



We will remember you

*by Lis'e Johnson,
Program Manager/
Garvin Road home*

There is a void now in our Garvin Road home that can never be filled since we said our last good-bye to the

irreplaceable Tim Powers. Tim was the third of eight children, born on June 18, 1944. He expanded his family in 2010 when he became a part of our Choices extended family. We are all the better because of him and his larger-than-life personality. Underneath that crop of cotton white hair there lived this straight-shooter kind of a guy that loved nothing more than being at home. He loved to 'do nothing,' as he was known to say often, and to go 'nowhere,' because home is where he preferred to be. The one exception was when it was time to go shopping. That is when he would have to pick up everything he saw and tell me 'I'll take it!'

Tim brought so much joy to all of us who knew him and who worked with him. Not only did he keep a smile on our faces, but he also kept us always on our toes. When we took him out to dinner for his last birthday, we all sang happy birthday to him after the meal. Once that was done, he brought the event to a close by saying in his characteristic matter-of-fact style, "okay, pay the check and let's get out of here."

It was a complete honor to be a part of the team of people who advocated for Tim and his right to live his best life. We all will hold on to that memory of hearing that raspy voice call out to us ... 'hey, buddy, whatcha bring me?' There would always be that Tim smile and a big 'YEAH' when we did have something for him. I had the pleasure of being a part of Tim's life for the past ten years as program

Continued on page 2

Choices receives largest grant in our history



A member of our extended Choices family since 1987, 67-year-old Maurice Hollingsworth celebrated our 40th anniversary by welcoming the two newest vans to our vehicle fleet. In addition to services he receives, Maurice is an honored member of our staff, serving as a part-time janitor at our Needmore Road office. He is also a recipient of a regional Erin Ritchey Memorial Award. (photo by Tamis Manigo)

"We are very pleased to share that Choices has received our largest grant since we began services in 1985." Choices' Chief Executive Officer Trent Grooms made the announcement that the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has confirmed a grant in the amount of \$545,000 for the purchase of five vans, with those vans to be purchased and added to our vehicle fleet in 2026. According to Trent, this follows the purchase of two new vans in 2025 that were made possible through a \$115,000 grant from ODOT.

Choices operates one of the largest vehicle fleets in the Miami Valley, with a total of 52 vans with the addition of the two new vans in 2025, providing Non-Medical Transportation Services for those served directly by Choices, as well as community participants in our Adult Day Services programs, including Fun-Fit and Choices Champions. This door-to-door accessible transportation is also available for individuals to and from jobs in the community. Each home owned and/or operated by Choices also has a designated van to assure access and integration in the community, as required by rules and regulations of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, as well as by Choices' mission-focused commitment to inclusion and independence.

"We are grateful for the support of ODOT for playing such a critical role in support of those we serve," continues Trent. "We are equally grateful for the work of Amy Fansher in preparing and submitting our application that made these grants possible. While she fulfills her primary responsibilities as Program Director for our Adult Day Services and Non-Medical Transportation program at an exceptional level on a daily basis, it is her skills in understanding and preparing grants of this magnitude that will have life changing impact on the lives of those we serve for years to come. A truly remarkable accomplishment!"

**Be a part of our
40th anniversary celebration**

(SEE PAGE 6 FOR DETAILS)



Celebrating 40 years – Among those joining in sharing memories during our 40th anniversary Board reunion event were Sharon Hairston, current CICL Board Treasurer; Trent Grooms, current Chief Executive Officer, and Bob Steinbach, who served as Board Vice-Chair and then as chair from 2008-2013. *(Photo by Anthony Luckett)*

One remarkable year

by Trent Grooms, Chief Executive Officer

It still has some time to go, but to date I can say without hesitation that 2025 has been a truly remarkable year! Spring and Summer have flown by, and we find ourselves surrounded by orange and brown and all the signs of Fall, with plans underway for seasonal activities right up and through the holidays. To date we've been the recipients of the creativity and professional experience of staff like Amy Fansher, who oversaw the receipt of our biggest grant in our history from the Ohio Department of Transportation, to Dan Cochran, with his gift of seeking out and creating innovation, with two new driving simulators now in our Martin Center because of his insights and ability to collaborate ... all while excelling in their day-to-day job responsibilities. We've seen staff drawn even further together as family, like our Garvin Road home as they grieve the loss of Tim Powers, and the staff in Clark County who hear a wish like a trip on the North Pole Express and take the initiative to earn the money to make it possible.

It's been a time of making celebrations happen so that the milestone of our 40th anniversary gets the attention it deserves, due to the planning and organizational skills of Kara Mortimore, Lorene Matthews, Renee Mills, and Judy Leasure, along with myself, where we even got Lorene's son Anthony Luckett involved as our go-to videographer for events like our Mother's Day Luncheon, Board reunion, and for our upcoming gala celebration on October 15 at the Mandalay Banquet Center.

For 40 years we have been known throughout the Miami Valley region and Ohio as one of the most respected service providers, known for our commitment to our values and mission and to our forward, future-oriented commitment to innovation. Every step of the way in all of these 40 years we have been shaped by the unwavering dedication of our incredible staff, by the leadership of a remarkably dedicated board of trustees, by the support and ever present generosity of our families and friends, and by the commitment to collaboration of so many valued community partners.

From major milestones to the quiet day-by-day triumphs, we have witnessed those we serve flourish, grow and make positive impactful strides as they reach for their goals of inclusion, integration, and independence as part of their communities, not apart from them. This year, our 40th anniversary year, has been a year that is testament to what is possible when we come together, united in common purpose and with a shared vision.

In times like these, if you need good news, look no further than here on the pages of this newsletter. It is here you will find confirmation of the good that is all around us, the good we want for each other, the good we create together for and with each other. It has been a good 40 years. And I would say, along with many of you, it has been even better than good. It has been a remarkable 40 years!

We will remember you *(continued)*

manager. No words can express how much I miss seeing his face, of seeing him sitting in his recliner, the sound of his voice as he wrapped me around his finger ... 'just let me go to bed,' he would say in that special Tim way ... 'let me sleep for an hour.'

Tim attended Gardenside School. He enjoyed taking part in activities at We Care Arts and participated in Special Olympics. He retired at age 65 from MONCO Enterprises. He had a fondness for tools, locks, and flashlights. Nothing brought as much joy for him than opening Christmas gifts. For all those years of holiday wrapping paper ripped apart to get to the gifts inside, for all the shopping trips, for all those moments in that recliner pleading for just an hour of sleep, for all those big YEAHs, we are thankful for the memories. Hey, buddy, that is what you brought us. All these memories. We will always remember you!

Lest We Forget

Scott Rheame was the joyful recipient of one of our door prizes during our Mother's Day luncheon in May, taking home a box of famous Killer Brownies from Dorothy Lane Markets. That he was there to take home that prize, that he was there having lunch with his mother Charla, father Myron, his sister Shawna Hatton, and friends - that there would be a day such as that to celebrate was something that could not be imagined more than five decades before, as captured in this story from his father. It is a story told with a depth of loss and pain as real today as if were still those dark days, the days that would be forgotten without the courage and tenacity of families like the Rheames, stories that should be told again, especially in times of celebration, like anniversaries, lest we forget the reasons we celebrate.

At three years of age, Scott began displaying behaviors that convinced his parents that he needed to be evaluated by professionals. Living in Cleveland at the time, they had access to 'the best' of the best professionals at the Cleveland Clinic, or so they believed. These would be the same professionals, following test after exhaustive test, that would give a name to what was happening ... not to Scott ... but to his mother. It came to have a name, a dark label, this diagnosis they gave to her, a negative, painful label that too many mothers and too many families came to experience. Refrigerator Mom. That is what it came to be known as. Charla Rheame most surely was a Refrigerator Mom and, as such, her son was who he was. Refrigerator Mom ... cold, distant, closed off from her child ... that is why Scott had the behaviors he had. Perhaps she, and Scott, would benefit from her receiving psychological care. Charla and Myron Rheame, loving parents of Scott, were told that ... had to hear those words ... live with those words ... have that as part of who they were as parents of a young child, to hold it within themselves as he grew into a young man and now into a man of 58. They are not words, not a label, that can ever be forgotten.

Myron and Charla carried those words, that memory, within them as they joined us as honored guests with other families on a beautiful day in May, where their son sat beside them for lunch and then took home that box of Killer Brownies. Wounded they were by those long-ago words, but it did not define the family that sat with us as we celebrated one of our 40th anniversary events. Behind them were all those challenges met, including at last the diagnosis of autism that meant there would be more support, more understanding ... doors opening to choices - school, work, community, and most of all, home ... all this would follow all those tests and evaluations, all those callous and unknowing labels - good things would follow. For 40 years Choices has been providing good things for families ... work, community, and, most of all, home - unable to take away those long-ago hurtful memories but committed to opening enough space for the good memories, good times, times worthy of celebration, always remembering why we do what we do. ***Lest we forget.***



The Rheame family (Charla, Scott, and Myron) knows from experience what it means to have a time set aside to celebrate mothers, fathers, and families. Our Mother's Day luncheon was so much more than food and family. It was recognition and remembrance of a long journey out of isolation and darkness into acceptance and community. (photo by Anthony Luckett)

(Editor's Note: Myron and Charla Rheame are two of the pioneering parents whose persistent and vocal advocacy were instrumental in the development of services and organizations like Choices. Myron is a long-time member of our Choices Board of Trustees, serving as Vice-Chair Emeritus.)



Howard Mathews knows about family. He shared a meaningful family moment with his sister Andrea Ginnan during our Mother's Day luncheon at the Dayton Women's Club.

Howard is one of the original 23 clients who transitioned from residential services provided by what was then known as the Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation to residential services provided by the newly formed non-profit Choices In Community Living, residing in the Olive Road home. (photo by Anthony Luckett)

Where technology meets the road

What links Scene 75 and Dave & Buster's with Choices? Choices' Facilities Director Dan Cochran has the answer to that question. It is technology. It is building partnerships through technology that adds to the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities while enhancing the skills of those who serve them. Podium 1 is a Tennessee-based company with little name recognition but walk into any Scene 75 or Dave & Buster's and they have immediate sound and action recognition. They are the company behind those realistic games with all that action and all those sounds. In their most unique and innovative partnership to date, they have stepped forward with Choices, through Dan, to build a customized driving simulator built specifically to train those who drive our Choices vans.

"We had used virtual reality training prior to this new option," says Dan. "While that provided us some level of support in training our drivers, it could not come close to the very real-life experiences from these driving simulators, which uses one of our vans as the default. We received our first simulator this summer and in September we will see the arrival of a second simulator from Podium 1, who partnered with us for a new endeavor for them and for us. Not only did they provide us their expertise, but they did it at a dramatic savings for us."

The simulators have been specifically designed to mirror the experiences of drivers in a variety of settings that they encounter during their daily responsibilities, including experiences with both manual and automatic transmissions.

With the design and installation completed, Dan will continue his efforts related to identifying both concerns and potential new opportunities related to the use of the simulators as he continues his collaboration with Podium 1, while Adult Day Services Program Manager Brad Bourquin will oversee the ongoing training for drivers. "Most of our Direct Support Professionals are required to drive," shares Brad. "All of our new drivers will now be trained using the simulators. They will also be used as part of our corrective driver training program."

"The simulators will help us accomplish two very important things," continues Brad. "They will help our drivers understand the importance of patience when driving those we serve, the same kind of patience we need in all the ways we serve individuals. Most importantly, being trained using these simulators will emphasize that client safety is our top priority. Getting first-hand experience in defensive driving will support those we serve and make sure our drivers are some of the safest out in the community. I am excited to be



Facilities Director Dan Cochran is the 'driving' force in furthering Choices' role as one of Ohio's most innovative service organizations. Dan took the first steps to develop the concept of a driver training simulator, reached out to partner with the development of this state-of-the-art concept, was instrumental in the design and development of the simulator and then getting it on-site at our Martin Center to become one of our newest technologic advances in support of those we serve.

overseeing this new training opportunity for our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and our Non-Medical Transportation/Adult Day Services staff."

According to Dan and Brad, there are numerous benefits, both currently and for the future, in adding this technology to our growing number of innovative technological approaches, including our remote monitoring, tech house, and other services.

Among the benefits of the simulators are: reductions/cost savings in insurance costs related to operating our 52 vehicle fleet; professional skill development for staff; enhanced/increased confidence for our drivers, leading to more job satisfaction; future planning to provide the training for clients to further the independence of those who may want to get their own driver's license; and the potential to form local partnerships with other organizations to provide the training in collaborative cost-sharing.

"Most importantly," emphasizes Dan, "it means that once again we are using innovative approaches to support and increase our commitment to our mission, with these simulators doing the most important work of all ... adding to the safety of those who rely on us for transportation so that they are as included, integrated, and as independent as they can be."

Join us for a 'haunting' good time



It is hard to tell from this angle, but there is a huge smile on the face of Kirk Ford (r) as he is picked as the winner to receive one free Boo Bucks ticket as part of our door prizes during our Mother's Day Luncheon in May. He is keeping his fingers crossed that #1 is a lucky ticket number for him when our Boo Bucks winner is drawn on October 31. (photo by Anthony Luckett)

Pumpkins, witches, ghosts, oh, my! If it is that time of year for all things fun, then it is most surely time once again for our Choices autumn 'Fun-Raiser' Boo Bucks. It will be no tricks and only treats if you hold the one ticket that could result in up to \$10,000 to you when we hold our drawing at our Choices offices on October 31. Tickets are now available at \$50 per ticket or three tickets for \$100. Only 500 tickets are available. Tickets can be purchased on our secure website at www.cicloh.com, by calling 937-898-2220, or can be picked up at our offices at 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton. All proceeds from ticket sales go directly in support of our Wish List, providing clothing, medical equipment, home furnishings, outings and recreation activities, holiday gifts and more when there are no other funds available.

Editor's Note: In the event 500 tickets are not sold by October 31, proceeds will be split 50% to our winner and 50% to Choices Wish List.

Join us for Giving Tuesday

With so many financial and policy uncertainties looming at both the national and global level, 2025 may well turn out to be the most critically challenging and necessary time to get involved with Giving Tuesday. This annual global fundraising effort will be held in the United States on Tuesday, December 2. It is a global online generosity movement whose purpose is to unleash the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world.

Choices In Community Living is a Giving Tuesday participant. Some of our proceeds from our participation in 2024 were used to help with the renovation of the kitchen in our Gardenside home. To make a one-time, online tax-deductible donation to Choices on December 2, go to our secure website at www.cicloh.com and click on the Giving Tuesday link on our landing page.

GIVINGTUESDAY



The work of a sunny day in August will be remembered when it is time for a trip back to a more historic time when the cold of winter arrives. Participants of our Fun-Fit Adult Day program in Clark County, along with their staff, put in the creativity and hard work that made for a successful Craft and Bake Sale held at their Hillside Church of God location in Clark County. The event also served as an open house to welcome families, friends, and neighbors to stop by and learn about all the good things that happen at Fun-Fit. With \$526 raised from the sale of baked goods and crafts, one of those good things that will take place during the upcoming holiday season will be a trip to Lebanon to ride the LM&M Railroad's North Pole Express for an hour and 15 minute ride alongside jolly old St. Nicholas and his elves. Pictured during the crafts and bake sale are: (l-r) Diane Hayslip, Jill Campbell-Brown, Rebecca Wells, Susan Buell, Jim Soloway, Mary Lipker, Vicki Vincent, Virginia Aylward, and Roxanna Zinkhon.

Editor's Note: You can be a part of making trips like the ride on the LM&M possible for our Clark County participants and others served by Choices with a tax-deductible gift to our Choices Wish List. You may designate your tax-deductible gift for a specific event, like the train, or as a gift to be used as needed to meet the dreams and wishes of those we serve through our Wish List when there are no other funds available. Please make your gifts payable to Choices In Community Living, Memo: Wish List, 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, 45414, or go to the Donate Now button on our secure website at www.cicloh.com.

We honor Karen Kenney for her thoughtful gift in memory of Verena Shroyer. Memorial gifts or gifts in honor of a special occasion or person may be made at any time. Gifts may be designated or undesignated to be used where needed most.



CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING

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to remove your name from our mailing list,
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Judy Leasure, *Editor*



BE OUR GUEST

40th Anniversary Gala

CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Mandalay Banquet Center

2700 East River Road

Formal/Dressy Attire (*no jeans please*)

RSVP required to assure seating and dinner selection.

Please select from the following entrees:

Boneless Braised Short Ribs ••• Stuffed Chicken Parmesan

Maple Bourbon Salmon ••• Zucchini Boat (*vegetarian*)

RSVP by October 6 to Kara Mortimore,
kmortimore@cicloh.com; 937-898-2220