

# The Marsh Messenger

• Winter 2018-19 • [www.marshfoundation.org](http://www.marshfoundation.org)

Serving children and families since 1922

## Marsh Auditorium Renamed in Honor of Past Director, Ron Bagley

A surprise announcement was made at the 2018 Marsh Foundation Christmas party when the Administration Building's auditorium was renamed Bagley Auditorium. The name change is in honor of past director, Ronald R. Bagley.

Bagley was born November 26, 1937. On July 1, 1962 he was employed at The Marsh Foundation at the age of 25 as a teacher. On June 23, 1972, he was named Director of The Marsh Foundation School where he served until his resignation on August 23, 1991. This capped 29 years of employment with The Marsh.

Bagley currently volunteers to serve as the official Marsh Historian and has starred in various videos and historical documentaries about The Marsh



**Mr. Ron Bagley, past director of The Marsh Foundation School, and his wife Linda were surprised to learn at the recent Marsh Christmas party that the auditorium in the Administration Building has been renamed Bagley Auditorium in honor of his lifelong service to the organization.**

Foundation.

"I believe Ron has an incredible respect for Mrs. Hilinda Marsh and her Christian life and values," said Jeff Grothouse, executive secretary/treasurer. "Mr. Bagley has the undeniable and much deserved respect of

the Marsh Alumni and students that were in his care."

So much appreciation that they presented Bagley with a plaque at the 2015 Marsh Alumni Reunion stating this.

There is no greater purpose

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## A Year in Review:

### 2018 at The Marsh Foundation

The Marsh Foundation continues to grow and prosper. 2018 was a year full of accomplishments and exciting moments. Throughout the year, the organization has strived to further its mission to serve children and families in need.

In February, The Marsh recognized the retirement of Marilyn Reno, overnight family teacher. In addition to working

on The Marsh campus, Reno and her husband Steve were also foster parents for 14 years. Together, they served hundreds of children in need of help. Congratulations, Marilyn and thank you for your service and dedication!

As The Marsh Foundation Foster Care and Adoption division continues to grow, a grand opening and ribbon cutting

was held at their new location downtown in April. The Foster Care and Adoption Center, 102 W. Main Street in Van Wert, houses office space as well as a training and visitation area. In addition, the division hired Beth Dye, LSW as foster care clinical provider and Megan Riemesch, LSW as a third foster care consultant.

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**THE MARSH**  
FOUNDATION

## Please Share

Please pass The Marsh Messenger along to others in your office or family who would 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  
Kim Mullins  
Jeff Grothouse

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

## From the executive's desk ...

As Christmas approaches and the year comes to a close, one of the things I continue to reflect on is our visit to Boys Town this fall. This year's annual Teaching Family Association conference was held in Omaha and included a tour of the historic and world-renowned treatment facility. In addition to myself, trustees Bob Gamble and Gary Corcoran attended; as did program managers Christy Thees, Ben Marsee and MacKenzie Basil. Lead family teacher Nick Channel and executive secretary/treasurer Jeff Grothouse were able to make the trip.

The groups were able to tour the historic campus which was established in 1917 by an Irish priest named Father Edward Flanagan. The home for troubled boys has made a difference in countless children and families' lives over the past 100 years. Boys Town served some boys who were homeless and some who were referred by the court system, but who were all hopeful of pursuing brighter futures. In 1979, Boys Town began accepting at-risk girls into its programs.

Now, the campus is officially its own village and is 900+ acres. There are group homes as well as individual family homes. The organization still provides services to children and families and has been inspirational and pioneering in the creation of behavioral guides and trainings for those working with troubled youth.



**Kim Mullins**

Perhaps even more impactful than touring the prominent campus, was listening to the keynote speaker, Jim St. Germain. Former resident of Boys Town and co-founder of Preparing Leaders of Tomorrow, Inc. (PLOT), St. Germain sent the audience away with a better understanding of how young people who commit crimes are treated.

I was honored to be able to ask him a question during the Q&A session and I asked, "After all your experiences in residential care, what would be a recommendation you would give to administrators?" His answer was to stay close to the homes and truly understand the needs when making decisions. Born in Haiti, St. Germain's family moved to Brooklyn and he quickly took to the street life and began participating in criminal activity. At age 15 he was arrested for dealing crack

*"We were privileged to bring back many new ideas and strategies to implement on The Marsh campus as we work with youth in need every day."*

— Kim Mullins

*The Marsh Foundation*

cocaine and instead of prison, he was sent to Boys Town. There, he benefited immensely from mentors and positive male authority. He was able to turn his life around and eventually got his GED, then graduated from college.

He went back to the projects with the goal of reforming the way the justice system treats at-risk youth. He is a compelling motivational speaker and adviser to several government entities working with at risk youth. St. Germain has worked with countless local, state and federal officials advising on matters related to juvenile justice, mentoring, mental health, substance abuse, and education.

Overall, the conference was very educational and beneficial. We attended learning sessions focused on trauma informed care, technology and mental health, substance abuse, recruiting and retaining talented staff,

learning disabilities, consumer relationships and many more.

We were privileged to bring back many new ideas and strategies to implement on The Marsh campus as we work with youth in need every day.

*Kim Mullins*

*Executive Director of Child & Family Services at The Marsh*

**Bagley Auditorium**  
*Continued from page 1...*

in this life than to change the life of a child for the better. Bagley has lived his entire life for this purpose.

The Marsh Foundation recognizes both Ron and Linda Bagley for their service to mankind and to The Marsh Foundation. On Thursday, November 29, 2018, The Trustees of The Marsh Foundation by unanimous vote – changed the name of The Marsh Auditorium to "Bagley Auditorium." From this date forward, all correspondence, events, mailings will refer to The Marsh Foundation's "Bagley Auditorium." The first event to be held in the new Bagley Auditorium will be the winter program and graduation in mid-December.

"I am humbled and honored to be the one selected to represent all of the dedicated and hard working staff members at The Marsh Foundation Home and School," Bagley said of the announcement.

Congratulations Ron and Linda, and thank you for your commitment and years of service to The Marsh!

# A commitment to excellence

## Marsh Foundation Aims to Teach Youth Valuable Life Skills Through Independent Living Program

Transitioning to adulthood is one of the most difficult times of a person's life. It's even more difficult for youth who are in residential or foster care. Without a parent to travel this journey with, these youth sometimes are lacking the important skills and knowledge needed to become a successful adult. This is why the Independent Living Program (IDL) at The Marsh is such an integral part of the continuum of care. There is a commitment to helping ensure youth at The Marsh start off strong with a good foundation of experience and skills when they leave care.

Christina Flinn, Community Psychiatric Support (CPST), works directly with the youth at The Marsh that are aged 15 ½ and over in the IDL group on campus. Many recent projects have been related to money. They have worked on a bill paying project, paying monthly bills, balancing a checkbook and managing a budget. Lessons have included talking about credit, understanding the language and

the math of borrowing money.

"Being able to manage your money is one of the most important things an adult has to learn to do," said Flinn. "Often our youth have no idea how to begin, then they suddenly have to do it when they go out on their own. With projects we do as part of IDL, they are able to make mistakes, ask questions, and learn so that when they have to do these things for real, it is not so scary," she said.

Another focus of the IDL group has been cooking. A cooking class has been held once a month at the First Presbyterian Church in Van Wert. These classes not only teach hands-on meal preparation skills like measuring, chopping and serving, but they also teach the planning and budgeting aspect. Youth are responsible for planning the meal on a specified budget, purchasing the needed ingredients and then preparing the meal.

It's a learning experience they say they enjoy. One girl in

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The IDL group has recently started a series of cooking classes which involve planning, budgeting and preparing the meal.

## A Note from The Marsh Board of Trustees

Christmas is a time to be especially thankful for the many blessings we enjoy on The Marsh campus. We have been blessed with the challenges of working with youth, but also by making a difference in the lives of the many students who are presently in our programs. We are blessed by working with the professional Marsh staff who administer these programs and the many Marsh graduates whose lives have been enriched by their Marsh experience.

To our present students, whether you are enrolled in our campus school, with one of our Marsh foster families or one of our families receiving consulting in your home, we wish each of you the very best this Christmas season. We are all proud of the progress each of you is making as you work toward graduation.

We also send our greetings to our The Marsh Foundation staff. Your loyalty and dedication to the mission of George Marsh and the youth of this campus is greatly appreciated. Each of you contributes in your own way to the success of The Marsh Foundation. When one reads Mr. Marsh's Last Will and Testament and the great insight and wisdom contained in it, you can see how closely it resembles our Teaching Family Program.

May God's richest blessings be on us all, this Christmas Season.

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

## Deceased Marsh Foundation Alumni and Former Employees

### Alumni:

Elizabeth "Libby" Woodruff Johnson

Deceased: 05/06/2017      Notified: 12/2017

George Melford Brenneman

Deceased: 11/29/2017      Notified 01/2018

Robert L. Mager

Deceased: 01/03/2018

Joyce Beall Hoffman

Deceased: 04/17/2018

Robert Richey

Deceased: 11/05/2018

### Former Employees:

Gerald Gordon

Deceased: 11/20/2018



## 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.

Through the clinical program, several of the girls have been participating in cooking classes within their groups. They enjoy this hands-on activity and have been learning valuable skills that they can take with them into adulthood.



## Marsh Matters

Marsh Hall is currently at capacity with ten boys. They all enjoyed participating in SPIRIT Week this fall. They enjoyed prom-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.

The boys enjoyed the annual Thanksgiving projects that they completed in Mrs. Looser's class. Each year, she has them write an essay, acrostic poem and design a cover page. Awards are given for the most creative and well written projects.



## Vance Voice

Vance Hall currently has two openings for boys ages 10 - 17. The home is always active and busy. Currently, the program manager, MacKenzie Basil is looking for fitness equipment donations to help keep the boys active over the winter months. Since they won't be outside playing basketball and fishing as much, they are seeking a treadmill, stationary bike or other similar items. If you can help, call 419.238.1695 ext. 452.

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

*"Over and over I marvel at the blessing of my life: Each year has grown better than the last." Lawrence Welk. It is Thanksgiving, and I know some of the unique things that I am thankful for and it goes like this.*

*Can I say that I am thankful for school. You're probably saying why school? I am saying school because it is a place I find interest in. I enjoy math, reading and books. It's a place I trust and relax. I also like my FT (family teacher), teachers, friends and learning many new facts. I love doing homework too. I like multiplication and division in math. I like writing in reading. I like reading the Percy Jackson series and Heros of Olympus series. And, I also like reading about Greek and Roman mythology.*

*I also like playing sports because it is fun, competitive and athletic. Some sports I like are football, basketball, and somewhat soccer. I like the similarities of all of these sports: athletic and competitive.*

*Friends and Family, that's a big one. A friend once said, "friends are loose but family is glued," It's just saying that friends might have your back but family will most likely have your back. The reason why I like friends is because they don't have to be just like you. Family is important because they will be there when you need them. My family (most of the time) have my back. They are loving and caring too. I can say that another blessing is The Marsh Foundation, so I can get help and be with them again.*

*School, sports, friends and family. These are the traits that make me, me. It makes me human and no one can take that away from me. Like I said, "Over and over I marvel at the blessing of my life: Each year has grown better than the last."*

## 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 poems at right is an excerpt from a winning essay.

**T** is for tossing desserts on a plate  
**H** is for ham that I shouldn't have ate  
**A** is for apple pie with golden brown crust  
**N** is for nicely passing salt and pepper just as I must  
**K** is for the kids laughing and playing  
**S** is for saying thanks and praying  
**G** is for good food  
**I** is for inviting moods  
**V** is for vegetables with carrots and beans  
**I** is for interpreting what giving thanks means  
**N** is for a neatly set table  
**G** is for gratitude in which to give is able



Attendees of this year's Teaching Family Association conference had the privilege of touring Boys Town. In 1917, Father Flanagan established the home for troubled boys. In 1979, Boys Town began accepting at-risk girls into its programs. Today, the Boys Town campus is officially its own village, encompassing 900 acres. Some of the homes are individual family homes and some are group homes. Most of the town is accessible to visitors, including Father Flanagan's former home, the Hall of History and Dowd Memorial Chapel.

## Independent Living Program ... Continued from page 3

the program stated practical reasons for liking the cooking class. "This will help you survive," she said. "It isn't possible to eat raw food; this cooking is something you need to know how to do."

Another stated that she likes to cook and it's beneficial to her well-being. "It helps me to cope," she said. Another said she hopes to go to Vantage and study culinary arts in the future. Moving forward, these skills are something that they will be able to take with them when they leave The Marsh's program.

Over the past summer, monthly activities were held that promoted social awareness.

Activities included things like visiting a car dealership and taking public transportation. These are things that many of the youth will need to do in the future but as of yet have never been exposed to. Future plans also include first aid and CPR training.

According to Flinn, a lot of people tend to learn better by doing, and the youth at The Marsh are no different. "It is boring to talk about money but when you have to balance a checkbook and figure out how to pay the bills on time and still have money left over to eat, there is more of an impact,"

she said. Physically doing these types of tasks helps the youth to remember them. "We talk about healthy eating but actually going to the grocery store or farmer's market, touching the food and then bringing it home to cook it makes it more memorable," she added.

The IDL group has been credited with several youth successes. They have discussions about saving money and how they will be able to live within their means instead of on credit. The youth that have jobs have been actively saving money. "I have also seen some IDL youth

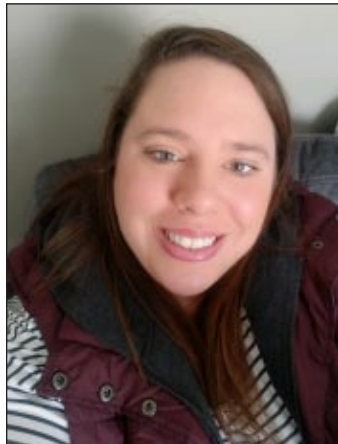
make their own medical appointments and actively take a role in their personal health," Flinn said. They fill out their own medical paperwork, memorized their social security number and educate themselves about side effects to their medications.

Some of these things may be taken for granted by most, but for youth in care they are often things that can get overlooked. It is important to The Marsh Foundation to not only provide housing and meals for youth, but to also impart knowledge and lessons that will stick with them well into their future.

## Marsh Hires Additional Foster Care Consultant

In order to meet growing needs at The Marsh Foster Care and Adoption Center, the organization has hired a third foster care consultant. Megan Riemesch, LSW, is excited to join the team and brings with her experience and education that will benefit the youth at The Marsh Foundation.

“Becoming a foster parent is a brave decision. I’m excited to support families of all kinds through the good, bad, frustrating, most amazing times of their lives,” Riemesch said.



**Megan Riemesch**

Riemesch obtained her degree in social work from The Ohio State

University. Previous positions at Westwood Behavioral Health and Allen County Children’s Services have given her a broad base of experience to draw from.

As a case manager, Riemesch has worked with individuals of all ages. “I truly want to help others and that is why I chose a career in social work in the first place. This position will allow me to do just that,” she said.

The foster care and adoption division at The Marsh Foundation continues to grow to meet the increasing number

of children in care. “We are excited about the opportunity to have Megan join our team,” said Marsh foster care supervisor, Melissa Snyder. “Unfortunately, we are seeing more and more children needing care. Thankfully, we are fortunate to have a strong, compassionate staff that use their talents to work closely with these families and children,” she added.

Riemesch recently married her husband Brent and the couple resides in Lima with their two dogs, Runner and Calvin.

## Marsh Foundation Creates Bridges Liaison Position to Work with Emancipated Foster Youth

Bridges is a statewide program administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services through a contract with The Child and Family Health Collaborative of Ohio. As a member of this Collaborative, The Marsh Foundation was given the opportunity to help deliver this program to young adults who are transitioning out of foster care and into the community. Therefore, The Marsh Foundation is excited to add a full time person to work as a Bridges Liaison in the Northwest region of Ohio.

Kyle Pressley, who has worked as a Family Teacher at The Marsh Foundation for the past two-and-a-half years, has been promoted to the position. Pressley holds a bachelor’s degree in clinical and counseling psychology from Ohio Northern University.

Pressley said he’s looking forward to the opportunity to work

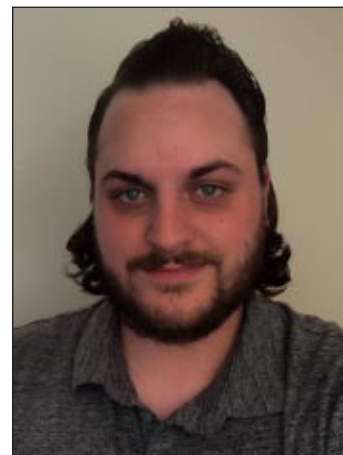
with young adults in Northwest Ohio. “I hope to establish trust in the young adults I work with and become a person they look up to,” he said. “My ultimate goal is to provide them with direction and help them become successful and happy adults.

The Bridges program was established in December 2017 to extend housing and case management services to eligible young adults who leave foster care on or after their 18th birthday but have not yet turned 21. Pressley will work with young adults in this age range who have recently emancipated from foster care. He’ll supply them with resources and help them with tasks such as finding affordable housing, finding a job, creating a budget and transportation. Essentially, he’ll help with anything that helps them transition to adult life.

“I’m excited about this posi-

tion because in the past, young adults leaving foster care did not receive the help they needed,” he said. “Now, being able to help these young adults during this important transition period will hopefully result in more successful adults later in life.”

In his free time, Pressley enjoys collecting vinyl records, going to concerts and bowling in leagues. He can be reached at [kpressley@marshfoundation.org](mailto:kpressley@marshfoundation.org) or at 419-203-0511.



**Kyle Pressley**



## 2018 Year in Review ... Continued from page 1

The growth in staff and facilities has a direct correlation to the growth in children served. Currently, the foster care division has 31 youth in care, 21 foster homes and another six that are in the process of becoming licensed.

For the eighth straight 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. 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.

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 2018 was a wonderful year for you and yours, and we look forward to what 2019 has in store for all of us!



An official ribbon cutting was held earlier this year at the new, downtown Marsh Foundation Foster Care & Adoption Center.

## New Staff Members

The Marsh Foundation would like to welcome new staff members:

- Megan Riemesch, LSW - consultant, foster care.
- Elaine Fuelling - family teacher
- Preston Hammond - family teacher
- Cassandra York - family teacher
- Jesse Salazar - family teacher
- Megan Riemesch - family teacher
- Kelly Redmond - family teacher
- Chance Goedde - family teacher
- Allison James - family teacher

## Fostering LOVE this Holiday Season

Instead of exchanging gifts with friends and family this year, the Pannkuk family has decided to put together a fundraiser for The Marsh Foundation instead. "The impact that this foundation has on these kids' lives is immeasurable," said Jen Pannkuk.

"Each year our family chooses a word that basically describes our goals for the year. We chose 'trajectory' for 2018. Every decision we make affects not only our trajectory but the trajectory of people around us."

"The Marsh Foundation is affecting the trajectory of kids' lives, in a positive way, every single day. Please help us support them in their efforts and join us in Fostering LOVE this Christmas," she said.

In addition to monetary donations, which go directly to the Marsh Foundation, they are also collecting items to pack backpacks for children as they first come into care. Some children arrive with only the clothes on their backs. The backpacks they put together will be given to the Marsh Foundation's Foster Care division - to be distributed as needed. Some suggested items are age appropriate toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo/bodywash, hairbrush/comb, underwear, socks, pajamas, coloring books, playdoh, stuffed animal, baby doll, small toys such as trains/trucks/cars etc.

Visit <https://www.gofundme.com/fostering-love-this-christmas> for more information! or to donate. Thank you so much in advance for your support.

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

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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](http://www.facebook.com/Marsh-Foundation) and give us a 'like.' Then, encourage your friends to do the same!



## Calendar of Events

December 2018- April 2019

- December 24 - January 4 - Marsh Foundation School winter break.
- No School Monday, January 21 in honor of MLK, Jr. Day.
- February 4, 7 p.m. - The Van Wert County Spelling Bee will be held in our auditorium.
- No School on Monday, February 18 because of President's Day.
- March 11 - 15 - Marsh Foundation School Spring break.
- Saturday, April 13 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- No School April 19 & 22 - Good Friday and Easter break.
- April 5, 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).

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