

The Talebearer

September 2018

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Van Wert Annual Fundraiser

Van Wert held its annual soup & sandwich fund raiser on April 26th at the Vantage Career Center. Committee members volunteered many hours preparing for the big event from contacting businesses for donations, making craft items to working the night of the event. Committee members consisted of: Mary Jo Smith, Jeneane Garwood, Beth Beyke, Francie Carmain, Alexis Kirk, Janice Agler, Heidi Leiendecker, Jasmine Goins, Dustin Taylor, Devin Hitchcock, Melisa Salazar, Linda Anderson, Courtney Althouse, Alexandria Weiss, Camille Goins, Dawn German, BreAnna Stegaman, Jennifer Bishop, Jacob Delgado, Marcy Diddle, Shawn Klingbeil. It was great seeing all our homes and day programming working together to make this a successful event.

I would like to thank all the employees who helped with selling tickets and made desserts/craft items. This year's top sales person for raffle tickets goes to Kirsten Tuckerman. The top sales person for meal tickets goes to Heidi Leiendecker. Both employees work in our community homes. Congratulations Kirsten and Heidi!

I would like to thank all of the employees & their family members, residents, and friends who generously volunteered their time the day of the event. Without your help this event could not happen. I need to give a special shout out to our former MRSI employee, Mary O'Daffer along with Orley O'Daffer and Trudy O'Daffer. Your continued support and help each year is greatly appreciated. Thank you to the MRSI employees who held a garage sale and donated all earnings to the fundraiser. I know the weather did not cooperate well for you but you stuck with it and did great.

MRSI is extremely grateful to all the businesses & private donors who generously gave donations for the fund raiser. Congratulations to all the lucky raffle winners and to Britany McMichael the 50/50 winner.

I would like to thank all of the community members for supporting MRSI by attending our event. Your continued support for the residents is so greatly appreciated. It was great seeing everyone again. I hope everyone enjoyed the night and we look forward to seeing everyone in the next year!

--Janelle Wehrman

CEO



Van Wert ADS

MRSI Van Wert ADS has been on the go this summer! In May, we participated in the VA2K walk at the Fort Wayne veteran's hospital to raise awareness and donations for homeless veterans. ADS members brought in over \$400 worth of hygiene, clothing, and snack items to donate to local homeless veterans. They also raised money to buy two flag blankets, purchased from the White House that will be draped over veteran hospice patients at the hospital. After the veterans pass away, the blankets are given as a memorial to their families. Throughout the summer, we continued to collect spare change to go towards Cup of Joe for a Joe, a charity that helps us purchase cups of coffee for deployed troops, to give them a taste of home and thank them for all they do for us. We continue to volunteer at the humane society and have added on an extra task of helping at Pet Valu. The humane society keeps cats at the Pet Valu store that are up for adoption, we have a set day that we go and help take care of the Pet Valu cats. We were able to work at and donate crafts for the Peony Festival and the Van Wert County Fair booths to raise money for the shelter. ADS members have enjoyed walking the humane society dogs at the reservoir and the parks throughout the summer. We have worked on teaching the dogs leash manners, how to take treats gently, and sit.

The Van Wert Healthy Fit Club is going strong! For the second year, clients chose to participate in the Allen County Trailblazers Hiking program. We have been on some beautiful hikes this summer and can't wait to earn our second trailblazers hiking medallion for our hiking sticks. We have continued a summer exercise challenge, which has included dance, cardio drumming, weights, and HIIT style training, in addition to the workouts we do at the YMCA on Mondays and Fridays. We participated in the YMCA Van Wert Color Run. Members have increased their strength, flexibility, and balance while progressing through more challenging yoga moves, as well. We had four volunteers who have been leading their own cardio drumming dances, with great confidence and skill!

We've made a lot of new friends this summer at our local coffee shops and creameries! We tried out rounds of disc golf, foot golf, and putt-putt golf. The fairs and festivals have taken us on everything from trolley rides to wagon rides, from Fort Wayne to Berne and back to Van Wert. We had a bake and craft sale at Rural King, where more than anything we enjoyed meeting people (and dogs) from the community. Our fall Open House was a great success! Clients demonstrated (and were the leaders of) cardio drumming, dancing, and sign language routines. We displayed our crafts, paintings, and wreaths, which raised enough money for us to attend the Nutcracker Ballet in December. Mercer and Van Wert ADS just had our second annual prom, with an old Hollywood glamour theme, "where you are the star!" It was beautiful to see everyone dancing and having fun, a day to celebrate how awesome our clients are!

Van Wert ADS has gone through a fair amount of change over the years. Change is difficult for everyone, but Van Wert clients have been determined to remain strong and keep working hard toward their goals. I am so proud of their resolve and confidence. We were sad to see Jennifer Bishop leave Van Wert ADS but happy for her as she was promoted to ADS Coordinator for Mercer ADS. We welcomed Maureen Hughes as our new ADS Director and Skylar Wannemacher as a new DSP for Van Wert ADS. We are looking forward to Fall, to continuing to change our world and exceed expectations every step of the way.

--Francie Carmain

MRSI Van Wert ADS Coordinator

WSGH goes to a Dragon's Game

Thanks to the Dayton Dragons for donating tickets to the WSGH residents. On June 25, 2018 the residents cheered on the Dragons, who played the Great Lakes. Even though the Dragons lost 4-1, the residents had a memorable time and it was all thanks to the Dayton Dragons staff. Not only did the Dragons donate tickets to the residents, but upon arrival, we learned the tickets were VIP. The residents all got free Dragons hats along with a buffet style meal that consisted of hot dogs, hamburgers, grilled chicken, mac and cheese, potato salad, fresh fruit and a variety of warm cookies. This also included beverages and Dippin' Dots for dessert. Although the food was absolutely delicious, I would like to give praise to the attentive ushers that took the time to answer all of the resident's questions and they would often come up and ask if the residents needed anything. This truly made the residents feel special on their trip to the Fifth Third Field. The residents also were able to meet some of the Dayton Dragons baseball players before and after the game. The players all signed hats for the residents and took pictures. It was a great day for the residents and it's a game they will never forget.

--Brooke Murray

WSGH and Community Home Coordinator



MRSI's Community Corner

-Kathy started her employment with McDonald's on Shannon St. in Van Wert on 03/29/18. She really likes working with her managers and co-workers. Kath enjoys helping customers and works hard in keeping the restaurant clean for them.

- Ruth, Ronda, Patty, and Frances went to LaComedia Dinner Theater in Springboro to see the play "Annie" and have supper. The ladies enjoyed the food from the huge buffet and the play.

- The staff and resident's at the group home had a surprise birthday party for Debra. The staff and resident's decorated the group home with signs and posters. Staff made a birthday cake for Debra and the residents to enjoy. When Debra saw what everyone had done for her, she was very happy and tearful. Debra thanked the staff for party.

-Other milestone birthdays between May and September: Justin and Dawn turned 21 in September and Sharon turned 65 in July!



The Importance of DSPs

Individuals who work in residential facilities for those with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities are expected to possess a vast amount of positive qualities and to work under physically and emotionally taxing conditions. There is upwards of 51,310 employees since 2017 who work in such facilities and many more that work in conjunction with the residents, too - all attempting to meet such expectations.

Firstly, residential services require a large amount attention, due to the fact that they are run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - this is unlike many businesses. It requires a larger amount of employees to provide the proper care for the residents. However, low wages create a set of problems for both the residents and for those employed. The low wage is discouraging for many potential workers because the position is both physically and emotionally tolling on the employee. In 2017, the median hourly income for an employee of a residential facility for those with an Intellectual and Developmental disability is \$11.56. This is roughly a median of \$24,040 annually. This, however, is not a minimum wage for those working for a residential facility for individuals with IDD: there are many who are not close to that mean. Therefore, many residential facilities are understaffed, overworked, and burnt out. All of the above can and will lead to a decrease in quality of care for the residents.

Secondly, the low wage and minimum of a high school diploma does not facilitate a working environment of well-educated, passionate people who are mentally able to cope with the stress from the job and stimulate a positive work ethic, too.

Thirdly, the residents with IDD are a vulnerable population who has both historically and currently been discriminated against, taken advantage of, and blatantly abused. The creation of a workplace that is understaffed, overworked, burnt out, and do not have the education to support positive coping methods to combat these conditions can encourage the mistreatment of the residents.

By and large, in order to have a higher quality and quantity of employees, a higher wage is required - for the best interest of both residents and the employees of these facilities.

-- Morgan Dougal

MRSI DSP



Deb is showing her love for her DSPs during DSP Recognition Week that occurred September 9-15

Employee Corner

MRSI, as always, has the utmost respect and appreciation for our loyal employees. Here are some special announcements regarding our wonderful staff!!



Congratulations to Courtney Althouse (Van Wert Area Coordinator) and fiancé Samuel Shehata on the birth of their son Rowan!

-Congratulations to the newlyweds Wes and Codie Collins!! Married in June!! Codie is a DSP in Van Wert.

-Congratulations to Jennifer Agler on the birth of your baby boy!

Also, congratulations to all new hires!

Van Wert DSP new hires are Mikayla Martin, Mary Mitchener, Becky Sampson, and Morgan Dougal.

Jon Leiendecker was hired as the TEGH Home Coordinator

WSGH DSP new hires are Nikki Griswold, Drema Meyers, and Chelsea Lautzenheiser

ADS DSP new hires are Ashley Ayers, Michelle Sawmiller, Chris Walters, Lori Wiessinger, Melissa Ladd, and Skyler Wannemacher

Maureen Hughes has been hired as the new ADS Director.

Jennifer Bishop was promoted to ADS Coordinator.

ADS

On Friday, September 21, 2018 Mercer County ADS and Van Wert County ADS got together in Ohio City to host their annual Prom. Staff and clients enjoyed the Hollywood themed dance. All participants had the chance to dress up and take their turn walking the red carpet. There was music, dancing, food, games and tons of fun!

The ADS programs also volunteer weekly at the Van Wert Humane Society. Individuals have the ability to feed, pet, and train the puppies as well as clean out the kennels. Individuals enjoy this service because it teaches them responsibility and other life skills. It also helps the individuals gain knowledge about the Humane Society as an agency.

