



## Celebration of Heroes

The Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services coordinated a “Celebration of Heroes” event following the May tornadoes to recognize the professionalism and heroism of direct care professionals and residential providers that were impacted by the tornadoes, as well as to recognize County Board staff for their work above and beyond that saved lives and assured that people with intellectual/developmental disabilities faced as little disruption as possible.

Pete Moore, President and CEO of the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) said this about the work of Direct Support Professionals during the Heroes Celebration, “our heroes faced tragedy with strength and with dignity, but let us remember that what they did is not new to them. It is the backbone of what they do every day.”

Jeff Davis, Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, spoke on behalf of Governor Mike DeWine and the Department, “you are examples of calmness and self-sacrifice. You lived up to what we asked of you. Your actions were nothing short of heroic.”



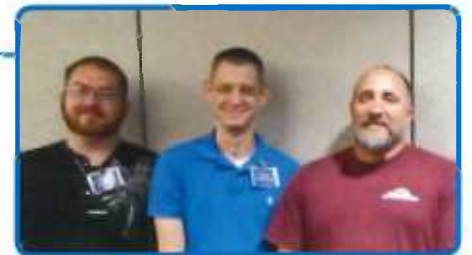
*This is one look at the Bromwick home where Choices provided direct care services taken after the tornado hit and after Direct Support Professional Dionte Cooley-Garrett became a hero, hers a story of calm in the storm as she got three men into her own small car and drove them away from the house that no longer had a roof and where the smell of gas threatened them all. They are safe today in temporary housing until a new home is ready for them.*

*Without a moment's hesitation ...* We have so many stories to celebrate our behind the scenes heroes of the storm. Office Administrator Dan Cochran was in the office the morning after the storm, where there was no power and no water, no phone service, just his cell phone to rely on. He sat for hours taking calls from staff and then spending hours on his computer at home to coordinate with staff throughout the affected area.

Chief Financial Officer Shawn Valentine was on vacation in Florida. He and Dan captured the moments when there was a break in the internet ‘cloud’ and together from across the miles they coordinated payroll so that no staff person would go without a paycheck even as some were displaced from their homes. Michelle Ortel continued billing from home. Jennifer Priske processed Food Stamp requests from home.

Chris McLaughlin, Buford Page, Alli Taylor, and Program Directors Danette Addison, Marvin Lewis, Chasity Cook, Jennifer McLaughlin and Kristen Park worked around the clock to get people relocated, even loading up a recliner from one home to get to a hotel for one woman who could not sleep in a regular bed due to her physical needs. They loaded mobile lifts, wheelchairs and other equipment and gathered up medications. They helped clear streets of fallen trees so they could get people out to safety. They came back to a home that was destroyed and loaded up a truck with personal items, clothing and some furniture and not only delivered it to a safe temporary home for the men, they set it up in the new location to look as much like the home they had lost as possible, caring for every detail in every way they could.

It was all about team work and all about family. **EVERY person made a difference! We were and are surrounded by heroes.**



*Maintenance Team Buford Page (l) and Chris McLaughlin (r), with Office Administrator Dan Cochran, represent all our behind the scenes heroes.*

## Without a moment's hesitation

by Tom Weaver, Executive Director

Unfortunately it was not a scene from *The Wizard of Oz*. What happened in the night time hours of May 27 was all too real for our Direct Support Professionals and the people who were asleep in their homes when the wind howled, the hail pounded, the lighting crackled and the thunder roared. And then the power went out and the roof peeled off! Almost 40 people with intellectual/developmental disabilities discovered on that night that they were surrounded by heroes.

It was their heroes who woke them up, got them to a safe place in their home, talked to them, sang songs with them, told jokes, prayed. It was their heroes who got them into cars and vans and to safe places where there was water and electricity, that worked with welcoming area hotels and other safe locations to bring in recliners and medications, wheelchairs and more. It was their heroes who did all this, even as some knew their own homes and their own possessions were being damaged and destroyed. We have been able to gift some of those staff with more than \$2,500 in total donations that have come from families and friends who want to join us in thanking them for their service.

Our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) receive annual training on what to do in the case of tornadoes, most never imagining that they would have to use that training. That training and their own sense of dedication to the people they serve meant that everyone affected by the storm made it through the terrible night.

There was so much to do after the storm ... making sure no one missed their medications ... getting possessions moved out of damaged homes .... getting in touch with families .... getting computer systems back up and running ... the list goes on and on. Just imagine relocating and accounting for not just your family, but several families all at once. Our DSPs, managers, and support teams were nothing short of miraculous!

That everyone, without a moment's hesitation, stepped up and did not only what was expected of them, but that went so far beyond any expectations speaks to the dedication to our mission and to the depth of caring for those we serve. We certainly didn't need this tragedy to hit our community to know that, but it did confirm in amazing ways that we are in every sense of the word a family, willing to risk our own comfort, our safety, our very lives for the well-being of others ... without a moment's hesitation. My heart is bursting with appreciation!



*The Celebration of Heroes event also honored those in the media credited with saving lives throughout the region, including WHIO TV Chief Meteorologist McCall Vrydaghs, WDTN TV Chief Meteorologist Brian Davis, and WKEF TV Chief Meteorologist Jamie Simpson, pictured with Choices' staff Marvin Lewis, Chasity Cook and Shawn Valentine.*



Our Choices' family is pleased to share the pride Bill and Melissa Fisher have in their son Wesley as he continues to show his support for his community. He is pictured with City of Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley as she presented him a proclamation for him to share with the eagle handlers and staff at Carillon Park, home of

Dayton's two distinguished citizens, the eagles Orv and Willa, named, of course, in honor of Orville and Wilbur Wright.

Wesley believed the eagles and all they represent should be recognized, along with the work of everyone at one of Dayton's treasures, Carillon Park. He worked with city officials to get the proclamation that set aside a day to celebrate Orv and Willa. "See, Mom, people with disabilities can make a difference," were the words he shared with his mother as they rode home after that time of celebration.

Whether it's our award-winning self-advocates, the leaders of our Greenemont and Partners Optimists Clubs or one person like Wesley, they make a difference. **Yes, Wesley, you made and continue to make a difference. Thank you for being an example to us all!**



# Partners For Community Living

enhancing the quality of life for people served by  
Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association



Volunteer Coordinator Cheron Barclift (r) was among those honoring Carolyn Hayes as she received the 2019 Carl Day Volunteer Service Award at the Developmental Disabilities Hall of Fame and Erin Ritchey Memorial Awards. Carolyn joined our Partners family ten years ago as a volunteer from LexisNexis and has stayed by our side, volunteering more than 1,000 hours, valued at more than \$25,000.

She is our BINGO lady, joining us for our monthly BINGO games, volunteering more than 100 hours for that activity alone. She volunteers at our events as well, including our Bowl-A-Thon, Fish Fry and more.

## Sinclair students and Fun-Fit ... learning with and from each other

Four years ago an important community partnership began when members of Choices' Fun-Fit program made a presentation to Sinclair Community College students enrolled in the Radiology Technology and Health Sciences program. In 2017 faculty members Ann Swartz and Vicki Luster expanded the experience by coordinating a Campus Day for Fun-Fit participants and students involved in the Radiology, Surgical Technology, Respiratory and Dietary departments. In 2018 the effort again expanded to include Sinclair's Emergency Medical Services and Medical Assistants departments. Campus Day '19 was held in April.



*Choices In Community Living was honored to stand beside Sinclair Community College as they received the 2019 Community Award during the Developmental Disabilities Hall of Fame/Erin Ritchey Memorial Awards ceremonies. Pictured at the ceremonies are Nancy Viets, Choices' Fun-Fit Director; Vicki Luster, Sinclair Community College; Trent Grooms, Choices' Chief Operating Officer and Human Resources Director; and Ann Swartz, Sinclair Community College.*

Sinclair faculty and students have made a commitment that empowers individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities to be more educated and active participants in their own health care, while providing students with meaningful experiences that will have a lasting impact as they become health-care professionals.



***This is how we roll!*** It's the broadest of smiles, the thrill of competition and the joy of friendship and all for a great cause. The great cause for Kent Crucea (*Resident Home Association*) and our other 2019 Partners Bowl-A-Thon bowlers and donors is making wishes come true. Proceeds from this year's event, as in years past, have been shared between the Wish Lists of Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association to provide clothing, medical equipment, home furnishings, help with paying bills and more for individuals when they have no other funds.

Natalie (*Choices*) is one of the people that knows just how much the Wish List means. There was a birthday party to help her and her mother celebrate her 28th birthday in

July because of those who supported our Bowl-A-Thon and who make direct donations to our Wish Lists.

From Kent, Natalie, her mother and all those who will have reason to smile this year, thank you for helping us raise more than \$2,300 for our Wish Lists from our Bowl-A-Thon:

Creative Labels, Inc.  
Rollin & Jennie Furnas  
Edith Fuson

Tom & Sherri Giver  
Paul Hutsonpillar  
Doug & Ann Jones

George C. Martin Funeral Home  
Ellen McCloskey

*Philanthropy is not about money. It's about using whatever resources you have at your fingertips and applying them to improving the world.* – Melinda Gates

*Thank you for your gifts*

#### CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING

Vanessa Guenther  
Melinda Husmann, *Wish List*  
Dr. Pamela Lockwood, *Safe Haven Farms*  
Stephen McHugh  
Janet Peasant, *Wish List*  
David & Susan Wilson

*To Choices for support of staff who lost homes and possessions during the tornadoes:*

Danette Addison  
Gary Blevins  
Trent Grooms  
Anita Kitchen  
Doug and Ann Jones  
Judy Leasure  
Terri Palazotto  
Larry & Connie Proctor  
Tom Weaver

*In memory of:*

Doug Hoyer, *from Arlene Deis*

#### RESIDENT HOME ASSOCIATION

Jonathan Hlavac, *Woodbury Home*  
David & Bobbie Murphy, *Woodbury Home*  
RHA staff support for tornado relief  
Wanda Roll

#### PARTNERS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Sue Ault  
Ronald & Patricia Burnside  
Cameron & Dawn Edmond  
Wilma Creager  
George Ford  
Trent Grooms, *Bowl-A-Thon*  
Michael Haap  
Marjorie Kitchen, *Wish Lists*

Ed & Janet Marrinan  
Ellen McCloskey  
Charlie and Mary Pierce  
Myron & Charla Rheaume  
Patricia Sales  
Edwin D. Shock, Sr.  
Gerry & Verne Shroyer

*In memory of:*

Robert T. Hart, *from Dana H. Kane*  
Karen Alexander Kemper, *from David P. Wittman*  
Charles & Roger Marsh, *from Joyce & Debra Marsh*  
Tom Panstingel, *from Mary Panstingel*  
Theresa Trzaska, *from Jim and Marge O'Neil*

*In honor of:*

Kathy Morgan, *from Connie Gilbooly*  
Judy Leasure, *from James Hurley*  
Brenda Whitney, *from Gary and Barbara Cummins*

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Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

December 3, 2019

#### So much more than a bathroom

A generous grant from The Physicians' Charitable Trust of the Miami Valley will mean there will now be an accessible bathroom at Resident Home Association's Springmill home. It will mean so much more than that one room in that home. With the passing of Joanne Maloney earlier this year, there are currently six ladies who are part of the Springmill family, ranging in age from 49 through 66 years young with an average age of 60. Together they have been part of the Resident Home family for 158 years. The home opened in 1978.

Three men from Choices know that they also have support from the community. There will be new flooring in their Lavon Court home because of a generous grant from The CareSource Foundation. Since their beginning in 2006, the Foundation has awarded more than 1,300 grants and invested over \$17 million to nonprofits like Choices, working to eliminate poverty, build healthier communities and develop innovative approaches to address significant social issues.

The new flooring for Lavon Court has also been supported with a grant from The Brighter Tomorrow Foundation.

"There was not one hero. Everyone was a hero. There was not one heroic act but many heroic acts," sums up Pete Roll, Resident Home Association Executive Director, as he spoke with deep respect about his staff and their response to the tornadoes on May 27. He is pictured with Program Manager Vicki Servais during ceremonies honoring heroes of the storm that was coordinated by the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services, recognizing the work of Board staff, as well as Direct Support Professionals and other staff from residential providers throughout our area.



"To help ease overcrowding as we took residents from our affected homes to safe homes, Vicki took three residents to her own home for two nights," Pete continues. "She did this after working long days. She was very helpful in planning and helping with relocations. She symbolizes our outstanding agency-wide cooperation. This holds true for both residents and staff that were all part of this shuffle. When you hear agencies speak of being family, this was on full display when we needed it most."

Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association share our appreciation to and respect for the hard work and heroism of staff from the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services for their hands on professional and personal commitment to the people we serve and others with developmental disabilities throughout our community.

## “Does anyone really know what time it is?”



Amy Zahora and Anita Kitchen could not have had a better time living out these lyrics to one of the band *Chicago's* big hits. Time for laughing, singing and all that dancing to the great music of *Chicago* was a dream come true for Amy. That she danced to that music and saw one of her favorite bands with someone she considers a friend made the experience unforgettable. When Anita, who is Choices' FunOne Coordinator, heard that the band *Chicago* was coming to the Rose Music

Center in Huber Heights, and knowing how much Amy loved the band, she immediately got two tickets.

“Amy’s experience is exactly what we imagined when we started FunOne,” shares Anita. “We match one current staff who wants to work additional hours with one individual, with that individual making the choice as to what they want to do or where they want to go. They don’t have to go out with a larger group the way we did before FunOne. We get to do things just like any other friends or family would do.”

The FunOne program is the only one of its kind in Ohio at this time. It began with funding support from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Brighter Tomorrow Foundation and the CareSource Foundation. Those funds helped set up the program and provide some funding for individuals who could not purchase tickets or pay for activities on their own. “Individuals usually pay for their own tickets or activities,” continues Anita, “but we do want to make sure that no one who wants a community adventure is denied that because they do not have funds.”

As for that experience dancing to the hits of *Chicago*, Anita continues to be inspired by her experience with Amy. “This is just what we wanted when we started FunOne. There are so many others that deserve to have what Amy and I shared at the Rose Music Center ... two friends going out together for a really, really good time.”

*Editor's Note: Designated gifts in support of FunOne adventures can be made on our secure website at [www.partnersohio.com](http://www.partnersohio.com) or by mail to Partners For Community Living, 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, 45414.*



**The gift of sleeping well.** David Pryor now has reason to smile each morning he wakes up. He feels better. His health is improving. His arms are not swollen from dangling over a too-small bed. With support from a grant from the Gorman-Hewitt-Ayars Memorial Fund (*United Rehabilitation Services*) and gifts from caring friends, David has the new therapeutic bed that has been on his wish list for so long. He and his staff share their gratitude for the grant and to his friends who supported him with gifts, including

Kay Davis, Edith Fuson, Doug and Ann Jones, Orpha Justiss, Joyce and Debbie Marsh, Charlie Pierce and Kathryn Pitchford. **You now make a difference every night of David's life!**



There's little free time for Jacob Yost, pictured with Fun-Fit participant Lonnell Cain (*l*) and her sister Pat Cain, as he balances his job at Skyline Chili on Old Troy Pike with his Radiology Technology studies at Sinclair Community College. That he would take some of that time in service to those served by Choices In Community Living speaks to his giving spirit and character. Jacob recently combined his work and his studies for a good cause by planning and coordinating a fundraising night at his Skyline, with the proceeds going to Choices' Fun-Fit program to help pay for field trips and community outings.

According to Fun-Fit Director Nancy Viets, one of the ongoing goals of Fun-Fit is to increase involvement in integrated activities in the community, in addition to the successful programs held at YMCAs and recreation centers throughout the Miami Valley. While Fun-Fit adult day programs are paid for through Waiver and other support, there are no funds for field trips outside of the YMCAs and centers.

“Jacob thought of this idea independently himself,” she says with gratitude, “he basically did all the arrangements, including getting Sinclair students and faculty involved by going to dinner at Skyline on our behalf. We thank him and those who supported him at Sinclair and his manager and fellow employees at Skyline for giving us such a great welcome. We promise we'll have some great experiences and get some new equipment because of them and especially Jacob.”

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### Honoring Omega

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is 'what are you doing for others?'" Wynema Mebane was inspired by this Martin Luther King, Jr. quote in nominating the Ushers of Omega Baptist Church for a 2019 Erin Ritchey Memorial Award.



"For the past 15 years, Pastor Joshua Ward and Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Daryl Ward have demonstrated a consistent willingness to volunteer as a body to better the lives of people with disabilities," she shared in her nomination. "Their support, ability and openness in interacting with people with all levels of disabilities through recreation and service is evidence of the members' giving hearts and giving spirits."

Members of the Omega congregation have consistently supported efforts of The Advocates for Disabilities and the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services. Their support included involvement with The Advocates Family Day in the Park from 2001 – 2013. For the past four years, ushers have volunteered for the County Board's annual Winter Carnival.

In 2018, led by Todd Mebane (*Wynema's son*) and Tylar Davis (*a young member of the congregation,*) Omega came together for a Christmas in July-August-September donation drive to benefit the Adult Interim Care Home. Choices In Community Living provides services in the home for individuals who need a safe and caring temporary home. Omega's efforts resulted in more than \$1,500 in personal care, household supplies and monetary donations. The outpouring of support and love coming from Omega Baptist will be one of the stories we now have to tell when we are asked what the word 'community' means to us. Here's our definition: shelves filled to overflowing with some of the basics that add comfort to our lives ... hearts filled with thanksgiving for what Omega has taught us about generosity, kindness and faith.