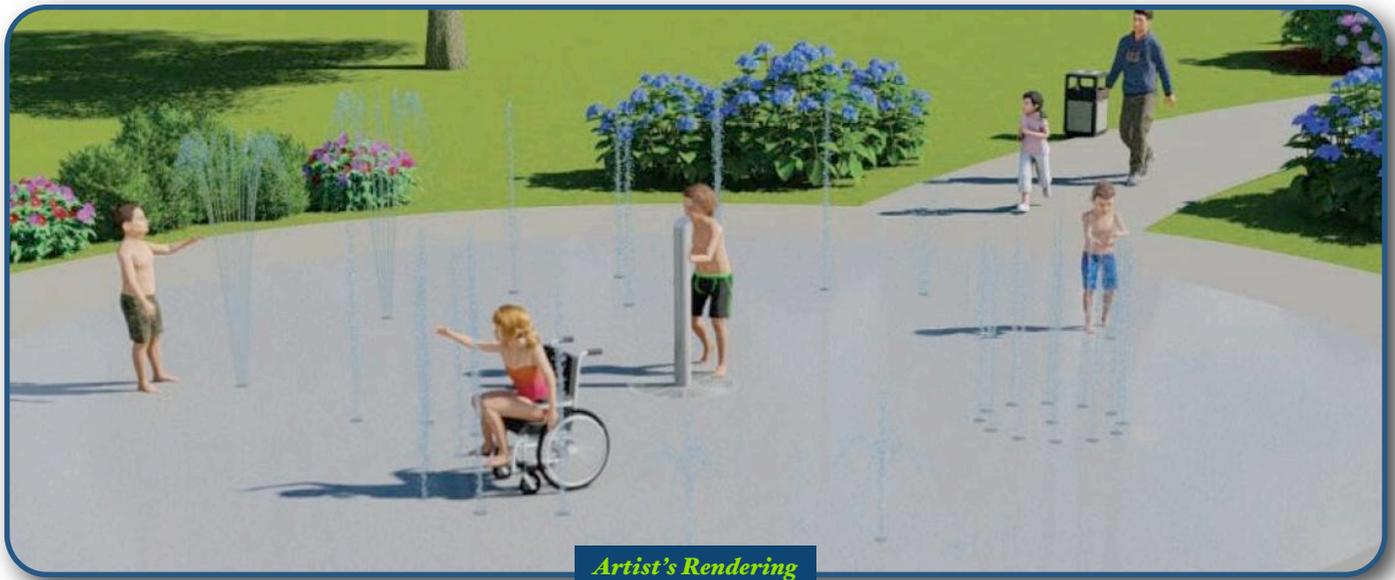




NORTH END MATTERS

Coming Soon: Splash Pads



Artist's Rendering

The North End will soon have some aquatic fun to partake in come late summer 2021. The City of Mansfield plans to install Splash Pads at North Lake and Johns Parks.

“I think the opportunity to put splash pads at North Lake and Johns represents an opportunity to provide a service to an underserved area of the city,” said Mark Abrams, Manager of the City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department. “A lot of kids who live in those areas don’t have access to transportation to get to the public pool at Liberty (park), so this will give them the opportunity to participate in some aquatic activities where they might not have been able to.”

Abrams said the splash pads will be located in the two parks which are both located in residential areas and within walking distance to those who live in the neighborhood.

“It’s an opportunity for them to experience something that they haven’t had the chance to do (in a

long while),” Abrams said, mentioning the closure of North End Ford Hill pool in the early 2000s and the pool at North Lake Park in the late 1990s.

Abrams said the city hopes to break ground for the splash pads within a month or so, depending on the contractor’s schedule.

“We’re waiting for the final numbers back from the company on the installation and a start date,” he said. “So, I’m hoping it will be this summer.”

Before concrete can be poured, Abrams said the city needs to install a two-inch water line at each location so that the Splash Pad can run from it.

The reason the splash pads will be able to be installed is because of the generous support of the Richland County Foundation. The total cost for the aquatic fun on the North End will be \$168,000.

“The project will be funded by three funds at the Foundation,” said Brady Groves, President of the Richland County Foundation, “the Community Fund,

Continued On Page 2

Splash Pads Continued From Page 1

the Robert and Esther Black Family Foundation and the Fran and Warren Rupp Fund.”

Groves said he and Abrams worked together for two months to bring the project to fruition, “though, installing splash pads in city parks has been a topic of discussion for quite some time.”

Mansfield City Council members recently approved the donation from the Foundation.

The splash pads are not extremely fancy but will be built to last, Abrams said. They are pretty much composed of a concrete slab with six to eight nozzles that will shoot out water for 20 minutes or so when a button is pushed.

“Honestly, this is a good opportunity for those two parks,” Abrams expressed. “It’s something that has been discussed for years.”

Letter From The Director

Greetings!

Well folks, its looking like things may be finally returning to some semblance of normal and after a snowy spring, hopefully summer is finally upon us! Speaking of summer, in this issue, we cover new splash pads coming to North Lake and Johns Parks to summer youth jobs.

As we emerge from a year-long hibernation of sorts, it’s nice to finally be reconnecting in person.

As this community, like many others, struggled to deal with the pandemic, gaps in our systems have come to light. Access to testing and to the vaccine has proved to be a community challenge, particularly within the black and brown community and certain low-income neighborhoods in the city. The disconnectedness of the healthcare system to minority members of the community became stark. Local efforts like the Count on Me campaign and similar grassroots initiatives convened to identify the best ways to outreach to the black and brown community with vital, and in some cases life-saving information. They may not have been as successful as we would have liked, but the effort still needed to be made. Accessing healthcare requires trust, a relationship, and the pandemic revealed that there remains much work to be done in this area. Precious few resources could be found located in low income and neighborhoods throughout the city.

For me, this issue highlighted just how important community health workers are to the community. Twenty-two years ago, the CHAP program started in the Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center with three doctors, two nurse practitioners, an administrative assistant (me), and fourteen dedicated women from the neighborhood who were trained to “be the eyes and ears of the health of their neighbors.” Even going door to door, the CHW’s looked for pregnant women



*Deanna West-Torrence
Executive Director NECIC*

Continued On Page 3

NECIC

Executive Director
Deanna West-Torrence

Business Manager
Tionna Perdue

**Community Development
Manager**
Tony Chinni

Community Organizer
Nyasha Oden

**Fiscal & Administrative
Coordinator**
Matt Ayers

Recruitment Coordinator
Crystal Weese

**Communications &
Engagement Coordinator**
Cheyla Bradley

**Farm Coordinator
in Training**
Justin Ocheltree

**Teaching Garden
Coordinator**
Mona Kneuss

**Program Support
Coordinator**
Gabriel Pierce

Contact NECIC

134 N. Main St.
Mansfield, Ohio 44902
(419) 522-1611
Fax 1-877-433-0848
“staff 1st name”@necic-ohio.org
www.necic-ohio.org

Letter From The Director Continued From Page 2

primarily, hoping to ensure that they received adequate prenatal care, resulting in better quality of life, and significant cost savings later in life.

Recently, one of the founders of the CHAP Program and beloved pediatrician, Dr. Mark Redding, passed away. Mark Redding launched my career and was my first introduction to “census tracts 6 & 7” and its accompanying and alarming health and economic data. It was while at CHAP, that the idea of NECIC began to emerge. For those of us involved, the value of utilizing people from the community being served was undeniable.

Joined by his wife, Dr. Sarah Redding and his colleague, Dr. Celia Flinn, the CHAP program shed light on a situation that we as a community are still struggling with during the pandemic: the lack of trust and relationship between the residents and the “system.” CHAP recognized that people who were from and a part of the community they served, were in the best position to gain access to people and information that others could not. Building on that, CHAP set out to start a new profession, originally called Community Health Advisors, or C.H.A.s, right in the Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center. Now, two decades later, the work has deepened and its effectiveness in achieving good outcomes have garnered attention from all over the country. From insurance companies and public officials, to healthcare providers, the impact of

Community Health Workers who are indigenous to the neighborhood they serve, are now seen as a valuable piece to connecting marginalized communities to services that improve their health outcomes and overall well-being. They are a still largely untapped resource that can help us address the gaps in connecting individuals to healthcare, education, social services, employment, etc. A CHW equipped with a proven approach to move toward good outcomes, brings value that cannot be understated.

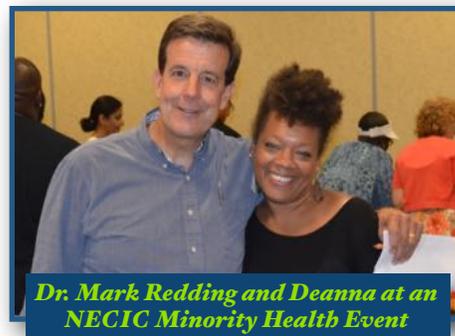
This is my third letter this year memorializing individuals who impacted the North End and who have personally impacted me. However, working as closely as I did with Mark for five years, I know that he would shift the focus from himself to the Community Health Workers that he was so passionate about. He would advise us that as a community we need to reduce risk factors do more of what we know works and do less - or stop doing - what doesn't and measure the results along the way. He believed that the “system” should pay for the desired outcome and not incentivize ineffective ways of working, even when doing what had always been done. This philosophy has guided much of the work at NECIC, and as we were developing our staffing service, I was anxious to add a certified Community Health Worker to our organization. We were fortunate to have had Robyn McNulty, CCHW join us to coordinate care for our temporary associates and residents, knowing that she, as a trusted and effective connection to services, could help stabilize the employee in a way that others could not.

The NECIC staff and board would like to extend our sincere condolences to the Redding family, including Sarah, and their three children, Hannah, Katie and David and the hundreds of Community Health Workers across Ohio and the nation who were impacted by him. We would also like to take a moment to acknowledge Mansfield's first class of Community Health Workers and the CHAP team when it started on Feb. 1, 1999 to address the glaring health disparities in the North End.

It was an honor to work so closely with the Drs. Redding as they set about to accomplish their vision. During those early years, I spent countless hours traveling and working with Mark, my much-loved boss who embodied selflessness, compassion, determination, and integrity. Fortunately for Mansfield, we have been left with a model of utilizing Community Health Workers who stand in the gap for their neighbors. For this reason, we honor Dr. Mark Redding for his tireless dedication to training, employing, and heavily investing in the people from the neighborhoods being served, and helping them help build a bridge connecting their neighbors to healthcare.

Sincerely,

Deanna West-Torrence
Executive Director NECIC



May Is National Foster Care Month

Make A Difference In A Child's Life And Become A Foster Parent!

May is National Foster Care Month and Richland County Children Services (RCCS) believes that every child deserves a loving home!

There are over 423,000 children and youth in foster care across the country, and many have been facing increased isolation over the past year.

It is more critical than ever for our communities to work together in identifying the right mix of supports to establish meaningful connections for children and youth in care.

This year, National Foster Care Month focuses on how to strengthen these connections and the role of family and youth engagement at every stage. We should ensure all families and youth have meaningful involvement.

Strengthening families and focusing on their well-being is the key to building strong communities. Whether it's promoting a collaborative relationship between birth parents and foster caregivers or providing parents with the right combination of supportive services to enable reunification, keeping families together is the primary goal in a successful child welfare system.

The goal of Richland County Children Services (RCCS) is always reunification. RCCS has on average 100 children in custody with close to 60 foster homes. Out of the 100 children, 30 percent of them are teenagers. Families are needed for all age children, but especially for older youth.

Foster care involves the temporary care of children ages newborn to age 18, all races, sibling groups, various religions, and children with special needs.

Requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a resident of Richland County or surrounding counties
- Have a stable home and income
- Be single or married
- Consent to a criminal background check
- Medical Clearance
- Preservice Training/CPR & First Aid
- Home Study Process

RCCS encourages all individuals to invest in the lives of children and to provide them with unconditional love, support, guidance, and every available resource to ensure their health and well-being.

RCCS believes every child needs a permanent home. Many of our foster parents adopt the children who are placed with them. Others help children prepare for placement with an adoptive family or relative.

RCCS needs more heroes to help make a difference in a child's life! RCCS needs foster parents for sibling groups, teenagers and African -

American foster care families. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, contact Richland County Children Services Foster Care Recruiter Joetta McCruter – Polk at 614-264-6176 cell or 419-774-4100 or go to richlandcountychildrengservices.org.



Shirley Jordan Comes From Humble Beginnings She Will Never Forget

Often when she sees people with whom she grew up she says, "Hey Lily Street!" with a smile.

"I just remember everybody was just family," she said. "On my North End it was Lily Street, Daisy, Mulberry, Harker, that area, we were all just really good friends, we walked to school together and just be together. I like the fact that even today when we see each other it's 'hey Lily Street hey!'"

Mrs. Jordan first lived out on Bowman Street for a couple of months after her birth at Company House where black people who worked for the Steel Mill lived.

"Then my family moved to Lily Street," she said. "That is where I spent most of my years, on Lily Street. Lily Street was like a family street. Everybody was your mother; everybody was your auntie. If they saw you doing something wrong, they would get on you, then tell your parents and you got it twice."

Mrs. Jordan mentioned the Feagins, the Norris', the Adley's, the Davis family, the Bonner, and the Walton families who all grew up on the North End together.

"We were all close to each other, we were friends, we played ball in the street, we skated, we were outside, and we had a good life and good time." She said they all walked to school together up to the old Bowman Street School that was later named Creveling School, then they walked on up to Simpson School and then eventually to Mansfield Senior High School.

"Back in the day, we just supported each other," Mrs. Jordan reminisced. "Like, I ended up on the homecoming court because one of my friends said they were going to nominate me to be the black representative and I did get that."

Mrs. Jordan said she's seen a lot growing up on Lily Street and has a lot of great memories. She said she has a street sign as part of her backyard decorations representing Harker, Lily and Crystal Springs Streets because, "I'm proud of my heritage."

The late Bishop Walter E. Jordan I originally was not a preacher, Mrs. Jordan revealed, but an organist. He came from a whole family of musicians. The original name of the church was Greater St. John Church of God in Christ and was originally started on Main Street and moved to Harker Street when they first took over the church.

"I never would have married a preacher or a pastor," she said. "I told God 'you tricked me' because eight months after our pastor died, my husband became pastor. I told God 'you tricked me' because I would have never married a pastor. But God had other plans, so the rest is history, and we pastored the church 40 years to the exact date, then my son, Walter II, took over and he pastored for 15 years..."

Mrs. Jordan remembered her brother-in-law, John Jordan, who was the first black president of Mansfield Tire and Rubber Company. He was really integral with helping local black children at the time. She also remembered the Honorable Judge Jeff Payton (retired), the only black Mansfield Municipal Court Judge to date, who grew up on Daisy Street, which is the street behind Lily. Her uncle was also fourth ward Councilman Ocie Hill, who was the first black Mansfield city councilman.

"God blessed the North End," she said. "You just had a lot of accomplished people."

Bishop Jordan and the late Rev. Dr. Walter Jordan II both were community minded and have left a legacy of helping the North End community.

"My husband kept in touch with the different agencies so if a person needed a job, he could direct them to an agency, if they needed healthcare, he would direct them there," she said. "It wasn't just church on Sunday evening and Wednesday evening Bible study; it was to help the total man to meet all of the needs. That's why my son came up with the block party, to help the kids in the neighborhood."

Back to her Lily Street days, Mrs. Jordan had many memories of going roller skating on Monday nights at The Coliseum, to teen dances at the Friendly House, going to a place called the Pink Swan for teen dances and having to learn how to swim in order to graduate high school. She also remembered having to take baths in a tin tub and having her house shake when the train passed by on the tracks in the backyard.

"One thing I've learned is that you appreciate your beginnings and then when God blesses, you never get the big head because you know all of it came from Him. He allowed this to happen, and you never look down on anyone because we're all the same."



Mrs. Shirley Jordan

Family -to- Family Program Addresses Issue Of Mental Illness In The Minority Community

An ongoing challenge health care professionals face is how to end the stigma of mental health in communities of color.

Each year millions of people in the U.S. are affected by mental illness. Mental disorders or mental illnesses are conditions that affect your thinking, feeling, mood, and behavior. They can be occasional or chronic.

There are many types of mental disorders. Some include, Anxiety disorders (including panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and phobias), Depression, bipolar disorder, and other mood disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia.

According to The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI), 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness and 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year. Mental illness does not discriminate. According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Black Americans are 20% more likely to experience serious



(L-R) Isolene Dunn, Faith Temple COGIC; Tanya Wellington, Faith Temple COGIC; Nnena McCruter -Jordan, Facilitator NAMI Richland County Family-to-Family Program; Joetta Mcruter - Polk, Foster Care Recruiter Richland County Children Services; Pastor William H. Jordan and Lady Shelia Jordan, Faith Temple COGIC; and Carla James, Executive Director Restored Visions and NAMI Richland County Family-to-Family Facilitator.

mental health problems than the general population. Black youth who are exposed to violence are at a greater risk for PTSD by over 25%. Black Americans are also more likely to be exposed to factors that increase the risk for developing a mental health condition, such as homelessness, racism and violence.

To address the widespread mental health concerns locally, NAMI Richland County has teamed up with the local community organization Restored Visions, founded by Melodye James, to bring the NAMI Family- to-Family program to Faith Temple Church of God in Christ, 506 Daisy St. Mansfield.

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, multiple-session education program for family, friends, and significant others of adults with mental health conditions. NAMI Family-to-Family provides information about anxiety, depressive disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other mental health conditions. Other topics covered include communication, problem solving, treatment and recovery.

The course is designed to increase understanding and advocacy skills while helping participants maintain their own well-being. The program is taught by trained family members who have a loved one with a mental health condition. NAMI Family-to-Family is an evidence-based program (EB).

Continued On Page 7

Family-to-Family Program Continued From Page 6

The free classes are held every Saturday for 5 weeks beginning April 24 - May 22, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Faith Temple. The facilitators of the program are Nnena McCruter – Jordan and Carla James, Executive Director of Restored Visions.

“NAMI Richland County is grateful and excited to be sponsoring a NAMI Family-to-Family Class at Faith Temple Church of God in Christ this Spring,” said Mary Kay Pierce, Executive Director of NAMI Richland County. “The course covers topics such as mental health conditions, treatment options, communication skills, preparing for a crisis, empathy, and recovery. Carla James and Nnena McCruter-Jordan completed the class in 2019 and went on to be trained through NAMI Ohio to be instructors for the course. The hope is to bring education and resources to minority families throughout the county. Faith Temple Pastor William and First Lady Sheila Jordan have also trained as instructors and are helping with the class.

“Mary Kay has been a long-time family friend and when we started looking at the issues of stigma, denial and treatment gaps in the minority community NAMI was immediately thought of,” said Carla James. “When I reached out to Mary Kay with our idea, she was very helpful and supportive. She helped us to host our first meeting at the mental health board and has been a constant supporter ever since.

“Over the many years that NAMI has taught the class, very few minorities have reached out and taken the class,” said Pierce. “We want to change that and make it more accessible to all our county. Mental health concerns touch all our families, and we continue to strive to deliver help and hope to all who need it. We are grateful for the dedication and help of all the individuals who are making this class possible!”

Despite the resources made available to the community, some African Americans will not seek mental health care because of stigma and shame.

“Because we are such proud hard-working people, we tend to associate any problems or conditions with an inherent character flaw, laziness or sometimes even lack of spirituality,” said James. “Since these things are negatives, we tend to overlook, minimize, normalize or just totally ignore mental health conditions. It can be a coping mechanism.”

“When I first faced the fact that I dealt with ADHD and anxiety it was life altering because I was then able to let go of some of the negative thoughts, I had internalized about myself,” said James. I wasn’t lazy, I had a brain condition that needed to be addressed. No different from someone who has diabetes and needs to take insulin. However, in our community mental health conditions are looked at so negatively that it is more comfortable to behave like they are not there. This is so detrimental to our community particularly because untreated mental health conditions can lead to negative encounters with law enforcement which often has tragic outcomes. It’s also very dangerous in today’s climate because the narrative is developing to not reach out to law enforcement in a crisis and this can also be very dangerous.”

Pierce and James believe that in order to end the stigma the community must come together to change attitudes about mental health in order to improve mental health for everyone.

“It’s essential that we as a community start to take a look at ourselves and others who have conditions with love non-judgment and compassion and then work to seek treatment and other sources of support,” said James.

NAMI Richland County and Restored Visions have developed tool kits that help families cope with mental illness or help family members battling mental illness. The information is available here: nami.org or email arestoredvision@gmail.com.

For more information and how to register for the free NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program at Faith Temple contact Carla James at 419-573-9895 or email cjames@restoredvisions.org

Continued On Page 8

Family-to-Family Program Continued From Page 7

About Restored Visions

Restored Visions is a community organization that was founded by my mother Melodye James. Restored Visions seeks to educate, empower, and uplift the community particularly underserved and minority groups. Restored Visions does this through our prayer ministry for grandparents, educational advocacy and training for parents of students impacted by the intersection of school struggles and mental health and the Minority Mental Health Initiative which is the committee which is responsible for the collaboration with NAMI Richland County.

About NAMI Richland County

NAMI Richland County evolved from the former "Families in Touch" support group which was meeting at the Center (now Catalyst Life Services) in the late 1990's. Parents, siblings, spouses, and children of mentally ill individuals were meeting monthly for support and to learn how to advocate for their loved ones. Mary Kay Pierce and Darlene Reed started attending this group in the spring of 1998. They soon found out there was a growing need for families and the community to be educated on mental illness. Together they started the Family-to-Family classes in the fall of 1999 to help support and educate the families living with mental illness.

When the need for help and more education continued to grow within the community, they asked the Richland County Mental Health Board (RCMHB) to consider helping start a NAMI local affiliate. On July 16, 2001, with the help of the RCMHB, NAMI Richland County became a 501(C)3 organization and established its own office in Mansfield. Mary Kay Pierce and Darlene Reed are the cofounders of the NAMI local affiliate. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

Pamela Williams Briggs: A Legacy That Transcends Life

Pamela Williams Briggs has left a legacy on the North End. Not just from burying our deceased loved ones but by offering compassion to all those she served while giving back to the Mansfield community.

"Pam" as she is affectionately known, has worked in the funeral home business for 40 years and has decided to call it quits in an effort to enjoy retirement. The funeral home business is not like your average self-employment business. It employs you to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, since people can die at any time. Pam purchased the local funeral home at 753 McPherson Street, from David Gary 40 years ago and now in a full circle move she has sold it back to his nephew, Marlon Gary. Marlon's wife, D'Andrea Cordell is also originally from the area being a Madison Comprehensive High School graduate.

Rather than selling the funeral home to a conglomerate or someone who may be out of touch with the community, it was extremely important for Pam to leave it in the hands of someone with a local ties.

"What was most important is that we pass it on or leave it to someone connected with the community," Pam said of why she sold the business to Marlon Gary.

"If at all possible, we did not want to leave Mansfield without a funeral home."

Back in 1972 when David Gary first started the funeral business on McPherson Street, it was undeveloped farmland, Pam said.

"Trimble Road was not even developed," she remembered. "We didn't even have a Bob Evans. When we took over, we used to drive down to Columbus just to eat at Bob Evans. So, what you see up there on that corner, I don't think there was anything on that corner except for BP (gas station). It even took a while for McDonald's to come in."

The area also started to develop from black folks moving from Company Line out on Bowman Street Road. "The North End would have been where the



Mrs. Pamela Williams Briggs

Continued On Page 9

Pamela Williams Briggs Continued From Page 8

predominantly of your blacks would have been and your black churches too.”

Something else unique about the McPherson street property is that there were two acres of land that was developed by Pam and her husband Larry Briggs.

“When you look at other people’s funeral homes in other areas you will not see acreage,” she said. “It’s usually a house in between two houses and if they’re lucky another house will become available so you can make you a parking lot.”

Pam said there most definitely was a need for a black mortician/funeral home business back in the day because segregation and the ugly truths of our American past with racial injustice.

“William (Bill) Jones was the first black undertaker here in Mansfield,” she said. “Bill Jones was down on Springmill between Woodland and Harker...My

grandfather was one of the people who helped bring Bill Jones here.”

Pam said she and Larry still plan to reside in Mansfield but will claim snowbird status in the winter by going to the south.

“Marlon has stated that I’m welcome to stay on, work and do whatever,” she said. “And of which I probably will. My husband is still going to do his dump truck business.”

Although the idea of retirement sounds good, Pam said she doubts she will be 100 percent retired anytime soon.

“Retired from running this business, yes, it’s now Marlon. But I still intend to be around helping when I can,” she said.

Pam said she feels confident in passing the torch to Marlon Gary Funeral Home Chapel of Peace.

“We looked, we’ve talked, we feel pretty good with our selection that we can walk away and say that Mansfield will be in good hands,” she said.



Kay’s Korner: Christen Lee: Defender Of Youth

The death of his mother and depression has not kept Christen Lee down. He is a warrior and survivor who ‘grinds on demand’ to keep his life outlook strong. Christen is this month’s spotlight for Kay’s Korner.

“I got my interest in being in the community off of family structure. My parents and my family were really big into helping people, especially the youth,” Christen said. “So, my house growing up was like the community house that everybody could come over to eat, play, sleep and whatever else. So, it’s always been in me to help and connect people.”

Christen took this philosophy with him to college and when returning home, he realized the disconnect between student athletes and actual athlete students, he said.

“Looking at how even if you don’t make it to play a professional sport, the business offices that run these sports and industries are more important because they kept the lights on,” Christen said. “That led me to start working with the youth with the idea of even the 10,000 plus hours I put into certain crafts and skill sets, giving back to the youth



Christen Lee

Continued On Page 10

Kay's Korner: Christen Lee Continued From Page 9

because the youth seems to be more of a sponge and absorb things and actually put it to use.”

Being employed at Foundations for Living and Abraxas, two agencies that work with troubled youth, Christen was able to mentor youth while helping them to help themselves. This inspired him to want to do more for the youth of the community.

His mother, Evern Taylor Lee, passed away in 2016 from cancer and it took a toll on the family as she was the heart of the family.

“Our last conversation she kind of gave me a farewell speech, through that it was just an eye opener on how to live a better life and, again, that brought me to youth to want to do some programming with recreation as well as business related activities.”

In honor of his mother, Christen started the “Evolving Though Love” Annual Basketball Classic which started in 2017 as a way to showcase local and out-of-town basketball talent but has also morphed into a community health event with the addition of community service organization booths to the event.

After the basketball tournament took off, Christen and his wife, Enisia, started working with Pam Rembert and her Children’s Cupboard Southside Outreach after school and summer programs. Christen was able to take his love of youth, recreation and basketball right to the children. It was

actually a family affair and his brother, James, and sister-in-law, Miatta, all came to help as well.

“It gave me a chance to create some opportunities and to bring in some other people that could help with that narrative of you don’t have to just play a sport but if you do play a sport then the things that come with it,” he said.

The Mansfield native was able to bring in mentors such as local international basketball star Antonio Graves and his college roommate Romeo Travis (who played basketball with LeBron James) to talk with and encourage the children at the after-school program.

“We were able to cap off the summer program for the first two years by going to the Cleveland Browns Training Camp,” he said. “Just looking at the inspiration that one experience can provide for kids, it was just one of those things that I felt like I have to do more because I want to create that opportunity more frequently.”

Christen also has a clothing brand called “Grind on Demand,” and is always full of ideas to help our youth. He currently is working in Atlanta, Ga. as a driver to celebrities and important people. He is also working on a community collaboration called U.G.O.O.D. with Nike and many local entities to bring more opportunities to our youth. Christen also used to be an AmeriCorps VISTA with NECIC working on the My Brother’s Keeper initiative in Mansfield.



Christen Lee

About Kay's Korner:



Geneva “Kay” Smith

North End resident Geneva “Kay” Smith was a Community Organizer for NECIC. She was passionate about the North End community until her untimely death in November 2019. In addition to being a North End resident through-and-through, Kay was passionate about non-violence and her family. In Kay’s Korner, we will spotlight different strong people from the North End who are handling their business in their career, the community and with their family. We will also focus on those who have a strong proponent for non-violence. May this be one way to honor our dear Sister Kay’s memory and continue her legacy of being a strong, empathetic individual who was also a great mother. May she Rest in Peace.

Summer Youth Employment:

The Richland County Youth and Family Council and Job and Family Services are looking for twelve supervisors to provide supervision and support to 100 low-income youth this summer placed at various worksites throughout the county.

The Richland County Youth and Family Council Summer TANF Youth Employment Program is a county-wide summer job program that employs youth ages 14 to 18-years-old. Generally, youth will work 20-30 hours per week for ten weeks (mid-June to mid-August). Youth participants should be residents of Richland County and have completed work readiness training.

Supervisors will be responsible for working with the youth and the worksites. Reliable transportation is needed along with a good attitude and desire to mentor youth. Hourly rate is \$22.50 and a local staffing agency will be the employer of record.

If you are interested in working with our youth and worksites, please provide your resume to Teresa Alt at teresa.alt@jfs.ohio.gov or call 419-774-5442.



RCCS Launches Faith-Based Foster Care Recruitment Campaign

During National Foster Care Month, Richland County Children Services (RCCS) will recognize its present foster caregivers to encourage the community to open their hearts and homes to Foster Care.

RCCS believes that every child deserves a loving home. In honor of National Foster Care Month, RCCS is hosting a Faith-based Foster Care Recruitment Campaign.

RCCS welcomes faith - based organizations to support the need for more Foster Care families in their community.

Special appreciation goes out to Pastor William H. and First Lady Sheila Jordan and the Faith Temple Church of God In Christ (COGIC) family for supporting National Foster Care Month.

Pastor Jordan gave RCCS a platform to address the needs of Foster Care which helped dispel myths about the program.

Foster Care Recruiter Joetta McCruter-Polk spoke to the Faith Temple family on Saturday, April 24, about the need for foster families in Richland County. Joetta will speaking at churches throughout Richland County during the month of May.



Joetta McCruter-Polk

Looking For A Job?

Register today at www.Temp2Higher.org. NECIC's Barrier Checklist helps our Staffing Specialists identify any obstacles preventing success in the work force. As an alternative staffing agency NECIC is able to help applicants be better equipped for employment, including funds to provide work boots or gas for your car, help buying groceries, and sometimes bigger things like paying rent or helping with a car repair.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

NECIC To Host Annual 60/60 Clean Up

On **Thursday, May 27** from 5:30 to 6:30 pm join NECIC for our annual North End clean up. Our goal is to organize at least 60 volunteers to pick up litter for 60 minutes. Meet up at the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden 417 Blust Ave., Mansfield. Clean up supplies and refreshments provided. For more information call 419-522-1611 ext 117. Stay tuned to NECIC Facebook for updates, especially in case of inclement weather.

NECIC Presents Paul Robinson Community Conversation

On **Thursday, May 27** from 3:00 to 4:00 pm join NECIC for a community zoom presentation on Climate Change. For information on how to join call 419-522-1611 ext 117.

NECIC And Richland County Land Bank Host Dumpster Day

On **Saturday, June 5th** from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm trash may be disposed of in dumpsters provided at the Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center 445 Bowman Street. For more information call 419-522-1611 ext. 117 or visit www.necic-ohio.org.

NECIC
134 N. Main St.
Mansfield, Ohio
44902

Address Label Here