lacks the foundational support and compass all youth need as they mature into adulthood.

If you are interested in foster care or adoption, please call The Marsh Foundation at 419.238.1695 ext. 307 or visit www.marshfoundation.org/help-kids.

A Note from The Marsh Board of Trustees

Giving Thanks this Holiday Season

All of us at The Marsh Foundation want to bring you warm Christmas greetings. This is the beginning of bright lights and brighter smiles of giving and gratitude. This holiday season, join with the The Marsh Foundation Trustees in giving thanks.

In today's busy world, we sometimes forget to stop and say "thank you for all you do." This holiday season The Marsh Foundation is giving thanks --- thanks to our foster families and family service agencies for your continued partnership, and thanks to our dedicated, talented and caring staff for their valuable contribution to the accomplishment of our mission.

Every day our staff helps young people in their time of need by compassionately guiding them as students and individuals preparing for independent living. We invite you to join us in recognizing the individuals who help The Marsh make a difference in the lives of young people and their families throughout the year.

Happiest of holidays from The Marsh Foundation. Our heartfelt good wishes to you as we celebrate the season of our Savior's birth.

*Marsh Foundation Trustees;
Bob Gamble, Gary Clay and Gary Corcoran*

Deceased Marsh Foundation Alumni and Former Employees

Alumni:

Mrs. Donna Longsworth Maples Deceased: 09/09/2016
Notified: 07/17

Lloyd Lee Deceased: 12/24/2016

Elizabeth "Liz" M. Roberts Heintz Deceased: 02/04/2017

Mrs. Jane Taylor Krieger Deceased: 02/04/2017

Former Employees:

Paul Walworth "Wally" Purmort Deceased: 12/02/2016
Trustee





Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently full with 10 girls. As the holidays near, the girls have been keeping busy with various projects and activities. The girls very much enjoyed the Fall Festival held on campus at the end of October. Many of them dressed in costume and decorated pumpkins for the contests.

Two girls were honored at the Thanksgiving program for their poem and essay writings.

The girls have been working hard to prepare for the upcoming holiday program. Several are participating in the talent show.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall Marsh Hall is currently at capacity with ten boys. They all enjoyed participating in SPIRIT Week this fall. They enjoyed mis-match day, hat day, costume day, throwback Thursday and sports day. Each day staff and youth voted on the best dressed and awarded prizes accordingly.

Marsh Hall did a great job during the United Way of Van Wert County 'Day of Caring' 19th Annual Food Drive in September. They encouraged and motivated staff and other individuals to donate to the important cause.



Senior Stuff

Senior Hall currently has two openings. The program at Senior Hall is specific to boys over age 15 that are in need of independent living skills. If you would like to make a referral, please contact Kelly Gross at 419.238.1696 ext. 360.

The boys spent several weeks in November selling poinsettias for the annual winter fundraiser for the garden program on campus. They also signed up to work shifts on delivery and pick-up day. The fundraiser teaches them sales, organization and customer service skills.



Vance Voice

Vance Hall is currently full with 10 boys. The home is always active and busy. As the weather has begun to change, their focus has switched to mostly indoor activities.

Several of the boys have begun to prepare for the upcoming holiday program and talent show.

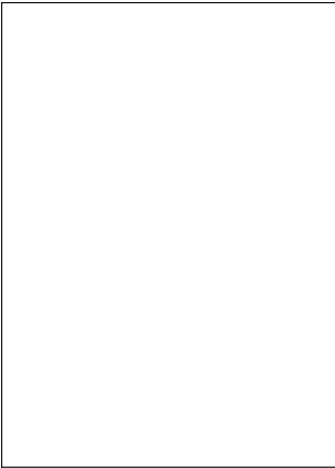
Many of them also created apple dolls in art class that were entered into the Van Wert Apple Festival art show. The Marsh had a total of 11 students win ribbons, including some from Vance Hall.

Thanksgiving Poem and Essay Contest

Each year, The Marsh Foundation School has an acrostic poem and essay writing contest at Thanksgiving time. Below is this year's poem winner and at right is an excerpt from the winning essay.

Thankful for the ability to be together,
Here we find ourselves, no matter the weather.
A day to celebrate everything we have in life,
No fears, no worries, no stress or strife.
Kindness envelopes us all,
So it does every Fall.
Grateful are we for each other,
Iwish it could go on forever.
Various foods, all delectable indeed.
It is this day, every year, that makes me feel free.
No matter what happens throughout each year,
Giving thanks is what we will always do here.

"It's easy for me, in a group home, to often sit and wish my life was different. But when I really think about how drastically different my life could be right now, I realize I really need to sit down and count my blessings. I'm grateful for my father, my strength, my education, a safe home, and, most importantly, I'm grateful to be alive. I am so glad I can laugh with my friends until I cry, listen to music that gives me goose bumps, see my dogs (who jump all over me when I come home), go on long drives, smell the warm air on a summer day, and meet new people who complete me. It's been seven months since my failed suicide attempt. I feel pretty grateful for these past seven months."



Clockwise from the top left: Our students spent a few weeks in art class making apple dolls. Students then entered the dolls in a local art competition at the Van Wert Apple Festival. We had 11 award winners. This November, our students spent time learning about and recognizing our veterans. The highlight in recognizing our veterans was an assembly in which two veterans, Ben Marsee and John Walls, came and shared their stories. SPIRIT week was held on campus again this year and one of the days featured costumes for youth and staff.



Marsh Foster Care, Adoption Division Grows, Hires New Licensing Specialist

The foster care and adoption division at The Marsh Foundation continues to grow in order to meet the increasing number of children in care. Part of that growth is the hiring of a new consultant and licensing specialist, Breanna Zipfel, LSW.

Zipfel is a 2012 graduate of Tinora High School and a 2015 graduate of Defiance College where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in social work. She went on to become a Licensed Social Worker (LSW).

She brings with her a variety of experience from working with developmentally disabled individuals at Easy Living, domestic violence victims at the House of Ruth and mental health patients at Four County

Family Center. Her position at The Marsh brings her back into the foster care system. She was an intern with a foster care agency during her senior year at Defiance College.

“I love being able to see foster families and the foster youth shape one another in positive ways,” she said. “I’m really happy to be back in the foster care setting,” she added.

In addition to consulting with current foster parents, Zipfel is tasked with conducting home studies and working toward licensing new foster and adoptive homes within The Marsh network. “I’ve really fallen in love with foster care,” she said.



The Marsh Foundation has hired Breanna Zipfel, LSW, in their foster care and adoption division as a consultant and licensing specialist.

IDL Youth Learn Money Management Skills

The independent living (IDL) curriculum is being expanded and a money management pilot program has begun. This program is currently being tested and fine-tuned before it is rolled out to the entire IDL group.



Money management is a crucial skill for IDL aged youth who will soon emancipate. The goal of this particular program is to teach them how to track money/spending, balance checkbooks, and pay bills on time. It is organized into a six-month long course.

Students have multiple homework assignments including building their own budget. For example, each youth was instructed to work out a laundry budget for the month. They are to assume they have to do laundry at a laundromat and buy all of their laundry supplies. Students also visited a laundromat to get a feel for it and check out local prices.

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Breanna Zipfel - consultant, licensing specialist, foster care.
- Mary Jo Hammond - family teacher
- Emily Baldauf - family teacher
- Brittany Robinson - family teacher
- Beth Dye - CPST, foster care
- Lisa Goodwin - promoted to school family teacher



Lisa Goodwin

2017 Year in Review ... Continued from page 1

The two panels featured professional women in our own community and included: Officer Brandi Dershem, Van Wert Police Department; Erin Patterson, Engineering Student; Beth Runnion, Retired School Principal; Judge Jill Leatherman, Van Wert Municipal Court; Eva Yarger, Van Wert County Prosecutor; and Cindy Hurlless, Customer Services VP, Central Insurance Companies. Staff had the opportunity to listen to the panel answer various questions regarding their experiences in the workplace and how their gender has played a part in their career paths.

Again this year, an egg hunt was the highlight of Easter weekend on The Marsh Foundation Campus. It was all made possible by the Shirley Haight family, who sponsored the festivities for the seventh straight year. Haight's daughter, Cindy Henderson, went above and beyond again this year to make Easter even more special for youth currently residing at The Marsh Foundation.

In an effort to raise awareness and funds to fight child abuse, The Marsh Foundation held its first annual 'Run to End Child Abuse' on Saturday, April 29. The event was a great success. The day brought out several volunteers and participants and most importantly, raised nearly \$1,000 to help fight child abuse in Van Wert County.

In June, The Marsh was proud to be a sponsor of a

collaborative training event in Mercer County. Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD, who is well known for his clinical and basic neuroscience research.

Dr. Perry's clinical research and practice has focused on high-risk children. This work has examined the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological effects of neglect and trauma in children, adolescents and adults. This work has been instrumental in describing how childhood experiences, including neglect and traumatic stress, change the biology of the brain - and, thereby, the health of the child.

The Marsh foster care and adoption program has had a very eventful year. In the spring, they connected with Closet 1:27; an initiative operated by Woodburn Missionary Church in Woodburn, IN. The ministry provides support and supplies for Christian adoptive and foster families. Closet 1:27 delivered 28 journey bags to give to Marsh foster youth. The bags are filled according to gender and age and include things like pajamas, blankets, books, toiletries, a Bible and much more.

The department has seen a lot of growth and expansion in 2017. They hired Breanna Zipfel, LSW as a consultant and licensing specialist, and Beth Dye, who is concentrating her efforts on clinical services for youth in the program. And, of course, the building at 102 W. Main St., was purchased and

in 2018 will house The Marsh's Foster Care and Adoption Center.

The year was also full of wonderful annual traditions and events. National Foster Care Month was celebrated in May, along with National Adoption Month in November. Project Believe again visited with Valentines in February, backpacks before the beginning of school, and Christmas presents in December.

The youth participated in the annual horse show in August, the Fall Festival and Spirit Week in October and the poinsettia sale in November.

We hope that 2017 was a wonderful year for you and yours, and we look forward to what 2018 has in store!

New Foster Care and Adoption Center

Continued from page 1 ...

are being placed in homes. "It is a great feeling to see our number of dedicated foster and adoptive families growing," said Melissa Gearhart, foster care and adoption supervisor. "This new office space will allow us to continue to grow and give us a convenient, accessible location to meet with prospective and current parents."

Formerly Next, the building will receive a face-lift from Alexander & Bebout over the next several weeks. Contractors will work to create offices, training space as well as a conference room. A move-in date is planned for the first quarter of 2018 and an open house will be held for the public at that time.



Pictured top right is Melissa Gearhart (left) foster care supervisor, with Kayla Bagley from Closet 1:27 and their donation of foster journey bags. Bottom right, the cultural diversity committee at The Marsh Foundation organized two guest panels during the month of March; Women's History Month. The focus was women in the workforce and featured females in traditionally male dominated fields.

The Marsh Foundation
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Have You Liked Us Yet?

Did you know that The Marsh has its own Facebook page? Have you liked us yet? You can stay atop of current happenings, get updates about events, see job openings, or connect with friends you used to live with.



We regularly post information about happenings on campus, upcoming events and opportunities to help youth in need.

Please, visit our page at www.facebook.com/Marsh-Foundation and give us a 'like.' Then, encourage your friends to do the same!

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

Calendar of Events

December 2017~ April 2018

- December 21 - January 2 - Marsh Foundation School winter break.
- No School Monday, January 15 in honor of MLK, Jr. Day.
- February 5, 7 p.m. - The Van Wert County Spelling Bee will be held in our auditorium.
- No School Friday or Monday, February 16 or 19 because of staff in-service and President's Day.
- March 19 - 23 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- No School March 30 & April 2 - Good Friday and Easter break.
- Saturday, April 21 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- April 6, 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.