

The Talebearer

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A Letter from the CEO

The year 2020 is over and I would like to say I am closing the book and never looking back at it but unfortunately, I believe, part 2, book 2021 has picked up right where the year 2020 left off. If I could erase the year 2020, I would but no one can. All we can do is try to look at the bright side of things. There are many positives that have occurred but below are just a few of them that I would like to mention.

- MRSI has slowly been working on going paperless. Employees have been documenting outcome and services on line for a few years now. Employees also can access their personal work schedule on line. In 2021 our ADS locations will be almost 100% paperless. Our home locations will begin to take additional steps to continue the process of going paperless.

- We are adjusting to holding meetings virtually which allows some of our employees more time to focus on the individuals we serve and their needs verses traveling to and from meetings.

- MRSI has seen employees become more creative with getting clients involved in the community using technology.

- The individuals we serve have taken all the COVID restrictions extremely well.

- MRSI employees have done an outstanding job keeping locations clean by continually disinfecting areas. They have done an outstanding job meeting all the protocol standards we have put in place to keep everyone safe. MRSI employees not only do a fantastic job following protocols while working, but they are doing the same thing when not at work.

As we enter into 2021, I hope all of us remain healthy. With the COVID vaccine becoming more readily available, hopefully this will allow Ohio to continue to get back to some type of the norm that we all used to enjoy and miss. At the same time, there will be many things we will look forward to continuing with the new "norm" we are all learning to accept.

-Janelle Wehrman, CEO





Mike Trace Award Winner– Autumn Armstrong

Autumn is an excellent employee who frequently goes above and beyond the call of duty. While TEGH was extremely short staffed, Autumn volunteered to pick up extra shifts in the home. She also has been very flexible with picking up extra hours at the WSGH; she would pick up extra weekend shifts and volunteer to work double shifts when needed. Autumn has also volunteered her time to help with extra ADS outings such as the Grande Lake Marathon, the Chili Cook-off and the trip to the Fort Wayne Ballet. Autumn also works well with the clients here. She takes the time to have conversations with them. She takes the time to get to know who they are, not just what services they need. Autumn keeps the atmosphere at the ADS fun and light. Finally, during this pandemic, Autumn was 7 months pregnant, and while others may have been too tired to continue working, Autumn kept working hard the whole time. She picked up both first and second shifts. She was extremely flexible during the pandemic and continues to be an asset every day.



Mike Trace Award Runner–Up– Chris Walters

Chris goes above and beyond to get to know the clients. He works to get to know all aspects of who our clients are as people. He spends a lot of his day talking with the clients about what they are doing, what they like, and what their goals are. Chris also works to come with new ideas for the clients different activities, bringing aspects from his life to the clients. This gives them the opportunity to experience many new things. Chris has also given a talk about his time in the military on Veterans Day. He has also brought his wife in to give a cooking demonstration and a talk about her Hispanic heritage. Chris is very flexible with his schedule whenever necessary. He has also picked up more than his share of holidays so that those with family plans could attend. Chris works to make sure that the clients have fun during the day while making new experiences available to them.



Mike Trace Award Runner–Up– Jennifer Gilkey

I am nominating Jennifer for the Mike Trace Award. Jennifer has been with MRSI for a year now. Jennifer is the LPN in Van Wert County. I am nominating Jennifer because she is an all-around outstanding, and great person. She immediately bonded with all of our residents here in Van Wert. She always goes above and beyond to make sure everything is done and appointments are done and the residents are getting the care they need. I have heard time and time again from other Home Coordinators and other employees how much everyone just loves Jennifer and how great she is. She is always there to help if she can. When the COVID-19 Pandemic first started, she worked the floor as HPC every day for a couple months. She picked up extra shifts, she did every shift. She would help on 1st, 2nd, and 3rds. Anywhere that I needed her, she was there. She didn't complain, most of the time, she offered. She picked up and helped during that time, more than anyone else did. It was truly appreciated. She is thorough with the care for our residents. She doesn't have a problem with letting staff know what needs to be done, and how it should be done. She will immediately step in if she sees that someone isn't doing something the way they should and explain to them how they should be doing it in order to provide the best care. Even if things may not be going the best, she doesn't let everyone know it. She stays positive and looks/acts happy. If she sees that someone is having a bad day, she will make time to do something special with them, whether it's an outing with just her or a walk outside, she makes everyone feel good and special. Hiring Jennifer as MRSI's LPN was the best decision for this team, and we all love her!!!

Crawford St.

Here at Crawford St. we haven't been doing too much outside of the house due to trying to keep everyone safe from COVID-19. We have been doing all the necessities like grocery and personal shopping. We get out of the house on almost a daily basis to buy pop and visit with family.

At Christmas, the guys opened presents and had a nice meal. Earlier in the week the guys got to go to Defiance County Fairgrounds in Hicksville, OH to see the beautiful Christmas lights display. Throughout the month they got to go out on drives to see houses that were decorated for Christmas in Van Wert and the countryside.

For New Years, the guys got to go to Black Angus for lunch and they really liked it and are ready to go back again soon. TB stayed up with staff to bring in the New Year.

Back in November, the guys had a nice meal for Thanksgiving and then a few days later celebrated TB's birthday. We all went to El Mexicano for supper and at home he had a cake and ice cream. It was a great time!

We have all stayed safe and healthy here at Crawford during these times. The guys are going to workshop 3 days a week for now.

- Linda McMichael, Home Coordinator

Gay St.

Kathy and Sharon had lots of fun celebrating the holiday seasons of 2020. Passing out candy, enjoying all the Christmas light displays, baking goodies and making crafts. We ended 2020 with some exciting news. Staff member Kirsten, gave birth to a healthy, beautiful baby girl on 12/29/20. From Gay St to you and your families, Happy New Year 2021!!



- Jeneane Garwood, Home Coordinator

WSGH

Over the last quarter we have celebrated several Birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. We lost one of our family members and we gained a new family member. The last quarter has been full of emotions. The best news we received was that WSGH won the Christmas Decorating Contest that is held annually by MRSI. Staff, families and residents alike contributed so much by donating a new tree, carolers and making so many of the decorations themselves. COVID-19 has definitely made things more difficult, but everyone has made the best of it. Everyone has been happy and healthy and we hope you all are too.



- Tacey Blakeley, Program Director



Mercer ADS

Over the last several months the Mercer ADS members several outside outing. We have also been utilizing technology to keep in touch with friends safely. In September we took a trip to the sunflower maze and enjoyed a picnic lunch. Clients were able to pick their own pumpkins and try some apple cider thanks to the wonderful staff at Menchhofer farms this year as well. We were also able to keep in touch with our friends from the Van Wert ADS with virtual parties. During these parties we made crafts together, played games of bingo and enjoyed book club. Also in December Nailed It hosted a Virtual painting party with us, so we could all paint together. Now we are looking forward to the good things to come in 2021!

- Jennifer Bishop, Mercer ADS Director



New Admission

MRSI would like to introduce WSGH's newest admission, Matthew. Matthew is a very outgoing, pleasant guy who enjoys helping others, attending ADS, coloring and listening to Country music. Matthew is very eager to help out at home with the daily chores. Matthew fits in well at WSGH and we are happy to have him as a new member of our family.



Van Wert ADS

Van Wert ADS members have been busy working on kindness and volunteer projects. They collected donations for the food pantry and the humane society, made dog treats, had awareness walks and passed out awareness hearts and ribbons to community members. Using technology, they have been able to socialize, play games, have parties with other ADS pods. ADS DSPs continue to lead interesting activities, crafts, and exercise, while maintaining strict health and safety protocols. We appreciate all your support and encouragement as we navigate this new world.

- Francie Carmain, Van Wert ADS Director



Van Wert Employee Spotlight

Alexis Dunn (Lexi) joined MRSI in August 2020. She is a DSP at Van Wert ADS and Thomas Edison Group Home. She is kind, funny, hardworking, and dependable. She is a valued team member who has adapted to all the changes that have come with the pandemic and offers to work extra shifts when needed. Lexi comes from Payne, but has recently moved to Scott. She will start college in the fall for social work. In her spare time, she runs Hello Beautiful Boutique online, coaches cheerleading, and plays with her dogs. We love Lexi's work ethic and positive attitude and appreciate all she does for the individuals she serves.



Individual Spotlight

Tracy Prior. Tracy has been a resident with MRSI since 1991. Over the years, Tracy has been involved in the Special Olympics doing events such as Bocce, Track, Bowling, Baseball, Basketball, etc. Tracy has also been an active part of MRSI's ADS. Tracy loves going to the YMCA and going swimming. He also enjoys doing arts and crafts. Tracy is an extremely funny person. He loves to meet new people and he enjoys helping people.

Mercer Employee Spotlight

I would like to spotlight Shelley Foreman, for the Mercer County employee spotlight. Shelley is the Community Coordinator and also works at WSGH. Shelley has been with MRSI for 6 years. Shelley is always willing to pick up hours when needed and help out however and whenever asked. Shelley has stated on several occasions that this is not just job, but this is her family, and I know Shelley means that from the bottom of her heart. I would like to Thank Shelley for all that she does care for the individuals in the community and at WSGH.



Cooking Healthy in 2021 – Very Veggie Egg Bake

Ingredients:

- 1C frozen chopped spinach-thawed
- 4 eggs
- 4 egg whites
- 1C fat-free milk
- 1 ½ tsp dry mustard
- ½ tsp seasoning blend
- 6 slices whole grain bread
- ¼ C chopped onion
- ½ C chopped red bell pepper
- 4oz sliced reduced fat Swiss cheese

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375. Prepare 7x11 or 2 quart baking dish.

Remove excess liquid from spinach. Tear bread into cubes.

In large bowl, combine spinach, bread, onion and red pepper.

In medium bowl, whisk eggs, egg whites, and milk. Add mustard and seasoning blend. Mix well and add to spinach mixture. Toss to evenly coat.

Pour into prepared dish- press with spatula and cover with foil.

Bake 30 minutes or until eggs are set. Uncover and top with cheese.

Bake 15 min. or until lightly browned.

Cool on wire rack for 10 minutes before serving.

Makes 6 servings. To make ahead: prepare casserole as directed up to baking instructions and refrigerate overnight. Let stand at room temp for 30 minutes and bake as directed.

MRSI
420 S. SUGAR ST.
PO BOX 603
CELINA, OH 45822