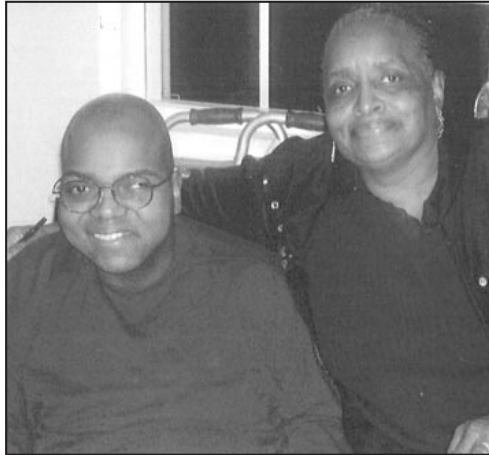




The Valley Views

A Newsletter of the Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc.

Evelyn's Got It All Over the Red-suited Guy



Evelyn Nelson and Kevin share a special moment.

St. Nick was a one-night stand whose principle need was a bottle of amphetamines. Evelyn Nelson does her work all year long—every day—in Lincoln Heights in a home that she has set up to aid two young men. Kevin is in a wheel chair because of cerebral palsy; Robert because of autism—and, he does not speak, and is unable to perform any personal hygiene.

For Kevin, Evelyn adapted a bathroom to accommodate his needs. She lowered the shelving in his bedroom so that he can experience some semblance of independence. She also pur-

chased a minivan for his transportation. If Kevin sees and/or hears a storm, he won't get out of bed. If he doesn't want to be at a work, he'll make himself sick at work so he would be asked to stay home a few days to recover.

For Robert, Evelyn had to learn his quirky patterns and fears. When Evelyn first took him into her home, Robert was very aggressive. She put special locks on the door because he would run; he broke a glass panel out of her dining room cabinet. He does not look kindly on people touching him. On one snowy day, Robert did not want to get his hair cut, so he took Evelyn's keys and tossed them into the snow in the front yard. Evelyn has taught Robert the first part of toileting; she is still working on the second, all the while spending at least an hour cleaning his room daily.

Routine rules Robert's life. On a Saturday morning, he might go to the door with his backpack at 6:00 in the morning—not remembering the day of the week—and expect Evelyn to attend to his week-day needs. Evelyn must get up and show him that it's cartoon day and then he will put the backpack down.

Another example of the importance of a routine, Robert sits in the front of the van when the bus driver is female, and in the back of the bus when it is a male driver. Evelyn must take him for a drive daily when he returns from work or he will sit in the van and wait until she comes to drive him. When he returns from school, Robert waits outside the door until he sees Evelyn begin to boil water for his macaroni and cheese. Speaking of routine, Evelyn—impeccably clean—gives both young men a bath every morning before day program or school—at least a two-hour endeavor. She prepares a separate meal for each young man.

No one is belting out a "ho-ho-ho" in her house, but Evelyn, blessed with a large extended family to dissipate some of the apparent turmoil, is never without a good word and bright smile. This is year-round Christmas.

December 2009

The Valley Views is published four times a year by The 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.

Spooky Photos from the 2009 Halloween Bash



Pirate Kirby Brooks sports his menacing look.

For whatever reason, the Halloween party generates more and more enthusiasm each year. And each year, the costumes become more elaborate. The Farm, on Anderson Ferry Road, looked like a convention of pirates this year. They were all over the place—swash-buckling ruled the night.



Pirate dressed in a Priscilla Faux costume



Vicki Kempf as a sinister lady pirate



Linda Jackson plays it as a sunglasses cool pirate—or is it a witch?



Robert Teisman lives the fantasy of Elvis.



Larry Phillips is the African prince.

OVRs Survey Results: 96% Satisfied

The Chair of the Program and Client Services Committee of the OVRs Board of Directors, **Henry Bang**, with **Karen Burr**, Program Director, compiled an extensive survey affecting the type of services and the best way to offer them. The survey was sent to family members, friends, or advocates. The purpose of the survey was to discern their perception of what services were valuable, missing, or could be improved.

To derive a more honest response, Mr. Bang sent a signed letter with the survey and included his personal home address as the return address. He encouraged families, friends, and advocates to call him directly if they had specific concerns. Of 133 surveys distributed, Mr. Bang received 40 printed surveys and three phone calls. 96% of the surveys expressed that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the level of support. The survey questions covered a range of questions—home atmosphere, participation in community activities, adequacy of staff training, responsiveness, and awareness of the OVRs website.

Three areas of concern were church attendance, appropriate appearance, and

communications between staff and families. Each of these areas offers its set of challenges. Karen Burr is meeting with the agency's program component—including supervisors and all staff at the home sites—to explore how OVRs can better respond to the interests of both individuals and their families.

OVRs has some challenges with the issue of church attendance because it is a private decision. On Sunday mornings with only one staff person working, one person may want to attend church, but others may want to sleep or relax at home. Some staff offer to take individuals to the church that they attend. Given the agency's staff limitations, families may have to get involved if they want their family member to participate in a specific church. Another concern expressed by several respondents was attire—whether clothing was ill-matched, not properly fitting, or ragged looking. While it is possible that a staff person may not have offered the best advice, it is more likely the individual was fixated on a particular shirt, jacket, or shoes. Staff can offer alternatives, and try to persuade, but they cannot force a person to dress a certain way.

A Merry Christmas to All Staff

As OVRs management team prepared the budget for 2009—a year ago—there was one conspicuous missing line item: a year-end bonus. It has been OV's way to address the fact that since the payment rates were set by the state in 2003, there has been one 3% increase, in 2005. To attempt to express the agency's support for the direct support service component, OVRs has been building into its budget a year-end bonus based on hours worked during the year for several years.

It is, of course, easier to structure a bonus than to promise an increase that, given the state and national economy, becomes an empty promise. The executive staff met to explore the possibility of cobbling, through efficiencies, a bonus in December 2009. Through attentive focus on all aspects of personnel, like overtime, maximizing all approved services, and controlling property expenses, revenue increased and expenses decreased throughout the year. And so, as it has turned out, the Board of OVRs is quite delighted to offer a bonus this year to all staff. This is no thanks to Santa; it's happening because of a concentrated, relentless effort on the part of all staff to make it happen.

As an expression of appreciation, OVRs has held an annual Christmas party. This year all employees were invited to visit the office on December 10 to sample a table of staff-prepared goodies and to receive their bonus.

Sad Farewell

On Saturday November 21, 2009, many friends, and lots of family, said goodbye to **Robert Dumont**, who unexpectedly died after a brief illness. Bobby had lived at Shadycrest for many years. His grinning smile will be greatly missed. Our sympathy goes to his family and especially his brother, with whom he spent many weekends.



George Timberlake captures a child-like notion of Santa's workshop.

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Community Services Supporting
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