

# The Marsh Messenger

• Winter 2019-20 • [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org)

*Serving children and families since 1922*

## A Year in Review: 2019 at The Marsh Foundation



**Marsh Foundation Trustees and Directors break ground for the new fitness and dining facility; (l to r): Bob Gamble, Gary Clay, Robbie Breese, Kim Mullins, Jeff Grothouse and Gary Corcoran.**

2019 started off on an extremely sad note for The Marsh Foundation family. In January, we lost director of residential services, Kathleen Davis to her battle with glioblastoma, a terminal type of brain cancer. Given just weeks to live in October of 2016, she defied odds and fought for more time with her family and at the job she treasured.

“She was compassionate, caring, supportive and creative in both her role as a leader and adviser,” said Mullins. She will be missed by many.

In March, Megan Tuttle, LISW-S, joined The Marsh Foundation as the new director of residential services. No

stranger to The Marsh, Tuttle first worked on campus as a family teacher, then program manager of Clymer Hall.

“I look forward to living out the mission, to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families,” Tuttle said. “Each piece of this mission is such an integral part into shaping these children and giving their hopes and dreams back to them.”

Tim Slusher, owner of TAG Menswear in Van Wert, reached out to The Marsh Foundation in April about making a clothing donation. The men’s clothing presented to The Marsh includes sweaters, dress pants, dress shirts, jackets, t-shirts and

more and is valued at more than \$12,000. The Marsh was extremely grateful for this large donation which was a definite blessing for the 20 boys living on campus.

In an effort to raise awareness and funds to fight child abuse, The Marsh Foundation teamed up with the Family and Children First Council of Van Wert County to host a ‘Run to End Child Abuse’ in April which is Child Abuse Prevention Month. The event featured a 5K and walk/run as well as a one mile fun run for kids on April 27.

In May, The Marsh Founda-

*Continued on page 3 ...*

### 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**
- Deceased alumni and former employees **Page 3**
- A Note from the Trustees **Page 3**
- Thanksgiving Poem and Essay Contest **Page 4**
- Photo Book **Page 5**
- Long-time family teacher retires **Page 6**
- House Happenings **Page 7**

### 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 ...

The Marsh's building project is set to open in June of 2020. The construction of a building for our staff and students to enjoy physical exercise activities is now all under roof. The project is currently in the exterior brick and roof enclosure stage. The November 11, 2019 change in the weather (4 inches of snow) has not stopped the project from moving forward. The Marsh Foundation Trustees will be holding an Open House and Grand Opening close to the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year beginning in August. This date has not yet

been set.

The new 15,000 square foot building will include a new gymnasium with basketball, volleyball and pickle ball courts and seating for 200 guests in the pull-out bleachers. There will also be locker rooms, restrooms, a gym teacher office, kitchen, commissary and a beautiful new dining room.

The construction began during spring of 2019 with a completion date in June 2020. This new facility sits on the north side of the Administration Building connecting through a corridor to the north school exit.

The maintenance depart-

ment has added two new staff to assist in the day-to-day maintenance of the grounds and buildings of The Marsh Foundation. Mr. Dan Tinnel and Mr. William Wiechart have been a great addition to the current staff of Mr. Lyle Ulrey, Supervisor along with Mr. Randy Patterson and Mr. Erik Price.

The business department of The Marsh Foundation wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

The mission of The Marsh Foundation is to inspire hope, to teach and to care for children and families. To complete this mission; the Marsh campus

must employ quality compassionate staff, continue to care for and improve the campus grounds and continuously seek out ways to help children and families. With the endowment of George H. and Hilinda Marsh and the vision of the Trustees, directors and staff, this mission will be accomplished for many many years to come.

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

*Jeff Grothouse*  
Executive Secretary & Treasurer



Architectural rendering of the addition to The Marsh Administration Building and School.

A commitment to excellence

*Continued from page 1 ...*

tion Trustees and Directors broke ground for the new fitness and dining facility. The 15,000-foot structure will house a gymnasium, locker rooms, restrooms, kitchen, dining area, staff offices and storage areas.

Director of The Marsh School, Robbie Breese, noted the increase in handicap accessibility as well as better fitness opportunities for both youth and staff.

“The number of Ohio youth that are in need of services is consistently growing,” Breese said. “This addition to our campus will put us in a position to be able to serve more children and families in need.”

Construction is currently on schedule and expected to be finished during the summer of 2020.

The Marsh Foundation School held its annual spring celebration at the beginning of June. Four students earned and received their diplomas. In addition, Ms. Suzie Hall was recognized for her retirement and 32 years in education; and the Bagley Auditorium was officially named in honor of past director

Mr. Ron Bagley.

There were also several excellent donations received throughout the year. Project Believe once again generously donated Valentines, back-to-school backpacks and Christmas gifts this holiday. The Marsh is grateful for these donations which always put a smile on the faces of the youth. In addition, Shirley Haight’s family once again made the Easter holiday a memorable one with an Easter egg hunt and gifts for the youth on campus.

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

2019 has been an exciting year at The Marsh and we are looking forward to what 2020 will hold. We hope that 2019 was a wonderful year for you and yours, and we wish you a happy and blessed 2020!

## A Note from The Marsh Board of Trustees

The Trustees wish to extend our warmest wishes for a safe, happy and blessed Christmas season.

The Marsh Foundation is currently serving over 100 youth and families in various Marsh programs. Whether in our residence halls, school, Marsh foster family home or in a Marsh community outreach program, the Trustees are proud for the progress each of our youth and families are making towards their own individual goals.

We are so thankful for the opportunity to open a new facility in June of 2020. The 15,000 square foot building will house a gymnasium, kitchen, dining room, locker rooms, restrooms and office spaces. This facility will be used for students and staff’s health and wellbeing.

The Marsh Foundation is fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional staff to serve our students and families. As Trustees, we wish to thank The Marsh staff for their contribution and dedicated service to the success of The Marsh Foundation.

We are so grateful for the vision and generous contribution of George, Hilinda and Katie Marsh.

May God’s richest blessing be with you all this Christmas Season.

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

## Deceased Marsh Foundation Alumni and Former Employees

### Alumni:

David L. Ross	Deceased: Date Unknown	Notified 05/21/19
Joyce G. Unterbrink	Deceased July 6, 2019	
Marilyn Hall	Deceased September 13, 2018	Notified 08/05/19
Marjora Stuckey	Deceased October 3, 2019	

### Former Employees:

Kathleen M. Davis  
Deceased January 18, 2019



# Thanksgiving Poem and Essay Contest

Each year, The Marsh Foundation School has an acrostic poem and essay writing contest at Thanksgiving time. Below is one of the winning essays (written by Kristy) and at right is one of the winning poems (written by Shelly).

*Without a doubt, everybody has something to be thankful for on Thanksgiving day and every other day. Thing about it, how happy would you be if you didn't have anything to be thankful for. These are some things I'm thankful for, and that I think you should be thankful for too.*

*A Swiss theologian named Karl Barth once said that joy is in the simplest form of gratitude. I believe this because there are so many things to be thankful for. Take for instance the food you eat. 795 million people, and possibly more, around the world are starving. But the thing is that those who have plenty of food add to 72 billion pounds of WASTED food every year.*

*The meaning of thanksgiving is pretty obvious due to the fact that meaning is in the name. You have to give thanks not only on Thanksgiving Day but you should realize that every moment is something to be thankful for. If you like music you should be thankful for the people who go out of their way to make it for you. If you like food and shelter, be thankful for the people who built and grew it, also for the fact that you can afford it.*

*One good way to realize everything we take for granted is to look at the people who don't have. There are people who don't have food, clothing, shelter or clean water to drink. Some people don't even have a life to live because somebody rules them by fear. I'm thankful for all of my freedoms, country, and the people who defend it. So take other people who are less fortunate and think about them the next time you turn on the lights, or the heater in the winter.*

*So be happy because today may be your last day to give thanks, and appreciate everything you have. All in all, Thanksgiving should not just be the fourth Thursday of the month but every single day, and everybody should cherish the friends, family, food, and joy of every day. So be satisfied in everything you do and you will always be thankful, grateful and most of all .... Happy.*

- T** is for the turkey is so yummy.
- H** is for the happiness that brings us together on Thanksgiving.
- A** is for the apple pie that grandma makes that smells so good.
- N** is for November that month of giving thanks.
- K** is for kids that are running all over the living room.
- S** is for the smell of pumpkin pie that comes from the kitchen.
- G** is for green bean casserole that mom makes me eat.
- I** is for the ice tea that we have out on the porch watching the sunset.
- V** is for the vacation that we take on Thanksgiving break.
- I** is for the ice cream that I don't share with my siblings.
- N** is for no school for a few days yaaaa!!!
- G** is for giving thanks to all the people that you love and care about.

## Need to Make a Referral?

*Our Contact Information has Changed*



**THE MARSH**  
FOUNDATION

**Residential/Group Home Referrals:** Call Kelly at 419.238.1695 ext. 360 or [kgross@marshfoundation.org](mailto:kgross@marshfoundation.org)

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

**After Hours/Emergency:** 419.605.8056

[fostercarereferrals@marshfoundation.org](mailto:fostercarereferrals@marshfoundation.org)



Clockwise starting at top: The rec hall on campus is now home to a newly recovered pool table that has long been awaited. The table is a gift from the family of Wally and Laurie Purmort and is 60 years old. Wally was a former trustee and often visited Marsh Hall to play pool with the boys. The week of Halloween was SPIRIT week and full of fun. Each day had a theme and staff and youth both dressed accordingly each day. The days included; crazy hair and crazy sock day, mismatch day, Halloween costume day, come as you are day and sports day. In addition, the fall festival was held Wednesday evening in the rec hall. The night featured a costume and pumpkin carving contest. There was also a chili cook off and karaoke entertainment.

## Long-time Foster Parent and Family Teacher Offers her Perspective after 30 Years of Serving Children

Vicki Chavarria has been serving children and families through The Marsh Foundation for nearly 30 years. Recently, she retired from her position as a family teacher. Previously, she was also a foster parent. The way she describes her time working with children is “heart aches to heart hopes.” Vicki has been kind enough to share some of her most memorable experiences with us. Following are her thoughts.

Think about a situation that was so heartbreaking that it left you with a deep ache in your heart. How did you react and were you able to recover a little bit from it? When youth come to live at The Marsh Foundation, they harbor a variety of heartaches which have deeply affected them. Their treatment depends on what they need in the areas of physical, mental, emotional and educational health.

The Marsh Foundation staff includes the trustees, business staff, maintenance staff, cooks, teaching family staff, school

teachers, counselors and foster care staff. All of the Staff work together to help youth become the best they can be.

There are many meaningful moments that youth and staff experience together. Some of my many experiences were in the foster care division and in the group homes. I would like to share a few of those touching experiences with you.

The first young lady who came to live with me in foster care expressed that she didn't like Christmas due to unhappy memories. I started to put white lights on the 6 ft. Christmas tree. Due to being short, I needed help to reach the top of the tree. She finally offered to help with the lights. After we finished decorating the tree, she marveled at its beauty. She did enjoy that year's Christmas fun! She has kept in touch over the years.

Another story is about a teenage young man in the group home. He had a lot of anger and sadness in his heart. One night he was very anxious and

couldn't sleep. I asked him if he wanted me to sing a lullaby. He said yes. I sang a beautiful song called “Whispering Hope.” He said that was beautiful, fell asleep and slept soundly the rest of the night.

Another young lady in the group home was often loud, obnoxious, and acted out negatively many times throughout the day. Staff worked very diligently with her to help her improve her behaviors. Staff also worked with her parents and observed their family visits. Later the observations subsided. At the spring program, her father came to me to shake my hand. He complimented the staff for their cooperation and great respect shown to his family.

The youth in the group homes learn about respect, kindness and empathy. One boy in particular lacked a certain amount of maturity and had a personality much younger than his age. He put on his Christmas list a certain toy. On Christmas morning he opened the present that contained that toy and was so excited to receive it. The other boys showed him empathy and watched with joy as this boy opened his presents. These acts of kindness warmed the hearts of staff members.

My last story includes a young lady in the group home who I mentored for a year. She then lived with my husband Steven



Vicki Chavarria

and I for a few months until she turned 18. Before she moved out on her own, we did a lot of activities such as taking her first family picture and taking her on her first kite flying adventure. She has kept in touch with us for over 21 years. She is now married and has two daughters. We celebrate birthdays and holidays together. She is our forever daughter.

There are many more stories I could tell. I have worked with children and youth for many years in a variety of capacities.

The Marsh Foundation staff have dedicated their time and talents to turn heartaches to heart hopes in the youth they have served. They truly do fulfill the mission of The Marsh Foundation!

### New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Karla Laukhuf - Family Teacher
- Chris Ellison - Family Teacher
- Mallory Vondenhuevel - Family Teacher
- Claudia Sidenbender - Family Teacher



## 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.

The girls enjoyed the Thanksgiving projects in Mrs. Looser's class. They wrote essays about thankfulness and also wrote acrostic poems about the holiday. Winners were chosen and recognized before the Thanksgiving luncheon held in the cafeteria.

As the holidays approach, the girls have been decorating and planning special activities. Some of them participated in the on-campus poinsettia sale where they sold the flowers to the community. Funds raised go toward the Marsh Grown garden program.

All of the girls are looking forward to the special events and outings scheduled in the coming weeks and want to wish you all a Merry Christmas!



## Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall is currently at capacity with ten boys. They all enjoyed participating in SPIRIT Week this fall. They enjoyed mis-match day, crazy sock day, costume day, come as you are day (messy hair, pajamas, etc.) and sports day. It was a successful week with a lot of participation from both youth and staff.

Each day staff and youth voted on the best dressed and awarded prizes accordingly.

The boys at Marsh Hall have a great view of the construction currently taking place on campus. The new dining and fitness facility is connected to the north side of the Administration building and is located near Marsh Hall. The boys have enjoyed watching the progress of the building going up and are anxious to be able to use it next summer.

As the holidays approach, the boys are looking forward to special meals, time with family, and making memories with each other.



## Vance Voice

There are no current openings at Vance Hall, as the house is full with 10 boys.

Vance Hall is always busy and the boys stay active with a lot of activities. While the weather has turned cold, the boys have shifted their basketball games indoors and spent time in the rec hall. They are putting the recovered pool table to good use.

They have also kept busy this fall and assisted with the poinsettia sales. During the times for pick up, youth take money, help customers select flowers and then carry them to cars for patrons. Not only is the event a good fundraiser, it is also a great opportunity for youth to work on social and customer service skills.

In the coming weeks, the boys have several special outings and activities planned. They are looking forward to spending time with friends and family and having some time out of school.

Merry Christmas!

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

Address Correction Requested  
Return postage Guaranteed



## 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

December 2019 - April 2020

- December 23 - January 3 - Marsh Foundation School winter break.
- No School Monday, January 20 in honor of MLK, Jr. Day.
- No School on Monday, February 17 because of President's Day.
- March 16 - 20 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- April 9 - Early school dismissal for staff in-service.
- Friday, April 10 - No school for Good Friday.
- Saturday, April 18 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- April 3, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.



For more information about any event, visit [www.marshfoundation.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.marshfoundation.org).