



The Valley Views

A Newsletter of the Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc.

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The Valley Views is published four times a year by Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc. (OVRs). Designed for OVRs families, consumers, staff, and friends, the newsletter includes articles, training opportunities, and personal stories contributed by OVRs residents, staff, and families.

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Consumer Sites & Programs
Charlemar, Parkview, Ivanhoe,
Carmel Terrace, Cypress Way,
Ferncroft, North Bend,
Shadymist, Clovernook,
Woodsfield, Hansford, Lisbon,
Meyerhill, Brookforest,
Epworth Court, Galbraith,
Strifler, Wayland, Cheviot
Apartments, Faircrest, Foster
Settings, and Supported Living

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Joe Greer: Inspiration from the Divine

Surprises can be humbling. **Joe Greer** lives in an apartment at the North Bend apartments. He has lived there for many years; in fact, Joe has lived in an OVRs housing arrangement for close to 30 years. In the course of that time, Joe engaged in a very happy relationship with **Jean Browning**, which led to their marriage. Sadly, Jean died within a few years, leaving Joe with his memories and wedding album of those brief wonderfully shared years. Recently, **Leon Baskin**, who manages the apartment building at North Bend, brought to the office a single-page profile of Joe Greer. It was put together by the artistic-tapping Visionaries and Voices. Two years ago, Joe started attending a couple of times a week.

Unbeknownst to staff, who have interacted with Joe for many years, no one knew of his interest in art—specifically religious art.



Joe Greer

From Visionaries and Voices

“Joe Greer is an artist with a solid work ethic. He creates three to four pieces a week. His inspiration comes from the divine. Iconic religious imagery absorbed from books and during his regular church visits is transformed into patches of color and form, interspersed with strong text. Jesus is a brother to everybody. And His image, along with the Mother Mary, can be found in many of Greer’s paintings and drawings.”

Like the onion, the layers of human emotions, talents, wishes, dreams, and achievements are often hidden beneath little or no articulation. Even with the most vigilant eyes and attentive ears, talents and dreams can often go unnoticed and uncovered.



Joe Greer entitled this painting, “Jesus Eats a Hot Dog.”

Hill and Rodgers Co-Winners of Decoration Contest

Cathy Hill, coordinator of the Cheviot apartments, set out, with the individuals living there, to win two awards for the "Christmas Decoration Contest." One was for a small hanging decoration, and the other was for a very large decoration, namely her whole apartment site. For weeks Cathy was informing everyone that they would see SOMETHING at the Cheviot apartments never before seen at an OVRS site. She sent invitations for the Saturday before Christmas. Her team of staff and residents widened the eyes of the visitors with an enchanting display of lights and color. But the capper was Cathy in a skit singing, "I saw Mommy kissing Santa Claus," backed by a chorus of staff and residents of the apartments.

Diane Rodgers, with her staff and residents of Brookforest, shared in the holiday party at the central office because Brookforest was a co-winner of the contest.



Cathy Hill



The wreath on the left is the co-winner of Holiday Decoration contest. It was submitted by Diane Rodgers and the staff and individuals who live at Brookforest.

Below: Nancy Frey holds the decoration submitted by Cathy Hill and the individuals and staff from the Cheviot apartments.



Frank McMorrow Died in February

Frank McMorrow was placed in Orient State Institution when he was 13. At the time, his father had just died, and he had four brothers, whom he would never see again. Frank was placed out of Orient several times, and each time found a way to return by hopping trains. At Orient, Frank and Bernie became buddies, life-long buddies. When they were placed out together with OVRS 30 years ago, they never had a desire to return to live in Orient State Institution again. While Bernie died in 2004, Frank just passed on February 20.



Tammy Wyatt Rated Employee of the Quarter



Tammy Wyatt

Tammy Wyatt is a program coordinator, who has worked at OVRS for ten years. She has distinguished herself as an inventive party planner, coordinator, and partier with the individuals. She has planned for several years a day at Coney Island, dances at The Farm, innumerable picnics, a weekly jewelry making workshop, and most recently "Game Night."

Game Night takes place at the OVRS offices on Victory Parkway. It began with a couple of home-sites learning of the event and has ballooned to scores of individuals finding a fun evening playing bingo, or whatever, and winning prizes.



One of the successful events that Tammy Wyatt recently planned and coordinated.



Karen McMichael toots her horn at the Mardi Gras Party.

Wolfensberger Dies; Normalization Lives

Within the past few weeks, perhaps the most powerful voice for the kind of services that exist today for the disability community died. Wolf Wolfensberger was a researcher, who began his career at a state institution in Nebraska, working with both individuals with cognitive and mental disorders. In the mid-1960s, he led a movement in Nebraska—encouraging community living through a pioneering organization, Encor.

In 1972, he published one of the most important and influential books ever written in the field of disabilities, *Normalization*. The focus of the book demonstrated how society devalues people who are different. He used his research to point out in case after case how society devalues and ostracizes people with disabilities. But most importantly, he pointed out how to reshape and enhance the image of someone who society wants nothing to do with. Wolfensberger, on the stage, had dramatic presence, and he used his voice to fundamentally change the way services were delivered throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. He was a man of uncompromising principles, which in the 1990s led to his fade from favor.

Wolfensberger understood language and decried the use of "dressing up impairments" using pretty or cryptic phrases, like self-advocate, challenged, and consumer. He never stopped using "mentally retarded" because he contended that there was no other word that expressed the implication of the impediment in the same way; he poked fun of words like "substance abuse" in the drug and alcohol world.

In the end, Wolf Wolfensberger cut a wide swath of powerful ideas that to this day continue to inform the service system for people with all kinds of disabilities.



Summer is just around the corner...

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Community Services Supporting Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in the Home, Community, and in Everyday Choices

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