



# The Valley Views

A Newsletter of the Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc.

## Thoughts from a Loving and Grateful Mom

*The following letter was taken from the Department of Developmental Disabilities website, and expresses so simply the aspiration of OVRs for all the agency's direct support staff in their interactions with the individuals with whom they engage daily. As we acknowledge and celebrate the work of the direct support staff in the succeeding pages, our hope is that our families and individuals mirror the "thoughts of this grateful mom."*

October 2011

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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*The Valley Views is proud to be the second-best newsletter, because every other newsletter claims to be the best.*

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I love taking care of our son, Taylor. He is an adorable young man. His medical and physical needs are tremendous total care 24/7 and I love every minute of it. My husband calls me a cave dweller. I prefer to think of it as enjoying being in the nest. Taylor cannot handle either heat or cold, and sleeps much of the time, so he truly spends most of his time indoors. I am kind of a homebody, so that suits me just fine. Speaking of our nest, the Level One waiver funds allowed us to redo Taylor.

The other big benefit of the Level One waiver for us is Homemaker Personal Care services, which, in our case, means a provider comes into our home to care for Taylor once a week for four hours, so that I can go out and enjoy some respite time. There is just no way to put into words what this time to myself does for me personally! I come home completely rejuvenated and energized; to continue with Taylor's care.

The main reason that I have an easy time leaving and enjoying myself is that I am blessed with a wonderful provider. Her name is April, and she has truly been a god-send! I trust her completely in our home and with Taylor. He adores her, and she understands him and cares for him in such a beautiful way. She is not afraid to hold him, rub his back, or sing to him...all the things I love to do as well. And she is so familiar with special needs children like Taylor, that she has figured most of this out on her own. She even administers meds through his g-tube like a pro. I just cannot say what finding a great provider does for a mother's mental frame of mind. If I had to worry all the time I was gone, it would not be worth it at all to have this service.



Singers and band players—Shirley, Betty, Janet and Mary—huddle around conductor Karen Williams (see "We Are Family" at [www.ovrs.org](http://www.ovrs.org))

# Safety and Accessibility a High Priority at OVRs



OVRs staff, in communication with individuals and family members, are constantly examining how the individuals within the agency can benefit from where they live: from minor modifications like adding grab bars, to bed shakers for individuals who are hearing impaired and cannot hear smoke detectors, to ramps for entry and exit, to remodeling bathrooms for accessibility, to upgrading housing locations—either for ease of access or to accommodate their safety. In the past year, the agency made two housing changes of some significance.

Like other organizations providing housing as part of their service, accommodating the tastes of consumers—individuals and families—is an integral part of an agency's decisions. And so, the residents who lived in the four-unit apartment building on Shadymist Lane relocated from the Mount Airy site to a re-modeled four-unit building on Longford Drive in Sycamore Township in late August.

The second significant change will be the relocation of the residents living in Norwood on Wayland Avenue. While the city of Norwood is nicely situated for easy access, its housing stock is old, requiring lots of maintenance. The residents will move to a newly purchased spacious two-family on Montgomery Road. Its proximity to shopping—two blocks from the Kenwood Town Center, plenty of nearby eateries, and a local library branch—makes for an ideal location. The move will occur in mid-October.

At both re-locations, all individuals and families are delighted with the new licensed homes.



Residents will move from Wayland (far left) to a newer facility on Montgomery Road (above), which is more convenient to shopping and public transportation.



In August, residents moved to Longford in Sycamore Township (photo above) from Shadymist in Mount Airy (adjacent photo). The new location provides a more residential setting.



# Celebrating OVRs' Direct Support Staff



Top to Bottom: Wilma Torrey, Sheryl Fairbanks and Angel Roper

One of the most, if not the most, critical concerns of any human service organization today is how to express to the direct support staff the importance and value of the work they do each day. In a large segment of our culture's workforce, employees who perform well receive pay increases and bonuses. Given the state and federal budgets and the desire (and need) to curb the growth of Medicaid, upward adjustments in funding is not going to happen.

OVRs tries to acknowledge the work of the direct support staff in several ways. Over the years, they are given primary consideration in the development of the agency's health care plan. It is always a wrestling effort to get the most coverage at the most minimal cost for employees earning \$10 per hour. OVRs' 403b plan allows an eligible employee to put away 10% of wages toward retirement.

Another way OVRs tries to highlight the worth of the direct support staff is to acknowledge individual work throughout the year. Collectively, all staff who interact with individuals are invited to the central office for tasty treats and prizes. On this page, you will find a few photos from a recent direct staff picnic.



Felix Moore and Tierney Hamilton



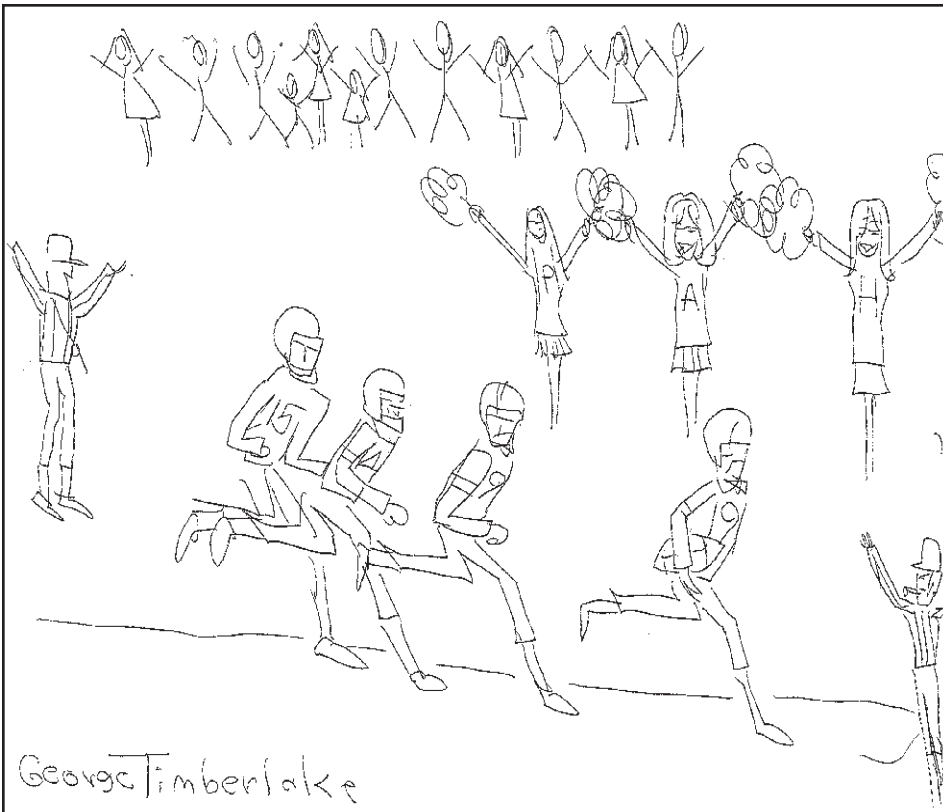
Marshea Harper



Maria Whitterson and Kat Bradford



Georgia Davis



George captures a touchdown in the making.

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

For information about employment or housing availability, visit [www.ovrs.org](http://www.ovrs.org)



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