

Volunteer News

By: Jackie Wynn, Volunteer Coordinator

VOLUNTEERS: The Heart Of Our Agency!



(l to r) Lisa Harris, Robin & Rob Smucker enjoy food & fellowship at the celebration.

Gabriela Mistral, a Chilean educator, once stated: "Many things can wait. Children cannot. Today their bones are being formed, their blood is being made, their senses are being developed. To them we cannot say "tomorrow." Their name is today!" 'Today' is what our volunteers have all claimed in making a difference in the life of a child.

Our volunteers were thanked for their service during our annual volunteer celebration dinner, which was held on April 15 our mentor center. All volunteers were recognized for their dedication to the children we serve throughout the year.

Rachel Spatz, a graduating senior at the College of Wooster was recognized for her outstanding contribution to leadership in the COW 4 KIDS program. Rachel served as a volunteer for four years and was the coordinator of the COW 4 KIDS group for the past three years. We wish Rachel all the best in her future endeavors.

A star is unique in design and brightly shines over us on clear nights. Sometimes they shine so brightly it's like they are offering an aura of protection as if leading us unto a brighter path. That illustration reflects the spirit of our star award recipients: Jim and Kathi Weaver! The Weavers have dedicated their volunteer time to mentoring adolescent sisters since January, 2007 – spending quality time with two girls who desperately need good role models. We are truly grateful for the Weaver's dedication to mentoring.

Our Volunteer of the Year is Brooke Winkler. Brooke has been a volunteer with us for nine years and a mentor to Leah for the past four years. Brooke is a therapist at the Village Network and, in my opinion, one of the best cheerleaders for kids that I know. She oozes joy, compassion, and genuine interest to all she meets. Our mentoring program is stronger because of Brooke's dedication.

My main goal is to make the volunteer experience mutually beneficial for the volunteer, and the children we service. This goal is much easier to achieve when caseworkers actively support our volunteers, by offering case information in a timely manner, engaging the volunteer into the case objectives, offering guidance, and showing appreciation to our volunteers. One worker does all of this and more! Martha Jackson-Hill was presented the "One in a Million" award for the outstanding collaboration she gives to our volunteer team.



Sharon Porter and Bo present the benefits of canine therapy.

Our program for the celebration was a presentation from Sharon Porter of Caring Therapy Canines on the benefits of canine therapy. We were treated to a visit from several therapy dogs. We learned that Caring Therapy Canines is a very active volunteer services group in Ashland, Wayne, Holmes, and Medina counties who offer companionship visits, as well as conduct a Dog Bite Prevention Program. Children Services and Caring Therapy Canines work in partnership together at the Wayne County Fair Tot/Tag Station and Main Street Wooster Kid's Day.



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National Pajama Program comes to Children Services!

The motto for the Pajama Program is: "Nothing is ever too much to do for a child." And, I can affirm that is what the Akron Chapter is committed to. For well over a year the Akron Chapter, under the direction of Patty Gillepsie, has shipped not only brand new pajamas for the children we service through our Closet of Hope, but also includes fantastic books and blankets in each shipment. It is difficult to put into words how wonderful the items are in each donation we receive, and



(l to r) Spring Fling Party Planners Bethany Sherrieb, Debbie, Jackie Wynn, Patty & Lisa Harris. Debbie & Patty are with the Pajama Program Akron Chapter.

for the children to receive brand new pajamas is just really special. Yet, in April the volunteers with the Akron Chapter proved that "nothing is ever too much to do for a child" and hosted a Spring Fling party that was open to all of our foster children, as well as the children in our mentoring program. Each child that attended the event was given the opportunity to make several crafts and decorate their very own cookie. They also received a brand new book and pair of pajamas. The evening was a very special one for all in attendance!



Isn't it amazing what our volunteers will do for us!

Randy Regan is so into helping our cause that he even wore bunny ears for the Orrville Area Chamber of Commerce's Bunny Trail. Thanks, Randy, for your dedication!

