

home address

a publication of resident home association

Founding Partner of Partners For Community Living



A season of thanks and hope

by Pete Roll, Executive Director

The calendar has turned from the cold and dark of winter to a new season when warming trends are taking hold, lifting up our collective spirits. While this observation comes with each new Spring, this year in particular the feeling of optimism seems more pronounced. Part of this comes from knowing that winter once again is behind us, even as we face an occasional chill in the air. This year it is so much more than the change in temperature that gives us reason to be hopeful. There is this promise that perhaps the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us, that we have weathered it somehow and we can look to a brighter, safer future. We know that we must continue to be cautious as we reflect on what 2020 and a year of COVID-19 has taught us.

First and foremost, this past year confirmed what we already knew about our staff, residents and families, about how extremely resilient we are. The challenges that we faced were nothing short of monumental. Residents who thrive when there is continuity and structure in their lives were separated from their families and friends. They could not go to work or attend Adult Day programs, participate in community outings and recreation, go to church. It was the creativity of our staff, in addition to their own resiliency, that helped our residents get through every COVID day. There were so many arts and crafts and other activities: Bingo; contests; Zoom meetings; Zoom visits with families; creative ways to celebrate birthdays and holidays. There were frayed nerves from time to time, to be sure, but overall, there was the shared realization that we were in this together and that together we would make it through, however long it might take. How resilient our residents are! They could teach us all about the true meaning of kindness and acceptance.

Understanding and patience is what we learned from our families through all this. There were so many moments of fear and uncertainty when they couldn't visit with their family member. They had to put all their trust in our staff, and they did. They stood at their front doors or on porches and waved to their family member in drive-by visits. They waved to the camera during Zoom family visits.

There are no words that can fully express the gratitude we have for our Direct Support Professionals and Home Managers. Their job responsibilities are extensive under everyday circumstances without COVID-19. Some of our staff became sick themselves or had family members who became sick and had

to quarantine in their own homes. Some of our residents became sick and staff quarantined with them. Long days became long weeks that became long months leading into a very long year. With the courage and dedication of our staff, we never once lost sight of our mission. We survived and, in some very important ways, even thrived ... just like a new Spring emerging from a cold and too long Winter.

And so more than ever, we welcome Spring ... the daffodils, tulips and roses. We look forward to the return of family visits, of hugs, of seeing smiles too long hidden behind masks. We can't wait to get back to work, to go to a movie or to sit inside a restaurant and enjoy a meal together. With kindness and acceptance taught to us by our residents; with understanding and patience given to us by our families; with courage and dedication shown by our staff, we survived the year of COVID! More than ever, we welcome this new Spring with a new awareness of what gratitude and hope really mean.



The holidays became a time of grief and remembrance for all of us at RHA, especially for the men and staff at our Kenbrook home with the Christmas Eve death of Brian Ritchie. He died from heart complications following surgery at the age of 53. He had been a part of our extended family for less than two years, but he left a lasting impact on all those

he touched. He is missed for his smile and laughter, for always being happy. He would be the first to greet staff as they came in to work to get them updated on everything that had happened in the house.

He had friends he spoke with on the telephone every day. He was dedicated to his job at Arby's, always wanting to go to work. He had wanted to go to work so much that he tried not to tell staff or his housemates just how sick he was in his final days, finally sharing with them when the pain became unbearable. He was a joyful and loving spirit.

Resident Spotlight

At age 55, Jeffrey Davis is reserved, soft-spoken and, most of all, happy and content as part of the extended family in our Kenbrook home. Prior to joining us at Resident Home he lived with his younger sister Annie, whom he keeps in contact with often during Zoom family meetings as the pandemic continues. "It's nice living here," he shares with a smile. "I have a nice bedroom and nice staff and I like the guys." He, like the other five men at Kenbrook, is still grieving the death of Brian Ritchie. He and Brian had shared a bedroom. "I like Aaron," he says of housemate Aaron Knight. "He's my buddy, my hero. I have a good life being here."

While he likes working at his two jobs at Better Living and Boundless, his favorite place to be is at home. He has been busy recently at Better Living making Easter flowers and items. He is part of the team that makes dog bones at Boundless. He stresses that he always makes sure he wears his mask at work. He previously worked at MONCO at the Kuntz Road Adult Services Center. He graduated from the Valley Learning Center.

He loves to play games and while he doesn't say it, staff share that he is competitive and likes to win. He is good at cornhole, Trouble, Connect Four and Sorry.

His other interests include watching cartoons, scary movies and Bewitched. He collects miniature cartoon characters, with Nancy and Sluggo among his favorites. His favorite food when he goes out to eat is wings at Fricker's. He likes to go out sometimes, like to Kings Island, where he likes most of the rides, except the roller coasters. "They're just too high," he says. Last year he helped plant and tend a vegetable garden and with warm spring days now upon us, he is looking forward to planting tomatoes, green beans, onions and more – maybe some watermelons again to see if they might grow better than the small ones from the year before.

Step in the front door of Kenbrook and you know immediately who Jeffrey is. It's there on the walls for all to see, on proud display throughout the house. **Jeffrey is an artist.** His favorite form is drawing characters. He is especially drawn to the use of warm, bright and light colors. "That's so much a part of who he is," Home Manager Melinda Moore says of his art. "The use of beautiful color is at the center of his art and is even reflected in his clothes. He loves clothes that have patterns and a variety of colors, nothing black or gray. We make sure he has the supplies and materials he needs, as well as quiet time in his room for him to focus on what means the most to him. His art is how he shares who he is with us."

In his new home and with his new extended family, Jeffrey has found contentment in the quiet of his bedroom where he can be alone for as long as he likes, free to create beautiful art that speaks of who he is more than the few words he speaks. "I like making things that are pretty and that other people like," he does share with a sense of pride and joy. And spoken like a true artist, he shares this thought, "Art comes from my head and from my heart."



One perfect cake for a birthday celebration for (l-r) Joshua Williams Boyd, Valvin (Doc) Owensby and Kent Cruca.

How to make one birthday cake into something special representing three different men with three very different themes! That was the dilemma facing Program Services Coordinator Casey Marchal when it came time to make sure three residents had special memories of their birthdays.

Casey and Woodbury Home Manager Chris Traylor have been working together throughout the pandemic to make sure that every resident had a birthday celebration.

"We usually do a birthday cake for each resident," Casey shares. "We talked about getting three small cakes, with each one to include a theme for each of the men, but that is a lot of cake, so I came up with the idea of trying to combine three themes into one cake."

The result was a cake with Star Wars characters (*Kent's theme*) battling it out with wrestlers (*Josh's theme*), with musical notes around the side to spur them on (*Doc's theme*.)



Administrative/Billing Clerk Alex Shaw added his special talent by drawing a picture of each theme, which Chris then framed to give each man as a gift, including Kent's Star Wars theme.



Staff Spotlight

“I don’t mind making a fool of myself if it makes the ladies laugh.” Hearing those words confirms that there is something unexpected, fun and energetic taking place every day at our Springmill home. They are the words from Direct Support

Professional (DSP) Angelice Kinney, one of our newest and most exuberant members of our professional team, joining us in May 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. That she is one of the newest members of the team does not mean she is one of the least experienced. Due to the need for around the clock staffing in all our homes because of COVID, in just one recent two-week pay period, Angelice worked more than 150 hours.

She is a recent graduate of Wilberforce University, where she majored in pre-law and English. She played center on the women’s basketball team. She graduated from Thurgood Marshall High School in Dayton. When a friend told her about working in homes with people with developmental disabilities, she thought that was just what she might like to do for a couple of ‘gap years’ between college and post graduate studies. “My plans are to go to law school, either the University of Dayton or Ohio State, depending on scholarships,” she says, “and this is just what I need to help with some money for school and to give me more work experience. I never worked with people with disabilities before, but I came in with the attitude that the ladies are just like everyone else. No matter what makes you different in some ways, we all want to be treated like everyone else, to be loved.”

“We have two new young staff,” shares Home Manager Karen Gabbard (*Angelice and Ashley Langston*). “It’s a breath of fresh air to have them around. They bring in new

and different ideas, aren’t afraid to just have fun with the residents and share this sense of playfulness with them. And being young, they have a lot more understanding of newer technology, like Zoom, which has been particularly welcome during this past year.”

Angelice confirms that the Springmill ladies do make her laugh. “We listen to music and just get silly together. I’ve learned a new level of patience. I’ve been surprised by how smart they are and how caring they can be. They can argue like cats and dogs and then at the end of the day forget all about it and say I love you. I love Resident Home and would highly recommend it as a job to anyone.”

In what time she does have away from Springmill, Angelice is focusing on studying for the LSAT for law school admission, hoping for a high score to qualify her for scholarships. Her passion is working with juveniles and so juvenile law is her primary interest. She enjoys spending time with her own family, where she is known for bringing the fun to them as well as to the Springmill ladies. “I recently brought a big group of my nieces and their friends to my one- bedroom apartment for a pizza and Tik Tok party.”

There is this energy in and around the Springmill home now. Spring is here. The ladies are getting back out into the community – Susan has been having lunch with her family – Vicki and Amanda are looking forward to a camping trip with their Venturing Crew (BSA) at the end of April. There will be so much to do away from the home and that is a most welcome change, but not nearly as welcome as the change that came one year ago when Angelice Kinney first walked in the front door and the dancing and laugh-out-loud fun began. With the unrelenting strain of a pandemic all around, she could not have walked through that door at a time when she was needed more.

Remembering Thomasine

“She was kind and respectful and lived her life with great dignity.” Executive Director Pete Roll shared those words of comfort as the family and friends of Thomasine Hill came together at her memorial to celebrate a true lady. Thomasine died on April 1 following a brief illness. She was a glowing 83 years young.

Born in Dayton, Thomasine became a beloved member of the extended Resident Home family in 2002 when she moved into our Van Buren apartments. She later moved to our more accessible Elru home in Clayton, with the other ladies who had been in the apartment program.

“She was sassy, kind-hearted and loved her snacks!” remembers staff member Charnell Posey. “She always got what she wanted, one way or another.” She enjoyed family gatherings, shopping, traveling and her church.

She loved her family, friends, her church and her job. She was a long-time faithful member of Mt. Enon Baptist Church, where she served on the Mother’s Council. She retired from Arby’s following years of loyal and dedicated work. She liked to be busy and enjoyed any kind of art activity, including creating her own pictures. Some of her work had been exhibited at the Town & Country Gallery.

“Thomasine brought a spark,” Pete continues. “She was a bright light with a charming personality that made you feel good and made you feel important to her. She was very kind with a generous spirit and an infectious laugh. She was in every sense a lady, always well groomed, a stylish dresser who loved her jewelry. She brought grace into all our lives.”





RHA STRONG!

2020 Community Report

Founding Partner of **Partners for Community Living**



The mission of the Resident Home Association (RHA) is to provide quality residential services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities, as we did for Brian Ritchie prior to his death due to heart failure in December 2020. We are a nonprofit 501 (3) (c) organization, founded in 1966, one of the first residential services providers in Ohio.

During 2020, we were home for 68 individuals in 13 homes throughout Montgomery County, with services provided by 81 dedicated professional staff. Our oldest residents (2) are 79 years old and the youngest individual we serve is 23 years old.

We provide value-based lifelong residential services seven days a week, 24-hours-a-day, in addition to community-based Adult Day Services, non-medical transportation and respite services. Our collaborative partnership with Choices In Community Living, Partners For Community Living, supports fundraising, community partnerships, advocacy and education.

The Resident Home Association is governed by a policy-making board of volunteers representing families, DD organizations, business and community leaders.

2020 Board of Trustees

Gary Newton, *President*
Carl Eubank
Tom Gmeiner
Rev. Michael Pratt
Steve Schulte

Pete Roll, *Executive Director*

During our most challenging year since our founding as we met the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also faced the loss of the one person perhaps more than any other who led the way in the development and growth of RHA as one of Ohio's most respected residential providers. Brenda Whitney, who was leading the way when our first home opened on Lexington Avenue in Dayton in 1969 and who spent 30 incredible years as Executive Director, lost her long battle with cancer. She was serving on the Joint Development Committee for Partners For Community Living at the time of her death, speaking to the depth of her commitment and dedication to the people she served and their families.



The year of ZOOM ... with the support of extraordinarily creative staff, residents like Keith Savage, pictured as he called Bingo games, found new ways to stay connected during COVID. Association House, our band of rock and rollers from our Greenhill home, performed online. Staff made sure that residents did not lose their family connections by arranging family visits over Zoom. Members of our Venturing Crew (BSA) attended Cyber Summer Camp, which included NASA webinars. Their regular Monday evening Venturing meetings were held on Zoom.

Even Bingo went virtual on Zoom, as did games of Pictionary, while homes became hubs of artistic creativity with an array of art supplies provided for residents to not only keep busy but to express themselves.

**Celebrating staff anniversaries —
27% of our dedicated staff
have served for 15 or more years**

15+ years

Debra Horseman; Judy McKee; Sherrice Nolan

20+ years

Joyce Barnett; Archie Brown; Cheryl Drakes;
Tina Ford; Karen Gabbard; Kenneth Hilliard;
Nafeesa Huff; Casey Marchal; Annalisa Meikle;
April Moore; Lori Singer; Pamela Taylor

30+ years

Paul Cyphers; David Henkalin;
Charnell Posey; Rhonda Rich;
Pete Roll; Vicki Servais

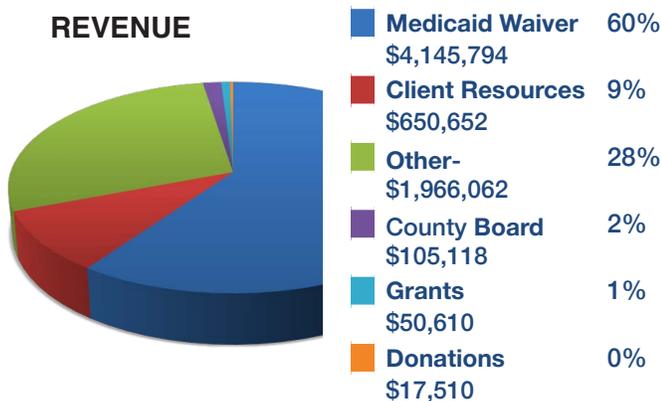


COVID did not take away the things that really mattered, like the holiday celebration for the men and staff at our Garber Road home.

Home Manager Kris Bergman (back, r) celebrated more than 40 years of service with Resident Home.

2020 Financial Review

REVENUE

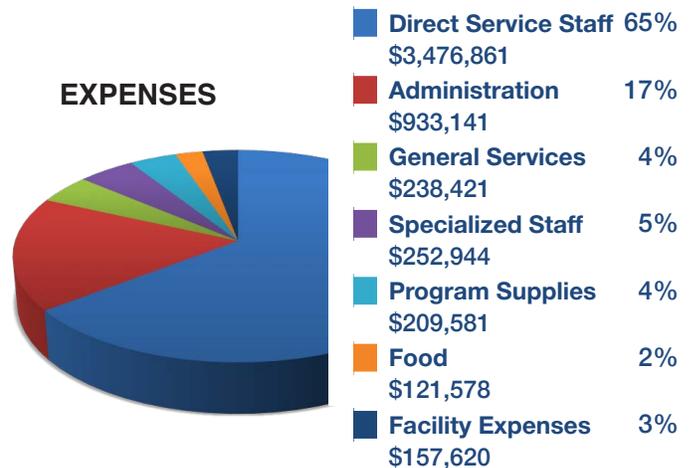


Our primary funding source (97%) is Medicaid, with additional state and local funding, including the Montgomery County Human Services Levy. As with organizations across the nation, Resident Home was impacted financially by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding from the CARES Act provided critically needed supplies and materials to support safety and health for residents in their homes, as well as for employees while working in homes. Funds from the Payroll Protection Program supported employee wages and benefits to provide around the clock services in homes due to community shutdowns.

Adult Day Services (*Day Hab*) and non-medical transportation services were significantly impacted as a result of COVID restrictions, resulting in negligible revenues in these service areas.

Fundraising activities and grants coordinated by Partners

EXPENSES



For Community Living supported needs not met by Medicaid and other funding streams, including support for our Venturing Crew (*BSA*), clothing, holiday gifts, recreation, with a priority of funding the installation of whole-home generators for Resident Home and our partner agency, Choices In Community Living.

Grants for our two partner agencies were received in the amount of \$55,353.52, including grants from The Brighter Tomorrow Foundation, Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Community Fund Ohio and the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Grants and donations funded the installation of whole-home generators in 2020 for the Garber, Greenhill, Piedmont and Springmill homes (*RHA*), and the Lavon Court and Gardenside homes (*Choices*.)



Partners For Community Living

enhancing the quality of life for people served by
Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association



Honors for our 'Dangerous Dame'

The League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area posthumously honored former Resident Home Executive Director Brenda Whitney as one of their 2021 Dangerous Dames in virtual ceremonies held on March 23. The event was established by the League in 2010 as part of its countdown to 100 years of women having the right to vote and the 100th anniversary of the Dayton League. The slogan for the ceremonies was "Celebrate the Women You Are, Because of the Women They Were."

The annual event was named in tribute to the suffragettes who fought for women's rights in Dayton, including holding rallies, parades and soap box speeches on street corners more than 100 years ago, resulting in local media referring to them as "dangerous to polite society", resulting in the League's term of Dangerous Dames of Dayton.

Brenda, who lost her long struggle with cancer in 2020, was honored along with Daj'za Demmings, Executive Director of Young Black Professionals and the Dayton Area Ohio Health Care Nurses. Jana Collier, publisher of Cox First Media/Dayton Daily News, was the keynote speaker. Members of Brenda's family and long-time friends were invited to the online ceremonies, where she was recognized for more than 30 years of service as RHA's executive director, as well as for her many leadership roles throughout Ohio in the de-institutionalization of state institutions, the founding of the Ohio Provider Resource Association, the establishment of many new residential providers throughout the Miami Valley region, the founding of Partners For Community Living and much more. She was also recognized for her other community commitments, including as a member of the League of Women Voters and her advocacy role with the Juvenile Court.

In sharing remembrances of Brenda during the ceremonies, Judy Leasure said of her, "Brenda was **not** some gentle wind. She was the gale force wind of a hurricane that constantly challenged us to do better; to live our lives out loud; to speak **and** to act as passionately for others as ourselves; to live, laugh and love fully – to always have a good story to share ... all that history wrapped up in her stories and no one to tell them now. A force of nature. A voice for the voiceless. **What a dame she was!**"

Self-advocates celebrate in April

Our two local Self-Advocacy groups, Voices of Greene County and Voices Matter/Montgomery County went virtual to host their Spring 2021 Self-Advocacy Conference. This year's Conference included one presentation each Friday during April via Zoom. The theme was How to Network & Involve Your Community in Your Advocacy. The Conference was planned and coordinated by members of the self-advocates group.

Hosted by the Montgomery and Greene County Boards of Developmental Disabilities Services, it kicked off on April 1 with a welcome given by Jeff Davis, Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. **What is a Self-Advocate** was the workshop topic, presented by the Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center.

Other topics shared during the weekly zoom workshops included **Positivity**, presented by

Continued on page 7

Art goes virtual

COVID-19 has made it necessary for the annual **Art & Soul** juried art exhibit to go virtual for a second year. While there will be no in-person opening reception due to health concerns, the art selected for this year's Exhibit will be on actual display during the month of April at the Dayton Metro Library in downtown Dayton. Gallery videos, as well as the virtual Awards Ceremony will be posted on the **Art & Soul** Exhibit Facebook page on April 17. As in previous years, Hutcheson Pharmacy is our Event Sponsor.

The Exhibit is coordinated by Partners For Community Living and Toward Independence to celebrate the artistry and creativity of Ohio artists with developmental disabilities. Additional sponsors for our 14th annual Exhibit are: Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities; Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, in conjunction with ARC Industries; Greene County Board of Developmental Disabilities; Hamilton County Board of Developmental Disabilities; Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities; and Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

All of the work in the 2021 Exhibit is for sale, with artists receiving 80% of the sale price, with the other 20% going to professional matting and framing of their work, as well as to provide cash awards for top ten and Best of Show artists. Art can be seen and purchased by going to <http://artandsoulohio.com/> or <https://art-soul-ohio.myshopify.com/>.



“A prince of a man.” That is how Kris Bergman (*Garber Road Home Manager – RHA*) remembers Jim Sheehan, calling him “equally kind and generous.” Jim and his wife Fran became long-time friends of Resident Home through the Bergman family. “Both Jim and Fran volunteered for our Fish Fry as far back as 1994,” shares Kris. “He continued to attend our Fish Fry after he became ill. When he could no longer attend, there would always be a monetary donation from him and Fran.”

We honor and thank the Sheehan family during their time of mourning in requesting memorial donations be made in his name to Resident Home.

**Thank you for your generous donations
(January 1 – March 31, 2021)**

CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Danette Addison | Dan Cochran | Mary Panstingel, <i>in honor of Tom Panstingel</i> |
| Julia Bell | Amy Fansher | Susan Wilson, <i>in honor of Tom Weaver</i> |
| James Cain | Charles Havener | |
| Clark County Board of DD | | |

RESIDENT HOME ASSOCIATION

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Sharma Baker, <i>in memory of Brenda Whitney</i> | Lexis/Nexis | Pete & Polly Roll |
| Lisa Glandon | Marathon Petroleum | Lori Singer |
| Lynda Hackett, <i>in memory of Brenda Whitney</i> | David & Bobbie Murphy | John & Carol Stinson |
| David Henkaline | Richard Potasky | Eunice Stueve |
| | Carmen & Ann Riazzi | Pamela Taylor |
| | David & Rhonda Rich | |
| | Ryne & Megan Rich | |

In Memory of James Sheehan

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rita Baker | Meredith Helmer | Betty Murray Stoller |
| Christine Bernard | Maria Hofstetter | Andrew & Maria Nolan |
| Jimmie & Sue Brandell | Nicholas & Maureen Keyes | Nicholas III & Eileen Nolan |
| Tom & Lisa Dineen | Katie Lawler | Francine Parker |
| Richard & Julie Fischer | Mary Martin | Leigh Sempeles |
| Carol Frank | Juliann Morelli | Eric St. Pierre |
| Barry & Cynthia Gorman | Kevin O'Hearn/ Jane Westendorf | Wealth Planning Corporation |

PARTNERS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Julia Bell | Jane Marquette, <i>in honor of Susan Haemmerle</i> | Tom Purkey |
| Rhonda Chandler | Joyce Marsh, <i>in memory of Roger & Charles Marsh, in honor of Debra Marsh</i> | Myrna Reese |
| Richard & Mary Sue Federle | | T. Maria Rucker |
| Rollin & Jennie Furnas | | Patricia Sales |
| Karen Gabbard | Ellen McCloskey | Anna Shaver |
| Andrea Ginnan | Susan Meyer | Becky Toomey |
| Diane Hayslip | Erin Nichols | Christopher Traylor |
| Lynette Hooper | Melodye Pennington | Ted Trzaska |
| Debra Horseman | Charnell Posey | Kesha Tuttle |
| Casey Marchal | | Tom & Kathy Weaver |

Give now through your Donor Advised Fund (DAF)

Do you have a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) or charitable checking account? If you do, you can recommend a charitable distribution from your DAF in support of Partners For Community Living. Please contact your financial or legal advisor or specific DAF representative.

You may make a bequest in your Will or Trust to Partners by listing them as a charitable beneficiary of your existing DAF.

You will need to share with your advisor that Choices In Community Living serves as the fiscal agent for Partners For Community Living and use charitable tax-exempt number 31-1126222.

For more information on how your existing DAF may be leveraged for current and future/legacy opportunities for Partners, please contact Vel Hux, Director of Development, at 937-576-0722 or at vhux@cicloh.com.

**Double Your Gift's Impact ...
and at No Cost to You!**

Every year, billions of dollars of potential matched gifts are left in dusty vaults because donors like you did not know they were available.

Did you know that if your employer offers a matching gift program as part of corporate/ community giving, you could double or triple the impact of your contribution to Partners and/ or our partner agencies, Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association? **Your gift of \$100 could become \$200 ... or \$300!** And all you needed to do was complete a form.

Who has a matching gift program in my community?

Here is a very short list of companies with matching gift programs in the Dayton area; AK Steel; Carmax; General Electric; Home Depot; Lexis-Nexis; Speedway; and State Farm Insurance. Thousands of companies have programs.

What do I do to find out if my company (employer) has a program?

Just simply call your employer's HR department. The information may also be available on your employer's website.

Would my gift be eligible?

The average minimum donation to qualify for a gift match is just \$25. Current employees as well as retirees could be eligible for a match.

How do I make a matching gift?

It's as easy as 1,2,3: 1) get a matching gift form from your employer, 2) complete the form, 3) mail your donation and completed form to Partners For Community Living, 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, Ohio 45414. We will do the rest.

For more information, contact Vel Hux at 937-576-0722

Self-advocates celebrate... continued

Optimist International members Jennifer Kendo and Sue Armstrong, with the welcome by Nancy Banks, former Montgomery County Board Superintendent; **Community Safety**, presented by Beaver Creek Police Sgt. Phil Wesseler, with the welcome by John LaRock, Greene County Board Superintendent.

John Zimmerman, Vice-President of Miami Valley Fair Housing, was the presenter for the **Housing & Your Rights** session, with the welcome by Kamarr Gage, Montgomery County Board Assistant Superintendent.

Serena Anderson, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, was the final presenter on April 29, focusing on **Transportation**, with the welcome by Dr. Pamela Combs, Montgomery County Board Superintendent.



RESIDENT HOME ASSOCIATION

3661 Salem Avenue
Dayton, OH 45406-1661
Phone: (937) 576-0722
Fax: (937) 278-2240
www.rhadayton.com
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Return Service Requested



RHA is guided by a policy-making board of volunteers representing families, DD organizations, businesses, and the community.

Gary Newton, *President*
Carl Eubank
Tom Gmeiner
Rev. Michael Pratt
Steve Schulte

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With gratitude and hope

“We’re getting back into the groove of things,” is how Adult Day Services Coordinator Frawnschay (*Shay*) Billingsley is announcing the start up of in-person day services, following COVID-19 guidelines for masks and social distancing as appropriate. Residents have come back into the RHA offices where Day Hab programs are held Monday through Thursday. One of the favorite activities, cooking and then enjoying lunch, often with a special theme, began with ‘thinking green’ on St. Patrick’s Day.

“I haven’t heard a loud cheer from a group of people in quite a while,” says Shay about the return to in-person activities. “That told me just how much they have missed being together.” Upon their return, participants have been enjoying painting. “At the end of February, I asked them to do their own version of a piece of art from famous African American painter Alma Woodsey Thomas, who lived from 1891-1978, as part of recognizing Black History Month,” Shay shares. “They had a copy of one of her pieces of work, as well as a photo of her to inspire them in making their own art. They did very well in this effort.”

Among the plans for the coming weeks of Spring is a Paint & Sip party, where artists will enjoy a glass of sparkling cider in plastic champagne glasses as they paint on a large canvas together.

Rebecca Carles and James Allen proudly display the work they created to honor Alma Woodsey Thomas, whose photo can be seen at the bottom of their work.



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