



Clelian Heights Newsletter

Spring 2010

PRAYER

O God in whose image and likeness I am made, as much as I believe that the abundance of your goodness is strewn all through this heart of mine, I still struggle with that truth. I find myself wondering about my inner growth, if there is anything really happening there: Am I full of life? Am I growing? Why is it so dark sometimes? Why can't I see better what kind of growth is taking place? Is it all worth it? Who am I becoming?

When the earth of my soul cries out for water, for refreshment and for nourishment, it is then that these questions seem most to threaten my beliefs. So much dryness there is all within me, God. I am seeded in such seemingly arid soil that I wonder if the green of goodness will ever appear above the ground. Yet, amid all that dry earth, there is a quiet stirring, a drawing, a silent movement that encourages me to believe in the potential within me. I need only to trust you, which does not mean the questions will end. I need only to allow you to take hold of me, as the earth takes hold of the silence of a seed.

I trust you, O God, in whose image and likeness I am made. I trust you to come along some silent night, bringing life to the seed of my soul, bringing waters to wake my dead. Amen.

Taken from [Fresh Bread and other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment](#). By Joyce Rupp

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Congratulations to Kelsey Shaffer...

Kelsey Shaffer, a student in Ms. Amanda's room 202, was recently honored at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon held at the Westmoreland County Food Bank. On April 29, 2010, Kelsey attended the luncheon

entitled "Planting the seed of Hope", where volunteers were recognized for their dedication in helping the Food Bank. In November of 2009, Kelsey was chosen as the Volunteer of the month. She and her classmates in Room 202 visited the Food Bank every Tuesday afternoon throughout the school year. Some of the tasks that they were given included: making boxes, sorting the donated items of non-perishable goods, packing boxes with bread or fruit or canned goods as instructed. Gia Russa provided the buffet luncheon. Everyone attending was given tickets for the twenty-five baskets that were to be given away. Kelsey won a gift card to TGIF restaurant. Our thanks go out to Louise Wilhelm, Volunteer and Food Drive Coordinator for all her assistance helping us with our weekly visits to the Food Bank.

Welcome to Lacey Enrico... our newest student in room 101. Lacey joined us in May and

she is a great addition! She joins her sister, Kelsey Shaffer who has been a student in room 202.

Graduation 2010... This year we have nine graduates! Congratulations to Joshua Cohen, Samantha Jo Ernette, Sarah Heeter, Benjamin Hixson, Katelyn Marhefka, Sarah Pelchar, Joseph Sikora, Allison Strzeszewski, and Richard Wolfe. Our best wishes go out to them for the accomplishments and progress they have made during their years of study at Clelian Heights! Graduation Mass will be held at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 2nd at 10 a.m. We ask God's blessing upon our Graduates as they continue their journey into adulthood.



FOCHO... The members of the **F**riends **O**f **C**lelian **H**eights **O**rganization have been very busy during this Spring Season. On Thursday,

May 6th they sponsored a Staff Appreciation Luncheon for the 130 plus employees at Clelian Heights. Many parent volunteers were on hand to serve the delicious meal. FOCHO made sure that each staff member felt loved and appreciated. Thanks, FOCHO! **On Friday, May 14th** FOCHO members again were on duty. This time it was in Clelian's main Kitchen preparing over 200 **Take-out Spaghetti Dinners**. This fundraiser was a huge success. Proceeds from this event will benefit both the student and adult programs at Clelian Heights.

New Fitness Room...

Clelian Heights would like to thank anonymous persons and Rudy and Patricia Mangini for their contributions to the school's new fitness room.

We would like to thank Wayne Bailey for donating a universal weight machine. This equipment has been the start of a new program which all started with a couple of students' interest in weightlifting and fitness. There will be individualized plans for each student that will be monitored by certified staff such as Lori Oddo and Jared Bailey. We believe we can find success in multiple areas with



this fitness room. Students of different ages will be able to work on various exercises. Younger students will be able to watch and learn as well as learn with resistance lifting. Students that have trouble walking will be able to strengthen their arms and legs in ways that walking or climbing stairs cannot. The individuals on our recent boys' basketball team and our upcoming girls' softball team will be able to achieve new heights with a competitive edge. This will also bring about socialization amongst the students as they work out together. A few students have already begun training, and their progress is monumental, as their hopes are inspiring to others to do the same. Our progress thus far is great; however, we are still in need of Free-weights, kettle-bells, bars, bands, weighted medicine balls, dumbbells, benches that are new or in excellent condition. We are also accepting any donations that will aid this cause. These can be addressed to the fitness or weight room.

First Holy Communion...



Congratulations to Kevin McElhinney and Kelly Lonergan for receiving their First Holy Communion in April! Kevin's celebration took place on Thursday, April 22nd at St. Sylvester Church in Slickville. Kelly's special Mass was on Saturday, April 24th at Mother of Sorrows Church in Murrysville. Besides family and friends, representatives from Clelian Heights were also present to share this special day with Kelly and Kevin.

Extended School Year Reminder...

Our Extended School Year and Work Programs begin on Monday, June 28th. We will not be in session on Monday, July 5th due to the observance of the Fourth of July holiday. Although the students will work on maintaining their IEP goals during the ESY Program, other activities will include swimming (both indoor and out) crafts, and lots of fun! We will be taking field trips on Thursdays except for Tuesday, July 20th, when we will be going to Idlewild and Kennywood Parks. The last day of ESY will be Friday, July 23rd.



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Midnight Masquerade...

Thursday, May 20th found sharply dressed men escorting beautiful young ladies to the Prom held at the Greensburg Country Club. Everyone enjoyed the Promenade and getting their pictures taken. We can't wait to see the DVD! Special thanks to Terry Hixson and Company for building and setting up the beautiful decorations. Special thanks also goes to Catherine Petrosky, Jennifer Garcia and all the staff at Clelian who made sure that every detail was taken care of in order to make this event so memorable for our students.



PLAY BALL!... Fall 2010 marks the start of the new Clelian Crusaders Girls Softball Team. We plan to use this summer to comprise our team. Once school gets back in session, LOOK OUT, HERE WE COME! The team is open to girls in Room 106 and above. We plan for at least one game during the fall and hopefully more! Coach Melissa and the other assistants look forward to a great season. If you have any softball equipment that you would like to donate to the team, please contact Melissa Fligger at fligger555@yahoo.com or 724-837-8120. Take me out to the ball game....

What's Happening at Chip's House?



The men at Chip's House have had a very busy second semester. We said good-bye to Joe Sikora in January. He was due to graduate in June, but he left Clelian early to participate in a job-training program closer to his home in Uniontown. We were sad to see him go, but all wished him well. A new group of students from St. Vincent College

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came for weekly visits, and they kept everyone busy with basketball and soccer games in the gym. Six men also had the opportunity to pose as models for some advanced art students at St. Vincent's. Br. Mark Floreanini, O.S.B., the class instructor had stations set up in two rooms and our group split up so that all the students could draw several people. Many portraits were done that evening, and everyone got to choose one picture to take home. They were also invited to the gallery to view the artwork of two graduating seniors, and since it was the opening night, they were able to enjoy the delicious food available for all guests. They had a great time and are looking forward to being invited back next year. The guys continued to bowl every other Monday and they celebrated their achievements at a Bowling Banquet in May. Many of our athletes participated in the Swimming and Track and Field Special Olympics, and some have medals and ribbons to show for their efforts in the statewide Bowling and Skiing events. All in all, it has been a busy, but fun year.

Transition to Work Program... Zachary Proskin is very excited about starting a new job. On April 29, he began working at Greensburg Country Club as part of the Transition-to-Work Program at Clelian Heights. He works part time in the dining room and really enjoys it.

Some of his duties are setting up for banquets. He moves tables and chairs, folds linen napkins and polishes silverware. He states that the staff is very friendly and the job is "a really nice experience".

On Prom day he was scheduled to work. He completed his hours and went home to change into his tux just in time to be back for the Prom. It was really a great experience. He likes his boss and says that he would like to work there for a long time. Special thanks goes to Ron Dezzutti for securing this wonderful work experience for Zach.

News from the Adult Training Facility (aka - Clelian ATF)... Everyone in the ATF is ready for spring to be sprung. Enough SNOW! However, we did have a lot of fun making bird feeders and filling them with birdseed. We watched daily as the birds, squirrels, and even a

dog enjoyed a winter snack. We, as always are busy with our crafts, music and learning new daily living skills. Everyone at Clelian heights seems happy with our bake and craft sale. Our Clelian workers with supervisors, Helen and Sandy, always whip up something tasty! The chocolate chip cookies are always a big seller. Thank you to all who support our sale. This helps supply our craft fund and center parties.



A warm welcome goes out to our newest member. **Karen Stahl** has joined our group and seems to enjoy her new program. When you see her in the hall or out and about, please say hello and introduce yourself.

Now that warmer weather is here, we are planning community outings again. Included will be a **trip to WCCC** to view and vote for the **Champions of Art**, bowling, working on our shopping skills, lunch out, a museum trip and walking in the park. Everyone is looking forward to our trips, learning new skills, and making new friends.

Staff News... We say good-bye to **Jesse Ravis (PCA - 107)** and **Jeremy Siard (PCA - 106)** as they leave to begin their student teaching assignments. We are sure they will be great teachers!

Netty Hope-Sasso (PCA - 104) left us earlier this spring to start her own dog grooming business. Good Luck Netty!

Brianne Reyes (OT) is also going to be leaving us. Brianne has been on our staff for five years. She will be missed!

Babies! We welcomed Amber Weaver's (PCA - 106) baby boy on April 23rd. Michelle Kerr (PCA - 106) and Bridget Williams (OT) will greet their new additions later this year.



Field Trip to Heinz Field... On Monday, May 24th, the students and the teachers in room 103 and 104 went to Heinz Field and CiCi's Pizza.

The most interesting things on our tour included: seeing all 6 Lombardi trophies won by the Steelers, visiting the press box where the media Visit us at www.clelianheights.org

watches the games, the Heinz ketchup bottles on top of the big screen, and walking through the Steeler's locker room where ESPN was taping. We got to touch the Steelers' football plaque on the wall that said "Men of Steel" then we ran out of the tunnel in slow motion. We sat in a suite where there were 3 touch screen TV's. In the hall, there were pictures of Three Rivers Stadium and the empty place where Heinz field was built. At one point, Three Rivers and Heinz Field were only 80 feet apart and when they demolished Three Rivers Stadium, only 1 window shattered at the new field. Thanks to Phil, our tour guide, who taught us a lot of interesting facts and the teachers in 104 and 103 for an awesome field trip! **Written by: Brendan Simms (104) with the help of his teacher, Sarah Pavetti**

The Women at the Apartments Continue to Cook with Care...

The "Cooking with Care Cookbook" is once again available. This book is the culmination of recipes from the cooking classes taught by Alyssa Francken last year. The cookbook was sold out shortly after they were available. Proceeds from the cookbook benefit the cooking program here at Clelian Heights. Buy your cookbook now for only \$12 while they last!



Elise Francken, Alyssa's mother took over the cooking project with the young women at the apartments when her daughter headed for the University of Michigan in the fall. Volunteers help Elise from the East Suburban Citizen Advocacy. Everyone enjoys the camaraderie in the kitchen and the delightful culinary creations they share at the end of each class. The group is starting to collect recipes for a second edition of their cookbook,

Clelian Heights Crusaders Basketball Team Plays Their First Game...

On Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at 9:30 am the Clelian Heights Crusaders Basketball team played their first game against the students of Clairview School. The Clelian Gym was decorated with signs and banners of support made by the teams' classmates. About 100 students, staff and family members cheered for both teams during this fast moving and exciting game. Although the

Crusaders lost the game, they learned a great deal about sportsmanship and teamwork. Each team was presented a trophy for their efforts at this the First Annual Clelian Heights/Clairview Basketball Tournament. Coach Brian and his team are looking forward to playing more games next year with other schools.



May Crowning... Our May Crowning this year took place on Friday, May 21st at the 9:00 Mass. Homeroom 106 prepared this beautiful ceremony. J. Tyler Reed escorted Christy Noca, the May Queen, to the Mary Statue. Twaun Chuhran was the crown bearer. Emma Cook and Tori Null each presented Mary with a lovely bouquet of flowers. As Christy crowned Mary Queen of Heaven and earth, all sang, "O Mary we crown you with blossoms today. Queen of the angels, queen of the May!"

The Annual JPK Golf Classic

will be held at Churchill Valley Country Club on Friday June 18th. Registration is at 7:30 am and the Award Program starts at 1:30 pm. Golfers are needed - both men and women so... please join us for a fun day of golf, a delicious dinner and a silent auction with great golf packages! Please contact Tina at 724/837-8120 ext. 124 concerning tickets or sponsorship. Proceeds from this event will support our Endowment Fund.



Greenhouse News... Our Easter Sale and Spring Bedding Plant Sale were both a great success thanks to all of you! We appreciate your generous support throughout the year! Stay tuned...we will be back in the Fall with our Mum Sale as well as our Poinsettia Sale in December.

Box Tops For Education... Thank you for your faithfulness in sending in the box tops for education. It may seem like a small contribution to make, but when many different people participate, the outcome is great! This year we received a check for \$1,703.90 from this program.

Summer's Coming! 5 Helpful Tips for

Parents... Many parents both love and hate the thought of summer vacation. On the one hand, you're ready to be done with the homework, backpacks full of papers, seemingly endless fundraisers, and getting the kids up and out the door to catch the bus every morning. Summer holds the possibility of a slower pace, fun times together as a family, and the kids being able to wrestle each other outside instead of in the family room! But then there's the other side of the summer vacation coin: refereeing the kids' fights (also known as "too much togetherness syndrome"), blocking out the whines of "but there's nothing to dooooo," shuttling kids around from one activity to the next, and discovering that there is only so much time you can be around your children before you start to lose your mind. It seems every season has its pluses and minuses!

A little summer pre-planning can go a long way in maximizing summer benefits for any family—especially families living with autism or other disabilities. Here are 5 helpful tips for thinking about and planning your summer months.



1. Plan ahead! The key is not to let summer sneak up on you, and overwhelm you in the process. You know summer's coming, so commit to making it a great experience for everyone involved instead of a stress-fest for your family. Begin looking into options in your area such as camps, community events, local attractions, parks, and other options that may be available. There are many things that are free or low cost if you take the time to look for them. Just exploring the variety of parks and playgrounds in your area can make for great inexpensive fun. Most larger communities have recreation departments that offer summer activities ranging from sports to art to science.

2. Ensure adequate support for your child. Make sure whatever activities you choose for your child include adequate support for him/her to have a successful experience. There can be a tendency to think that because summer activities don't involve "academics," children with autism and other disabilities won't need as much support. The reality is that these kids need support to navigate the social complexities and expectations of seasonal environments such as camp, vacation Bible school, local recreation events, etc. Supports vary according

to the needs of each child, but it is best to determine potential needs and accommodations ahead of time to ensure a positive and productive experience for your child, and less worry for you.

3. Figure out a schedule that is workable for everyone involved.



Sometimes in the quest to make sure everyone has things to do; we end up turning ourselves into crazed taxi drivers all summer long. Determine how much time

you want to be at home versus other places; and don't go crazy planning something every minute. As much as kids may think they need to be doing something 24-7, there is great benefit to them having some downtime as well. Don't plan so much in your summer schedule that there isn't free time and relaxation.

4. ALL kids need a break from the hectic schedule of the school year! Some parents of children with autism or other disabilities feel that they need to make every moment therapeutic, or have their child involved in some kind of activity or program each day. I have met many families over the years that become stressed at the thought of their child not being in school for the summer. Some of the BEST learning for kids takes place outside the walls of the classroom. You may have been conditioned to believe that what your child needs only happens in a school building, or that you can't possibly provide the same benefits outside a school setting. Nothing could be further from the truth! Allow your child with autism to experience the summer just like other kids—and watch them blossom in the process.

5. Make time for yourself.

All parents need breaks and time to themselves throughout the summer. The previous tips will help accomplish reduced stress for parents by planning ahead for structured



activities outside the home, and developing a workable time schedule for those things to happen. Parents also need to allow some time to do things you want/need to do, instead of feeling like you have to entertain your kids all day. Determining a workable schedule that includes time at home together and time doing other activities will help

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everyone stay sane—most importantly you!

Summer can be a great time for kids, parents, and families as a whole. A little time spent in planning can make the difference between a successful, rejuvenating summer, and one that leaves you burnt out and longing for September. Look for a future article covering the kinds of questions you should ask when considering summer programs and activities for your child.

Written by: Nicole Beurkens, founder and director of the Horizons Developmental Remediation Center



A Special Thanks to...

... Mr. and Mrs. Miskanin for donating a Wii to the school program.

... Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins for donating a case of copy paper.

... Jo Snider and The Westmoreland Community Foundation for donating \$1,000 for swimming aerobics and Wii Accessories.

... Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Demangone for donating a pogo stick to our Physical Therapy Department.



Wish List

- Softball equipment for our new girls' team
- 2 new vacuum cleaners for the apartments
- New appliances for the home economics room
- DVD's for our Residential Programs

Admission, the provision of services and referrals of residents are made without regard to race, color, age, religious creed, disability, sex ancestry or national origin.