

The Marsh Messenger

• Fall 2017

• www.marshfoundation.org

Serving children and families since 1922

Marsh Hires Full-Time Counselor

The Marsh is proud to announce the hiring of a new, full-time counselor in our clinical department. Elspeth Neville, MSW, LSW, was officially hired this summer but is no stranger to The Marsh Foundation. Neville has worked at The Marsh for the past five years as a family teacher at Marsh Hall.

Her role in the group home made her quickly realize that she wanted to be more directly involved with the youth and their treatment. "During my undergraduate years, I always thought that I wanted to work with adults. However, after about six months of working with youth at The Marsh, I discovered I really enjoyed working with kids and that I had the ability to help children," Neville said.

After realizing her ability and her desire, she further pursued a career in social work by applying for graduate school at The Ohio State University. "Working as a family teacher really helped me to understand what the youth need from adults to be successful; such as trust, consistency, and empathy," Neville said. "These are all skills of a good counselor. The experience I had working as a family teacher was invaluable in learning these skills and I believe that these experiences have allowed me to connect with clients so that they are able to trust me



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and be open to learning about new ways of thinking and doing things," she added.

Following graduation with her master's degree in social work, and becoming licensed as a social worker, The Marsh hired Neville on full-time in the clinical department. She now provides individual and group counseling to youth and is directly involved in their overall treatment plans.

Neville said that she enjoys all aspects of counseling and her new role at The Marsh. "I like being able to do individual counseling with all the youth from the same house and then see these youth come together

in a group and work through things together. I think that at times it is easier for a counselor to see a youth's progress and I enjoy sharing this progress with the rest of the team and the youth's families and point out how much their hard work has paid off."

Although she found her role as a family teacher rewarding and impactful, she also finds her job as a counselor rewarding because without the help that I and the rest of my team can offer, the children we work with would not be able to have happy

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THE MARSH
FOUNDATION

Please Share

Please share The Marsh Messenger with others in your family or office who might like to read it. Thank you!

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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

From the Executive's desk ...

The opiate epidemic in Ohio continues to claim lives and create unexpected victims. Many children are becoming displaced from their homes because their parents are either addicted to opiates or are deceased as a result of an opiate overdose.

The crisis happened so quickly that the foster care system was not prepared to handle the increase of children needing services. Currently, in the state of Ohio, there are more than 15,000 children in

the foster care system but not enough homes to take care of all of them.

Staggering statistics from the state say that there are nearly 3,000 more children in the child welfare system now than when the opiate crisis began seven years ago. Many of the children are 10 years of age or younger. Agencies are removing infants that are born addicted to drugs and are placing infants and young children after they are dropped off by an addicted parent.

Children are staying in foster care longer because

their parents are unable take them back as a result of their continued addiction. Therefore, the need for more foster homes continues to grow. Tenured case workers are reporting this situation to be the worst they have seen in many years.

The Marsh Foundation's intake department receives multiple calls from case workers trying to find foster homes for these children every week. We are turning away more children than we ever have because of a lack of foster homes.

The good news is that we have recruited new homes and they are already serving children who have been removed because of this epidemic. These families have welcomed these children into their hearts and into their families with open arms.

We need loving people, not perfect people, but people who can love a child or infant through a situation in which they have become "collateral damage." We are asking people to consider stepping up to help these little ones find a secure and loving home. Please call us if you would like to learn more about foster care.

To learn more (with no obligation), you can call our foster care division at 419.238.1695 ext. 307 or you



Kim Mullins, LPCC

"Staggering statistics from the state say that there are nearly 3,000 more children in the child welfare system now than when the opiate crisis began seven years ago."

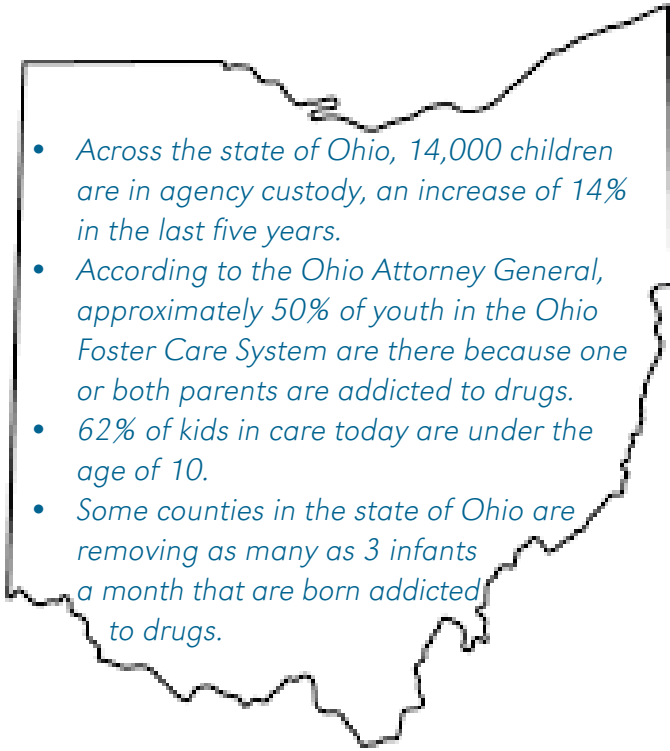
— Kim Mullins

The Marsh Foundation

can visit our website at www.marshfoundation.org/helpkids. Our staff can help answer your questions regarding these children in need.

Kim Mullins, LPCC

Executive Director, Child & Family Services



- Across the state of Ohio, 14,000 children are in agency custody, an increase of 14% in the last five years.
- According to the Ohio Attorney General, approximately 50% of youth in the Ohio Foster Care System are there because one or both parents are addicted to drugs.
- 62% of kids in care today are under the age of 10.
- Some counties in the state of Ohio are removing as many as 3 infants a month that are born addicted to drugs.

A commitment to excellence

Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentors Needed

The Marsh Foundation and Big Brothers Big Sisters need



volunteers to be a Big for the Supper Club Program. There are several youth from The Marsh looking forward to spending some time with a special friend a couple of times a month beginning in late October.

Without enough volunteers some of these youth may not be able to participate in the program. You could be that special person!

In the Supper Club program, the Bigs and Littles get together on the first and third Thursdays of the month for supper and an activity.

Volunteers also visit their Little at the youth's group home once a month on a weekend day of their choosing for a couple of hours.

To participate in this program, or for more information, please contact Sherry Grone at 419-605-2512 or sgrone@marshfoundation.org.

It doesn't take a lot to make a BIG difference in a life of a youth at The Marsh Foundation. A past youth summed it up when he said, "It is really cool how you guys do this for us. It is really appreciated. It's a lot of fun."

Project Believe Donates Back Packs and School Supplies to Marsh Students



School is off to a successful start at The Marsh Foundation thanks in part to Project Believe. They generously donated backpacks and school supplies for all of our students. Pictured (l to r) is foster care supervisor Melissa Gearhart, school Principal Robbie Breese, Project Believe's founder Tammie Rafferty and director of residential services, Kathleen Davis.

For the fourth year in a row, Project Believe was able to visit campus and bring along a donation of backpacks and school supplies for Marsh Foundation youth. Project Believe is no stranger to The Marsh; the non-profit has also donated Christmas presents and Valentines for the past several years.

The organization, which originated in 2009, has continued to grow and expand. Tammie Rafferty, the group's founder, was inspired to help others by her own daughter's circumstances.

Rafferty visited the campus to present the backpacks and

supplies to Marsh Foundation staff and students. School principal Robbie Breese, residential director Kathleen Davis and foster care supervisor Melissa Gearhart, were more than happy to accept the donation on behalf of the organization.

Project Believe is already gearing up for the Christmas season. A complete list of the items they are gathering for the

Christmas holiday can be found on their website, www.project-believe.net.

Project Believe serves other facilities and could use your donation. You can learn more about Project Believe by visiting their website at www.project-believe.net. Or, you can contact Rafferty directly at projectbelieve@live.com.

New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff member:

- Claire Fleck ~ family teacher
- Nicole Bowers ~ group home custodian
- Breanna Zipfel ~ foster care consultant

Independent Living Program Teaches Valuable Skills

"They are good skills to have for unexpected emergencies. Not many people have the opportunity to be certified and I am glad that we did."

*— Bryce H.
Marsh Youth*

The Independent Living Program continues to be an integral part of the treatment program at The Marsh. The program, geared for youth ages 15 and up, incorporates a lot of practical life skills that youth will need as they emancipate and move on from The Marsh.

Recently, the group had the opportunity to become certified in CPR and first aid. CPST Christina Flynn, works with the youth in the IDL program and said it was an easy decision to certify the youth. "The class is full of practical information and useful life skills. It also looks great on a resume," she said.

The IDL program focuses on practical life skills that youth will be able to use in the months and years to come. They practice things like writing checks, conducting online banking, using a GPS or reading an atlas. The hands on practice helps the youth retain the knowledge even more, Flynn said.

"We want our youth to succeed and anything we can do to give them an edge, we try to do," she added.



The Independent Living Program continues to be an integral part of the treatment program at The Marsh. The program, geared for youth ages 15 and up, incorporates a lot of practical life skills that youth will need as they emancipate and move on from The Marsh. Youth recently participated in a CPR/First Aid course, above. The garden program (below) teaches valuable skills all year long.

Marsh Trustee, Bob Gamble, will be working with the youth in the near future on housing skills renter's rights, understanding leases and how to find an apartment.

The youth enjoy learning new, practical skills and especially took pride in their certification from the American Heart Association following their CPR/First Aid course. "They are good skills to have for unexpected emergencies. Not many people have the opportunity to be certified and I am glad that we did," said Bryce H., a current Marsh youth in the IDL program.



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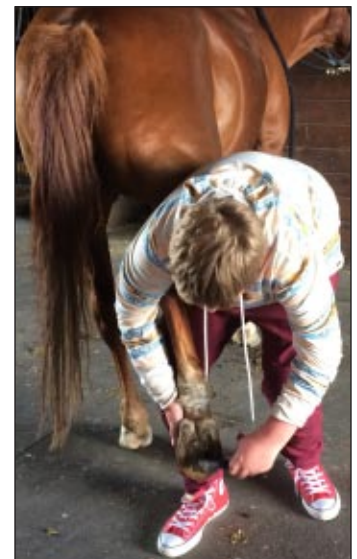
and successful futures. I think it is most rewarding when I see a child with whom I have worked, go out and help their own families and other people," she said.

Neville's desire to learn hasn't stopped with attaining

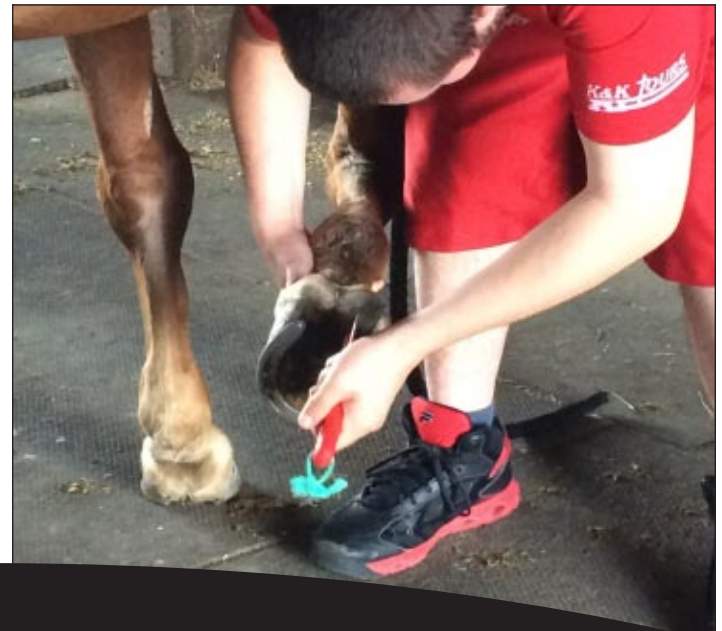
her master's degree. She has goals for the future. "I want to continue gaining knowledge and experience," she said. "I would like to complete my juvenile sex offender counseling certification and I would also like to learn

more about trauma treatment."

To learn more about The Marsh's clinical and counseling services, visit www.marshfoundation.org.



Clockwise starting at top: It was a busy 4H season! Youth created posters for judging of their projects. Pictured is an art project and a horse poster entered for judging. Horse related projects always prove a popular choice for youth. At top right you can see the before and after cleaning a horse. A horseless horse project involved learning how to clean the horses' hooves. The garden crew was busy working hard this summer. They harvested a large crop of garlic from the on-campus garden. Another youth's 4H project this year was rabbits. Incorporating 4H into the summer activity program at The Marsh proves to be beneficial and educational for the youth.



Marsh Partners with Niswonger PAC

The Marsh Foundation is proud to partner again this year with the Niswonger Performing Arts Center in Van Wert to highlight our need for foster and adoptive homes. The NPAC is an important part of the Marsh's ongoing recruitment campaign.

This year, in addition to an advertisement in the season's playbill, there will be lobby advertising highlighting the need for foster parents November through March.

"The NPAC offers a fantastic list of events and draws a huge audience from the surrounding areas and the region," said Kim Mullins, executive director of child and family services at The Marsh. "We are thrilled to be able to work with the NPAC and reach this audience."

More than 40,000 audience members are expected to enter the NPAC throughout their nine-month long eleventh season. "The NPAC is a great asset to our community and the advertising opportunities they offer to fellow community members are very valuable," Mullins added.

In addition to the print advertising, The Marsh is excited to have a lobby presence during three shows this season. A representative from The Marsh's foster care department will be available to answer questions, pass out informational material and provide goodies to audience members.

"Partnering with The Marsh Foundation is an example of community working together to share a message of opportunity

Foster Parents Needed!

You can make a difference in the lives of children!



THE MARSH FOUNDATION Marsh Foster Care and Adoption Services
419.238.1695 Ext. 307 or www.marshfoundation.org/helpkids

that has lasting impact. The Niswonger is the perfect family destination for entertainment. Family is at the core of the Marsh Foundation Mission. It is a perfect partnership with an enriching outcome for our audi-

ence and Northwest Ohio," said Tafi Stober, NPAC Marketing Director

The following events will feature a Marsh Foundation informational table:

- October 1**
"B" Underwater Bubble Show
- December 1**
Rudolf The Red Nosed Reindeer The Musical
- February 3**
Erth's Dinosaur Zoo Live

Since its opening in 2007, thousands of patrons from over 25 states and Canada have attended performances, lectures, and meetings at the Niswonger. Currently, the Niswonger hosts over a hundred concerts, shows, and events a year in its 1200 seat Van Wert County Foundation Saltzgaber Music Hall and another 200 meetings and activities in its First Federal Lecture Hall. It has truly become the entertainment destiny of Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana.

For more information, visit the Niswonger's website at <http://www.npacvw.org>.



Where's Home?

We are often asked where the youth we serve are from. We currently accept and receive referrals from counties across the entire state of Ohio. Our population frequently changes as youth are reunified with their families, emancipate or successfully complete our treatment program. Currently, the children in our group home and foster care programs call the counties indicated are from several counties. At left is a snapshot of where our youth call home.



Clymer Chat

Clymer Hall is currently full with 10 girls; however one opening is expected in the coming weeks. The girls had a fun and busy summer and now are adjusting to the back-to-school schedule and routine.

The girls at Clymer enjoyed many activities over the summer. Many were involved in 4H, the garden crew and the horse program. The girls especially enjoyed campus bike rides when they ride throughout the community. One ride in particular took them to the historical museum garden and they learned both bike riding skills and safety.

The girls are looking forward to a busy and successful school year.



Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall is currently full. The boys have had a successful summer and are looking forward to the school year.

Several of the boys at Marsh Hall had 4H projects this summer. They included horse projects, art, rabbits and more. 4H is a great activity for youth at The Marsh. They remain dedicated to their projects and work on them throughout the summer. They also go through the presentation and judging process.

In addition, this summer the 4H club had the opportunity to visit other county fairs in the area and observe other projects.



Senior Stuff

The Senior Hall program continues to flourish and benefit the youth it serves. The house currently has an opening for a youth over the age of 15 1/2.

The boys at Senior kept busy over the summer with off-campus jobs. Some of them also worked on the garden crew through the independent living program on-campus.

This year, there was an abundant garlic crop and the boys worked hard harvesting and preparing the garlic for sale. This was in addition to the many other things planted this summer; green beans, tomatoes, and much more!



Vance Voice

Vance Hall has had a handful of boys discharged this summer and currently has a couple of openings for boys ages 10-17 in need of group home placement. Those wanting to make a referral should call Kelly Gross at 419.238.1695 ext. 360.

The boys at Vance Hall had a good summer, with some of them participating in 4H as well as the gardening program.

This summer, the garden crew worked hard to build new compost bins on campus. The boys were instrumental in helping with that large project.

The boys are looking forward to the school year and all of the exciting things planned by the school staff.

Summer Equestrian Program Concludes with Show

The youth at The Marsh Foundation recently concluded their summer equestrian program with a show for staff, trustees, families and guests. The program, which began in May, gave the youth opportunities to ride at least four times per week. For the program, The Marsh leases horses from The University of Findlay and hires on-campus riding instructors, Stephanie Hall, Kathrine Singer, Abigail Neville and Alicia Rist.

In addition to riding instruction, the youth also learn how to

care for and demonstrate respect for the horses.

The program culminated with a horse show. Each youth had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills for the audience. Ribbons were given to the top placers in the various categories. All youth also received a participation gift from the instructors.

Youth participated in the annual horse show recently. They were able to showcase some of the skills they have learned this summer and compete for ribbons.



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

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Did You Know? We now offer adoption services!

The Marsh has pursued 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

October - December 2017

- Marsh Foundation representatives will attend the Public Children Services Association of Ohio's annual conference on Sept. 20-22.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences for The Marsh School are Saturday, Nov. 11.
- The Marsh Grown garden crew will once again host their poinsettia sale this holiday season. Stay tuned for details.
- The Marsh Foundation School will not be in session Nov. 22- 24 or Dec. 21 - Jan. 2 for Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.



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.