

The Marsh Messenger

• Spring 2016

• www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Happily Ever After: Adoption Story that Bloomed at The Marsh Foundation



The Gordon family; David, Joy and Gerald.

Sometimes the road is long and hard; but some things are just meant to be.

Gerald and Joy Gordon were married in June of 1984. Together, they had one child, Lindsey, and for many years thought their family was complete. Eventually, their careers led them both to positions at The Marsh Foundation. This is where they met David in 2011 when he came to live in Vance Hall.

Many days, David would not be able to complete a full school day and he'd end up back at the house. When Gerald was there, performing various maintenance tasks, David would follow him around.

They'd talk, David would help, and almost immediately they formed a relationship.

Gerald suggested the couple mentor him and that quickly turned into the idea that they should become licensed foster parents. Shortly thereafter, it became apparent to the Gordons that David's biological father would no longer be able to maintain custody, so the plan to foster almost immediately turned into the plan to adopt.

The Gordons believed that David needed permanency and not a temporary home. "We just knew we couldn't do that to him."

The process to become licensed foster parents took

several months and throughout that time the couple mentored David and spent a lot of time with him. Gerald took the lead throughout the mentoring relationship; planning activities, initiating meetings and transporting David to and from the group home. Needless to say, he and David formed a strong bond from the beginning.

The relationship had a positive impact on David and his behaviors continued to improve. He had spent several months in the group home on campus because he often was reactive to feelings of disappointment and failure.

He had made significant progress in the group home, but



THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

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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 Executives **Page 2**
- Major League Pitcher visits Marsh **Page 3**
- You're Invited & Upcoming Alumni Events **Page 3**
- Project Believe Continues to Donate **Page 4**
- Photo Book **Page 5**
- Marsh Foundation Seeking Therapist **Page 7**
- Calendar of Events **Page 8**

Leadership

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

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From the Executive's desk ...

Inspiring Hope

The Marsh Foundation mission statement begins with the phrase, "To inspire hope." Hope may be defined as an optimistic feeling or frame of mind based on the expectation of positive outcomes related to events or circumstances in one's life. But what does hope mean for a child who has been neglected, traumatized and has no caretaker to call his/her own?

Without hope and vision for a more meaningful future, children can become paralyzed in their ability to be able to take action by making better decisions for the future. To some of our children, hope can mean an escape from being hopelessly imprisoned by the darkness of past experiences and the fear that the odds are against them. Hope can be what leads them to interact with the world where they can discover meaningful relationships, faith and trust. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Only in the darkness, can you see the stars." What are ways in which we attempt to inspire hope in children who have been injured by past experiences?

First we must help them feel safe. We must understand that feelings of safety and security can't be achieved overnight. Be aware that children without



Kim Mullins

trust have valid fears about their safety. These fears can rob them of hope. They need consistency, familiarity, and control over some aspects of their lives. It is important that they develop confidence in knowing that their needs will be met (food & mealtime, sleep & bedtime, school, physical & medical-dental care). We must find and build on the strengths and interests of each child. We want to see children as unique and extraordinary in their own way so that they can begin to see themselves as capable and worthwhile. They need to experience and remember the feelings associated with making accomplishments. Then, they can begin to see themselves differently and have hope for the future.

We must discipline with compassion and understanding. Most people equate the word

discipline with punishment; but discipline comes from a Latin word which relates to teaching and instruction. With this understanding of discipline, children can learn to regulate through safe, understanding, and meaningful relationships. We have the opportunity to support and influence children versus trying to control or punish them into making changes. Discipline with these children includes setting limits; but the approach with enforcing limits is different. The right approach involves trying to understand where they are coming from instead of making judgements about their behaviors.

Hope is a lifeline to the children we serve here at Marsh. It brings excitement, anticipation and optimism to many children who are bound by worries about their future. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life." Our mission, "to inspire hope," is essential to our children's confidence that happiness and fulfillment is possible for them.

Kim Mullins, LPCC
Executive Director, Child &
Family Services,
The Marsh Foundation

Hope

By Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with
feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune--
without the words,
And never stops at all,
And sweetest in the gale
is heard;
And sore must be the
storm
That could abash the
little bird
That kept so many
warm.
I've heard it in the
chillest land,
And on the strangest
sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

A commitment to excellence

Major League Pitcher Gives Inspirational Talk to Marsh Youth

Major League pitcher Jerry Blevins was on The Marsh Foundation campus recently to deliver an inspirational message to our youth. He spoke about his upcoming season with the New York Mets, and the determination it's taken to make it to the Big Leagues. His message of encouragement and perseverance really resonated with the kids. After his talk, he spent time in the library answering questions, taking photos and



You're Invited:
Please Join Us
May 25



This year's Spring Celebration and Graduation ceremony will take place on Wednesday, May 25 in The Marsh Auditorium. Please plan to join us. There will be piano recitals, the annual production of *The Wizard of Oz*, and graduates will be recognized. A luncheon will follow. All are welcome.

Upcoming Alumni Events

The Marsh Foundation Alumni Association has been busy with several activities. They are planning an event to honor Veterans on Saturday, May 28 from 1 - 3 p.m. in The Marsh auditorium. If you, or someone you know, is a Marsh alumn and veteran, please contact the Alumni group at marshalumniOfficers@gmail.com as soon as possible. Everyone is welcome to attend and more information will be forthcoming.

Also, if you are an Alumn of The Marsh Foundation, you are eligible to receive a membership card. This card will entitle you to various discounts and perks at various local businesses. If you are interested, contact Mabel Trindle at the above e-mail address.

Project Believe's Relationship with The Marsh Foundation Continues to Grow

For the fourth year in a row, Project Believe has helped to make Christmas a little brighter for youth at The Marsh Foundation. The organization, which originated in 2007, has grown from serving 10 kids at Christmas to more than 200 at seven facilities in two states.

Tammie Rafferty, the group's founder, was inspired to help others by her own daughter's circumstances. Their mission is to enrich the lives of youth and their caregivers in residential treatment centers. They provide gifts at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter and back-to-school time at various facilities.

Christmas gifts include things like pajamas, blankets, books, board games, art sets and journals. Each group home also received a bag of items to share among the house and staff were treated to homemade cookies.

This year, two Marsh Foundation employees decided to attend the organization's wrap party and help organize and wrap donated gifts. "It was a spur of the moment decision," said Julie Hess, former Senior Hall Program Manager. She and Naomi Robertson were in the area visiting another youth and decided it was a stop they should make. "We were so glad that we were able to attend and had a great time. It was awesome to be able to give back a little to an organization that has helped us and our kids so much," Hess said.

Not long after the Christmas holiday had passed, the organization once again reached

out to donate Valentines for each youth on campus.

They delivered hand decorated bags of goodies for youth in each home on campus. The cards and treats had special meaning for the kids that received them.

You can learn more about Project Believe by visiting their website at www.projectbelieve.net. Or, you can contact Rafferty directly at projectbelieve@live.com.



Clockwise starting above: Vance Hall Program Manager, Ben Marsee, helps unload the trailer of Christmas gifts from Project Believe. From left, volunteers Tyler Mendoza and Bethan Rousculp help Rafferty deliver Valentine bags to The Marsh. Marsh employees Naomi Robertson and Julie Hess volunteer at The Project Believe wrap party before Christmas. Project Believe board member Minda Springer is pictured with Marsh's Executive Director of Child and Family Services, Kim Mullins, while delivering Christmas gifts.





Clockwise starting above:
The winter weather was mild this year, but there were a couple of opportunities to see the beautiful Marsh Foundation campus covered in snow. Now, spring is right around the corner. The Christmas season was busy and exciting at The Marsh. The staff, youth and foster families had the opportunity to attend the annual Christmas party at Willow Bend Country Club. The Foster Care department also had a Christmas party for their parents and youth, which was enjoyed by all. The Marsh Grown Garden Program had another successful poinsettia sale this past December.



Marsh Foundation Alumnus Now Award-Winning Doctor

Perry Hux and his siblings lived at The Marsh Foundation during their childhood in the 1960s and 70s. After his time at The Marsh, he went on to graduate from the Medical College of Toledo in 1978 and then completed his Family Practice residency there in 1981. Following that, he came back to the area and set up his family practice in Delphos.

Dr. Hux is board certified

in Family Medicine and Addiction Medicine.

Dr. Hux looks back on his time at The Marsh fondly. "I have to say, my years of development and hard work at The Marsh gave me a great grounding in life. People there, like Mr. Ron Bagley, set such wonderful examples of concerned human beings for all of us to aspire to be. I am so thankful for all they gave me."

Dr. Hux has been on St. Rita's Medical Staff since coming back to the area and was Chief of Staff there in 2005-2006.

Each year, the hospital's medical staff names one or two "Legends" for their commitments to the staff, hospital and community. This year, Dr. Hux was among the award recipients. "It was a great honor and I did not expect it," he said. "I love doing what I have been



Dr. Perry Hux

Adoption, continued from page 1 ...

even more so with the stability, *Continued on page 6...*

structure and support provided in the Gordon's home. His motivation to manage his behaviors progressively improved.

Gerald and Joy were licensed as foster parents in September of 2013 and David moved in November 3.

David continued to do well. He was able to transition into an alternative school and then eventually public school. He has also participated in 4H, football and baseball. The support and love given to him by the Gordon's has been tremendously significant in changing his behaviors and attitude.

The long and tedious process of adopting was nearly complete when the unthinkable happened. On August 17, 2015, Gerald suffered a massive stroke while the family was in St. Louis visiting Lindsey and her husband, Brad. After weeks in a St. Louis hospital, Gerald was stabilized and transferred to a hospital in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, approximately an



David signs paperwork at the adoption hearing.

hour from the Gordon's home. There, he underwent several weeks of rehabilitation and therapy.

He is still very limited physically, and struggles to speak, some days only saying a few words. He has improved enough that he was able to move into a rehabilitation facility in Van Wert, so that he is closer to family. He has a prosthetic after an amputation of part of his lower leg and is working on standing and taking steps again. He continues to improve and doctors say that it could take up to two years

before they know how much he'll be able to recover.

As you can imagine, this has had a tremendous impact on the family. David initially had to stay with another family while Gerald was stabilized and he and Gerald's relation-

ship has changed dramatically. David, however, is adjusting well and is concerned about stepping up and helping Joy in the home. The circumstances have brought them even closer together as a family. This fall, Lindsey and Brad also moved back into the home to help.

They all say they wouldn't change a thing. Joy said they are grateful for what they have and they don't have a single regret. She often tells David, "life isn't perfect, but we go on from here."

On Friday, February 12, their dreams were finally realized when David's adoption became final. "I've waited for this my whole life," David said. He will be 13 in May and has

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Tammy Heffner - Family Teacher
- Kelly Smith - Family Teacher
- Jennifer Biberstine - Family Teacher
- Reva Prater - Family Teacher



Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently full with 10 girls. There has been some transition lately and everyone is adjusting well.

The girls and staff at Clymer Hall took advantage of the day off from school on President's Day and traveled to Columbus. The zoo was offering free admission on the holiday and the girls enjoyed interacting with the gorillas, bonobos, a sea turtle and other animals. They look forward to returning in the future.

Several girls also enjoyed participating in an on-campus dream catcher making class activity. Each youth was able to make their own dream catcher. They are now using them to decorate their rooms at Clymer Hall.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall currently has one opening in their JSO program. The boys have been keeping busy over the winter, but are anxiously awaiting the spring weather and more time outdoors.

During the winter months, the boys have had the opportunity to participate in several fun activities. They traveled off-campus to go ice skating and to visit the Allen County Museum.

On-campus, they made buckeyes for Christmas and participated in a sewing class where they made their own pillowcase.

The boys are actively preparing for this spring's piano recital and production of The Wizard of Oz. They have been auditioning for parts in the



Senior Stuff

Senior Hall is currently full with five, independent living aged boys. However, there is one opening anticipated in the coming weeks.

Recently, staff and youth were having a meal at Arby's when they spotted what they thought was a lost ferret. A youth initiated calling the Humane Society and took its picture so that the animal could be helped.

Luckily, a representative from the VWHS was able to respond and capture him easily. He was sent to a foster home who often takes care of this type of animal. It was then realized that it was in fact a mink and not (a closely related) ferret. Thanks to the youth's initiative and help, the animal is happily staying



Vance Voice

Vance Hall is currently full with 10 boys.

Several of the boys at Vance Hall are involved with Supper Club, the mentoring program that The Marsh offers in conjunction with Big Brothers Big Sisters. These gatherings keep the boys busy playing games, sharing meals and visiting local points of interest. In the near future, they will tour the historic Homestead on The Marsh campus and learn more about the organization's origination and history.

Recently, several boys were excited to attend the field trip to the Imagination Station in Toledo. They are looking forward to more activities and community service opportunities during spring break.

2015 Annual Report

Did you receive a copy of the 2015 Annual Report released last month by The Marsh Foundation? If you did not, please contact Dawn Berryman, marketing and public relations specialist, to request one. She can be reached at 419.238.1695 ext. 233 or dberryman@marshfoundation.org.

Marsh Foundation Seeking Therapist

The Marsh Foundation is seeking a full-time, licensed counselor for its on-campus group home program. The ideal candidate will have more than five years of experience working with adolescents in individual and group therapy settings. Experience with risk assessment, diagnosis, trauma and sexual offender treatment is preferred. A license from the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board is required.

The Marsh program encourages and

supports clinician development and ongoing training. The therapist will be responsible for providing intensive treatment, CPST clinical supervision, and advocacy to adolescents and families. The therapist is also responsible for becoming familiar with the group home treatment model and coordinating with all members of the treatment team to achieve targeted outcomes.

The candidate must be flexible. Excellent pay and benefits are provided. Please contact [info\(at\)marshfoundation.org](mailto:info(at)marshfoundation.org) with interest.

The Marsh Foundation
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Address Service Requested



Have You Liked Us Yet?

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



Most importantly, you can learn more about the upcoming reunion and connect with others who may be attending. As the event draws closer, we will be posting updates, agendas and reminders.

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

March ~ July 2016

- March 27 - Easter Egg Hunt on campus courtesy of the Henderson family.
- March 28 - April 1 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- April 1, 7 p.m. - Peony Pageant in The Marsh Auditorium.
- April 6 - Marsh Foundation Youth Talent Show.
- May 7 - The spring plant sale will be held in the greenhouse and Homestead Tours will be available from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- May 25, 10 a.m. - Spring celebration and graduation ceremony held in The Marsh Auditorium
- May 25 - The last day of school



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/alumni. This ensures that you receive all mailings from The Marsh.