

# The Marsh Messenger

• Summer 2016 • [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org)

Serving children and families since 1922

## Marsh Foundation Hosts 2016 Graduation and Spring Celebration

The Marsh Foundation School held its annual spring celebration on Wednesday, May 25. The day included piano recitals, a musical production of *The Wizard of Oz*, a graduation ceremony and a luncheon. A total of three students were honored for receiving their high school diplomas. During the graduation ceremony, those receiving diplomas were invited to speak. A former student was also invited to share some inspirational words about the successes he's experienced since leaving The Marsh.

Many of the youth's friends and families, as well as community members joined in the celebration. More than 35 students participated in the day's festivities. Many received academic awards for their successes throughout the school year. Following the program in the auditorium, everyone in attendance enjoyed a luncheon in the cafeteria.

The Marsh Foundation wishes all of our graduates well in the future and congratulates them on their successes thus far.

This year's Marsh Foundation graduates were blessed to each receive a basket full of items from Project Believe and Abbott Labs in Tipp City. The baskets included items such as kitchen utensils, cookware, a shower curtain, tool kit, dinnerware, towels and much, much more.



**Above: A student performs a duet with piano teacher Audrey McClure during the piano recital. Below: Pictured is Project Believe Founder and Director Tammie Rafferty with the baskets she delivered for each Marsh Foundation graduate.**

All of these items will be extremely helpful to the youth as they move out on their own. The Marsh Foundation is extremely excited about this part-

nership and the way it continues to evolve. The generosity of Project Believe is truly making an impact in the lives of young adults!



**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
  - Jeff Grothouse
  - Kim Mullins

*The Marsh Foundation*  
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## From the Executive's desk ...

Another successful school year has come to a close at The Marsh Foundation School. We proudly ended the school year with a piano recital, an amazing production of The Wizard of Oz and a wonderful meal. Most importantly, the day was highlighted by a graduation.

This year, we had two students graduate from The Marsh Foundation School, and we also recognized another student affiliated with The Marsh Foundation that graduated from a local school. As principal, I am extremely confident that we gave these two graduates tools that will help them become successful in their future endeavors.

Last fall, I wrote about a lot of change that we would be implementing this school year. As we all know, change can present many challenges and some resistance. The Marsh Foundation School is extremely fortunate to have staff members that will embrace anything that is in the best interest of our students. We did face challenges and experience failures along the way, but our school's resilient attitude persevered, and we were able to accomplish a lot of great things.

School looks much different today than what most of us are traditionally used to. There is a need to individualize all instruction, appropriately chal-



Mr. Robbie Breese

*"Life doesn't owe you anything."*

*—Jerry Blevins*

lenge students in different ways, and provide paths that align to our students' future goals. Today's students are becoming increasingly more demanding in the following areas: relating curriculum to "real life" experiences, hands-on activities/projects, successful collaboration with peers, career-based learning, visual tools and technology based lessons, just to name a few. In reflecting on this past school year, I can proudly provide evidence to where our teachers are meeting these student demands through the curriculum they are teaching.

Here are a few of the things we did this school year:

- Started a Book Club;
- Went 1:1 with student computers;
- Visited and studied the Ohio Statehouse, also meeting Senator Hite;
- Created artwork out of recycled plastics ;
- Implemented a new technology class as well as an On-line Curriculum;
- Compared/contrasted historic literature to current films;
- Developed structures made to withstand an Earthquake Simulator;
- Studied food safety supplemented with taste testing cow tongue, brain, gizzards and other unpopular delights;
- Created Holocaust Projects which were presented at Temple Beth Israel-Shaare Zedek in Lima, Ohio;
- Created career projects at the Fort Wayne Zoo for our elementary students;
- Explored "Code" in technology;
- Studied and presented on influential people in African American history;
- Had a Thanksgiving Project Competition; and
- Participated in and received recognition at a local Art Exhibition

One of the greatest memories from this school year was an assembly featuring major

league pitcher, Jerry Blevins. Mr. Blevins is currently a middle reliever for the New York Mets. Students were able to ask questions, received autographs and were able to meet the baseball star. Mr. Blevins spoke about his past leading up to his professional career and life's unpredictability saying, "Life doesn't owe you anything." He stressed the importance of always planning for what comes next and adjusting to what life throws your way next. Our organization is truly blessed to have role models, like Jerry Blevins, that are willing to take time out of their busy lives and lead our youth in a positive direction.

Lastly, the end of one school year means the beginning of the next will be here before we know it. As much as we would like to continue reflecting on our many accomplishments from this past year; it's time to move on and start planning for the next. We will continue making advancements in technology, continue ongoing improvements in curriculum, begin enhancing a new credit recovery program and will be constructing a new classroom in the basement of the administration building. With ongoing future planning in the school, we continue to make decisions that support our mission of teaching and caring for our student while inspiring hope for a brighter future.

*Mr. Robbie Breese*  
The Marsh Foundation School  
Principal, Director of Education

# A commitment to excellence

## 2016 - 2017 Marsh Foundation School Calendar

### Monday, Aug. 15

Faculty Work Day

### Tuesday, Aug. 16

Faculty In-Service

### Wednesday, Aug. 17

First Day for Students

### Tuesday, Aug. 30

Staff In-Service (Dismiss at 1:08 for students)

### Monday, Sept. 5

Labor Day (No School)

### Friday, Oct. 28

Staff In-Service - No School

### Saturday, Nov. 12

Parent-Teacher Conferences

### Wed. - Fri., Nov. 23-25

Thanksgiving Vacation

### Wed. - Mon., Dec. 21 - Jan. 2

Christmas Vacation

### Tuesday, Jan. 3

Classes Resume

### Monday, Jan. 16

MLK Day - No School

### Friday, Feb 17

Staff In-Service - No School

### Monday, Feb. 20

President's Day - No School

### Mon. - Fri. March 20 - 24

Spring Break - No School

### Friday, April 14

Good Friday - No School

### Monday, April 17

Easter Break - No School

### Saturday, April 22

Parent- Teacher Conferences

### Tuesday, May 23

Last Day for Students

### Wednesday, May 24

Faculty Work Day

## May Honors National Foster Care Appreciation Month

One of the most meaningful things you can do in life to help a child is to become a foster parent. The Marsh Foundation celebrated Foster Care Appreciation Month throughout the month of May. The organization focused on recruiting additional families to help care for the many children in need.

The Marsh offers a continuum of care that includes a Foster Care Program. Last year, more than 100 children were turned away from our program because of a lack of foster homes. The Marsh believes that all children have the right to love, protection and to be cared for by a committed family.

If you have an interest in becoming a foster parent, please call 419.238.KIDS for more information. Inquiries can also be placed at [www.marshfoundation.org/helpkids](http://www.marshfoundation.org/helpkids).

All foster parents receive ex-



**Employees and foster parents at The Marsh Foundation participated in a recruitment challenge during the month of May.**

tensive training. Certified foster parents are required to undergo continuing training to maintain their license.

Foster parents can be married couples or a single individual. Foster parents are substantially reimbursed for

costs associated with caring for a foster child. Consultants are assigned to each foster family and are available 24 hours, seven days a week. Consultants help create the youth's treatment plan, offer support and are available in crisis situations.

## Supper Club Season Concludes

The 2015-16 Supper Club season recently wrapped up with their last supper at Willow Bend Country Club. The Supper Club program is operated in conjunction with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Auglaize, Mercer and Van Wert Counties. Matches meet in a group setting twice a month for supper and an activity. They also schedule one-on-one time throughout the month.

The beginning of the season started with eight matches and five of those matches finished the complete season. Three matches ended early due to kids leaving The Marsh program.

The Marsh Foundation is very grateful to the amazing volunteers who give of their precious time, energy and efforts to make meaningful relationships with those kids who have minimal family involvement or outside support.

Many of the Supper Club volunteers have been with this program for several years: Recognized were Phil Burnett for six years; Tony



## Big Brothers Big Sisters

*Little Moments. Big Magic.™*

Perry and Ron Lumm for five years; Pam Purmort for four years; Mandy Fifer, Jim Twining and Diana Creekmore for two years; and Marie Runyon completed her first year.

A big "thank you" goes out to all of our mentors for giving hope and lots of love to the kids! If you're interested in volunteering this coming school year with Supper Club program please contact Sherry Grone at The Marsh, 419.238.1695 ext. 270, or Nancy Eberle from our local BBBS chapter at 419.584.2447.



## Marsh Youth Spend Spring Break Serving Others

For the past several years, the youth at The Marsh Foundation have completed service projects during their spring break that revolve around the theme of serving others. This year, they continued their efforts.

Activities coordinator Sherry Grone coordinated the week's projects. To start, a group of independent living aged youth prepared and served the meal Good Friday evening at the Van Wert Bread & Bowl at First United Methodist.

The Marsh girls spent time helping with the Van Wert City Easter Egg Hunt and a small group also volunteered at the Humane Society's Animal Shelter, cleaning and socializing animals in need of extra care. During the week, they also took a trip to Ft. Wayne and worked at Miss Virginia's Food Pantry, serving a record high 388 individuals.

One group of boys volunteered at the Lima Rescue Mission, serving dinner to homeless men and cleaning up after the meal. Another group went to



**Youth volunteer at the Habitat for Humanity Restore in Lima during one of their Spring Break service projects.**

Habitat for Humanity Restore in Lima and learned about how the

organization builds homes and empowers people in need. The

boys then helped to clean and organize the supply area in the store.

Service is a strong component of The Marsh program that works to instill a sense of stewardship in its youth.

George, Hilinda and Katie Marsh left a strong legacy by being compassionate and helping the less fortunate in the Van Wert community. Hilinda, especially, left behind writings that were very spiritual in nature. In her funeral memorial it was quoted, "Many were the days when she went about in her well-provisioned carriage, helping the sick and needy, in the very joy of her Master who went about doing good. In the church [she was] a humble and conscientious follower of the Christ; a leader for years in the Ladies' Society of the church. Our sense of loss is deep; we shall ever hold her services in grateful remembrance." The Marsh Foundation continues to build on and carry out that legacy and this is the inspiration behind these service projects.

## Student Holocaust Projects Receive Regional Attention

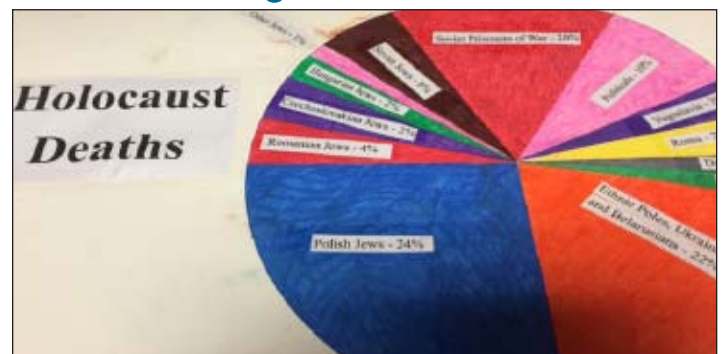
During April, youth at The Marsh Foundation School learned about the Holocaust and each completed projects on the topic. In conclusion, Connie Hornung from the Jewish Temple in Lima visited campus and spoke to students and staff about Jewish cultural traditions.

Students had their projects on display and also prepared refreshments that were related to the Jewish culture. Hornung was impressed with the students' efforts and invited them to display their projects in Lima at the Temple Beth Israel-Shaare Zedek during their Holocaust

Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day Sabbath Service in May.

They displayed before and after the service, answering questions and explaining their projects to visitors. They also participated in a reception afterwards. It was an educational and beneficial experience for the youth involved.

**At right: Two of the youth's Holocaust projects are pictured. These projects were displayed on campus as part of a cultural diversity training as well as in Lima at the Temple Beth Israel-Shaare Zedek.**







Clockwise starting above: Principal Robbie Breese's office was one of the casualties of senior prank season when seniors filled it with balloons. In May, the Garden Crew held a spring plant sale and the historic Homestead was open for tours. This spring, the Van Wert Chamber of Commerce held its quarterly 'Chamber Coffee' event in The Marsh's cafeteria. This year's spring formal had a 20s flair with a Great Gatsby theme. Staff and youth on campus participated in the #wearblue day to raise awareness about child abuse prevention. Staff and youth also participated in a fun hat day prior to the running of the Kentucky Derby.



## Staff Member Goes Above and Beyond Planning Prom

The youth of The Marsh Foundation enjoyed their second annual Prom in May. The youth are definitely thrilled that this is becoming a tradition.

This year, Pamela Reagan, foster care consultant at The Marsh, took the lead in planning the event. She went above and beyond to ensure a fun night was had by all.

After the youth voted on the theme “The Great Gatsby”, Reagan went all out, finding decorations and planning a memorable event. The refreshments, centerpieces and lighting all complimented the theme.

Perhaps the highlight of the evening was a photo booth complete with fun props.

The event was held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Van Wert. The evening featured music, a disk jockey, refreshments and a promenade. Andy Gearhart, of Alspach-Gearhart Funeral Home, provided a limousine to transport youth to the

dance. Many youth were able to enjoy a meal out at a restaurant before the dance.

According to Kathleen Davis, director of residential services, the prom was very successful and special in part because of all the work and care that is put into it. “The staff and community members that work on the dance understand that this important event in most teenagers’ lives is not normally an opportunity afforded to our kids. Therefore, every detail – facility, decorations, dress, limousine, corsages, DJ, food, even door prizes! – is completed with the intent of making a special memory for them.”

“This year, the coordinator [Reagan], worked to make this prom a spectacular night that would make many public high schools envious! We appreciate her dedication to make the “Great Gatsby” theme come alive for our teens!” she said.



Above, Pamela Reagan, foster care consultant, is pictured at Trinity United Methodist Church during The Marsh Foundation’s Prom. She was responsible for organizing and planning this year’s event, complete with refreshments and elaborate centerpieces, pictured below.



## Generous Donors Make Easter Even More Special

Again this year, an egg hunt was the highlight of Easter Sunday on The Marsh Foundation Campus. It was all made possible by the Shirley Haight family, who sponsored the festivities for the sixth 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 the 1940s, Shirley Haight came to live at The Marsh. Now, her daughters and grandson continue to give back to the campus at Easter time. The family provided eggs, baskets and gifts for all of the youth on campus. Although Haight passed away in 1988, her family has made a tradition out of donating. It was a memorable day and enjoyed tremendously by Marsh Foundation youth.

The Marsh appreciates generous donations such as this because it allows resources to be used on other activities and tremendously benefits the youth served.

## New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff member:

- Connie Daisy ~ Family Teacher
- Kyle Pressley ~ Family Teacher
- Ashley McClure ~ Seasonal
- Josh Leiter ~ Seasonal
- Jason Barnes ~ Family Teacher
- Abigail Neville ~ Seasonal





## Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently full with 10 girls. Three girls successfully completed the program at the end of the school year, so the house is adjusting to new youth as well as the new summer schedule.

The girls have been keeping extremely busy with the horse program, 4H projects and other activities. The 4H group on campus this year decided to establish an official club and has elected officers, including one of the youth from Clymer Hall.

One of the three graduates this spring was from Clymer Hall. Congratulations! She will be transitioning back home later this summer after completing a vocational program locally.



## Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall is currently full with 10 boys. They have been enjoying summer so far. Some of the boys are involved in the new on-campus book club, while others have spend extra time shooting baskets or fishing at the pond.

Some of the boys at Marsh Hall have had the opportunity to sign up for the 4H program this summer. They've chosen projects that are of interest to them and the summer schedule specifically sets aside time throughout the week to work on these projects.

Interviews for on-campus jobs took place recently and some of the boys are anxiously awaiting to hear the results.



## Senior Stuff

Senior Hall has one opening for a boy aged at least 15 1/2. The boys there have been busy going on job interviews and some starting off-campus employment.

Some of the boys are attending summer school in the mornings until July. The program at The Marsh School has allowed those who are behind to do a little bit of credit recovery during the summer months.

The boys at Senior enjoyed participating in the recent Wizard of Oz production and all played a role. One youth successfully completed the program and was reunited with his family following the end of the school year. Congratulations to him!



## Vance Voice

Vance Hall does not currently have any openings. The boys have been busy adjusting to the summer schedule. They are enjoying the time with the horse program each morning and the free time they are given later in the afternoon.

Several of the boys at Vance participated in the Peony Parade this month and walked with The Marsh entry.

The boys have also been enjoying activities such as fishing, riding bikes and playing outside. One young man has been able to obtain off-campus employment and others are hoping to follow in his footsteps.

## Independent Living Aged Youth Appreciate Opportunities

Time and time again, the Independent Living Program at The Marsh Foundation proves to be a valued component of our continuum of care. Not only are adults and guardians pleased with the results; the youth themselves recognize the benefits.

"When I came, they automatically wanted me to be a part of the group," said Carl, a youth that has been at The Marsh since March. "I was excited because I had the opportunity to work right away," he said.

The IDL group focuses on things like budgeting, getting

along with peers, time management, etc. According to Carl, these skills are very important to him because when he leaves he'll be 18. "This is helping me to get ready for the future," he said.

A component of the IDL program is the Marsh Grown garden crew. The crew works on planting, watering and caring for the large organic garden on campus. They are able to harvest their produce and sell it at the local farmer's market in town. They learn job skills while they are participating in a program that uses a vocational

horticultural therapy approach that ties directly into the overall behavioral therapy that they are receiving at The Marsh.

Although the summer growing season is the busiest time for the garden crew, they don't just have the rest of the year off. They sell poinsettias before Christmas and have a spring plant sale in May. They spend time in the greenhouse growing seedlings that they'll later be able to transplant to the garden.

Proceeds earned at the market and at other sales are divided between all the youth working on

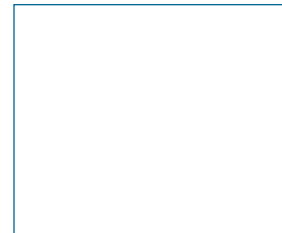
the project. This gives them income as well as a sense of pride and accomplishment.

The youth also learn leadership skills through opportunities such as 4H. Many youth on campus have summer projects and participate in a Marsh 4H club. This gives youth the opportunity to expand even further on things they are learning in the IDL group.

"I need to know how to cook," Carl rationalized. So, he chose a 4H grill master project for the summer.

**The Marsh Foundation**  
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**Van Wert, Ohio 45891**

**Address Service Requested**



## **Marsh Alumni Notes**

- The Alumni held their first Veteran's Salute this past Memorial Day weekend. It included various tours of local landmarks and a recognition program in The Marsh Auditorium. More than 100 names were read of Marsh Alumni that were also United States Veterans.
- The Alumni are planning a meeting and potluck in The Marsh Foundation Recreation Hall on Saturday, Sept. 17 at noon. Alumni are invited to bring a dish and stay for the meeting. The Alumni organization will provide the meat. RSVP to [marshalumniofficers@gmail.com](mailto:marshalumniofficers@gmail.com) with number attending and what dish you are bringing. Stay tuned to Alumni news for more details!
- 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/alumni](http://www.marshfoundation.org/alumni).

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

## *Calendar of Events*

June ~ September 2016

- The on-campus summer schedule is in full swing and will last through Aug. 12. It includes summer school, the horse program, 4-H time and more.
- The Business and Child and Family Services Offices on campus will be closed on Monday, July 4 in observance of the Independence Day holiday
- The summer horse show, open to the public is Wednesday, August 3 at 10 a.m. Rain date is August 5.
- First day of school - Wednesday, August 17. Faculty will have in-service and word days on the 15th and 16th.
- School will dismiss early (1:08 p.m.) due to faculty in-service on Aug. 30.
- The Business and Child and Family Services offices, as well as the school, will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5 for Labor Day.
- An Alumni meeting will be held in the Rec Hall on Saturday, Sept. 17.



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