

Clelian Heights Newsletter

A Family Affair



Building for the Future

Shavings

Fall 2009



Mission

The mission of Clelian Heights is to provide spiritual, educational, vocational and residential programs for children and young adults with developmental disabilities that enhance their quality of life and maximize their potential for independent living.

Vision

The vision of Clelian Heights is to provide an atmosphere of choice and mutual acceptance, respect and love that will make a lasting difference in the lives of persons with developmental disabilities.

Non-Discrimination

Clelian Heights offers services to all without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, religious creed, disability, sex, ancestry or national origin.

United Way

Clelian Heights can receive United Way Campaign donations. On the pledge form list, our Contributor's Choice Code is #403 and write in the address of: 135 Clelian Heights Lane Greensburg, PA 15601.

Publication Statement

This publication is produced by the Clelian Heights School Advancement Office, a non-profit organization. No copy or distribution is permitted without permission. This publication is mailed several times a year. For information contact us at Clelian Heights School 135 Clelian Heights Lane Greensburg, PA 15601 or 724-837-8120 or visit www.clelianheights.org.

Welcome to Our Clelian Family Sister Ritamary Schulz, ASCJ ~ Executive Director



Sister Ritamary and friend try a new exercise

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24) These are words that inspire Sister Ritamary Schulz, ASCJ, the new Executive Director of Clelian Heights.

"These words call me to live with God in the present and to be grateful for the goodness of God's gifts that surround me," says Sister Ritamary. "You must see the good in people and all the events in one's life."

So far, Sister Ritamary is especially pleased with all the good work happening at Clelian Heights School for Exceptional Children.

"I am truly energized by the commitment, love and compassion shown by the faculty and staff here. To work among people who truly love what they are doing, who are professional and attentive to the needs of their co-workers as

well as the children and adults whom they guide and teach, this shows how much the spirit of the Lord is alive and well here at Clelian."

Sister Ritamary has thirty years in educational administration with solid experience in program development, fiscal planning strategies, facility growth and enhancement, and technology expansion. She hopes to use this experience to best serve the ministry of Clelian Heights. She has already begun to assess the state of affairs at Clelian and is actively involved with the Safety Committee and the publication of an updated and expanded employee handbook.

"I believe high energy and enthusiasm are key to my role as Executive Director. All of us are involved in a very special ministry where young people and adults are thriving and happy because the Spirit is alive with love and compassion," says Sister Ritamary. "I want all of our faculty, staff, children and adults to really stretch themselves to be all that God wants us to be. I believe our ministry flows from the love of God and our love for his people."

Sister Ritamary is excited to have the opportunity to build upon the strong foundation provided by the Sisters, faculty and staff as well as Sister Rosemary Zaffuto, the recently retired Executive Director. She is looking ahead to maximizing the quality of programs available to the children and adults who attend Clelian. She knows that Clelian is blessed with a broad range of community support and gifts which has been a very important part of Clelian's growth and development.

Sister Ritamary joined the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus shortly after high school. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from St. Louis University, a master of education in pastoral counseling from Iona College, and a master's degree in education and supervision from Southern Connecticut State University. She was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut and has four sisters still living in the Connecticut and Massachusetts areas.

"I am very happy to be involved in such a special ministry where God's love is evident in all who enter this place."

Our Clelian Family: Faculty & Staff Profiles



2009-2010 Faculty: *Row one left to right:* Amber Blair (Music), Carol Kasnevich (Transition to Work), Catherine Petrosky (HR 108), Maryann Wisner (HR 102), Diane Baranowski (RM 104), Sister Sarah Marie Wojcik, SC (Student Support Services), Betty McCormick (HR 106), and Amanda Montell (HR 202)
Row two left to right: Ron Dezzutti (Transition to Work), Gwen Diddle (HR 109), Jennifer Garcia (HR 107), Melissa Fligger (HR 103), Gilbert Stemmler, Jr. (HR 105), Mary Beth Holleran (HR 101), and Sister Vivian Chiodini, ASCJ (Religious Ed.). *Inset photo:* Katie Datz (HR 201)

In each issue of the *Shavings* newsletter, we plan to introduce you to members of our large Clelian family. This will allow you to put a name with a face or simply to learn more about who our staff members are and what they do to make Clelian Heights School such a special place.

All of our teachers, both full and part-time, are vital to the school program at Clelian Heights. Our full-time teachers include all homeroom teachers who are responsible for the day to day curriculum of the classroom and individual education plan (IEP) for each student. Each of our homeroom teachers are fully certified with the necessary requirements to teach special education in the state of Pennsylvania. Our part-time teachers assist with programs and services that enhance the day to day education provided in the classroom.

We are lucky to have four new teachers join our staff this year.

For two of them, Amanda Montell (HR 202) and Amber Blair (Music) not only is it their first time at Clelian Heights, it is also their first teaching position. Diane Baranowski (HR 104) is new to Clelian Heights as a teacher but was familiar with us as a result of her work as a Behavior Specialist Consult (BSC). Melissa Fligger (HR 103) is enjoying her first year as a teacher but has been a part of the Clelian Heights family for twelve years.

Miss Montell previously served as a substitute for Hempfield Area School District. She is a graduate of Slippery Rock University of PA with a dual-bachelor degree and certification in elementary and special education. She is enjoying the “welcoming and friendly” environment at Clelian Heights School and hopes to make an impact on her students and help them improve their skills.

Miss Baranowski had experience at a local school district for seven years as a BSC and instructional aid. Her work with her clients led her to Clelian Heights.

“I love children and always wanted to do this type of work,” says Miss Baranowski. “I love to teach.”

Miss Baranowski attended Mercyhurst College and earned a bachelor in psychology and later attended Chatham University to earn a master’s in special education and elementary

education.

Miss Fligger began to volunteer a Clelian Heights in middle school and continued that relationship during the summer and school breaks through college. She also served as a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) for two years.

Miss Fligger graduated from Edinboro University of PA in 2007 with a bachelor degree in special education and a minor in psychology. She also earned her certification in special education and mathematics. In 2009, she completed her master’s degree in special education. Her favorite thing about Clelian Heights is the environment. “It’s impossible to walk in those doors and be in a bad mood! The Sisters, staff, and students make it such a loving place. It’s amazing!”

Miss Catherine Petrosky is entering her third year of teaching as a mid-semester replacement in the spring of 2007. The students and parents of Clelian Heights make her days at Clelian Heights more enjoyable. “The close family environment is key for special education success,” says Miss Petrosky. She earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Seton Hill University (SHU) and is certified in elementary and special education. This year, she began studies at SHU for a master degree in inclusive education and should complete her studies in August 2010.

Mrs. Katie Datz began volunteering at Clelian Heights as 7th grade student. She worked as a Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS) for three years until she was hired as a teacher in 2006. In addition to being a teacher at Clelian Heights, Miss Datz also works as a BSC and Mobile Therapist.

Miss Datz earned her degree in Human Resource Management from California University of PA but felt that it was her “calling” to be a teacher and earned a master’s degree in special education from SHU where she was given an “Outstanding Teaching in Special Education” award. She is also certified in special education.

Mr. Gilbert Stemmler, Jr. was hired as a TSS at Clelian Heights in 2003, then as a teacher three years later. He attended the University of Pittsburgh and earned a bachelor degree in business management. He has since earned his master degree in

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special education from SHU.

Mr. Stemmler is enthusiastic about teaching. “Kids want to have fun and use their unlimited energy! Me, too!”

Mr. Stemmler says the most enjoyable thing about teaching at Clelian Heights is that Clelian is really like a big family. “We are so familiar with one another that the entire campus is on a first name basis.”

Miss Jennifer Garcia was employed as an art therapist working with the elderly, including a few with special needs and as a TSS for three years prior to her employment at Clelian Heights.

“I have always had a strong desire to work in special education. Even during my work in art therapy, I would seek out opportunities to work with children and adults with special needs,” says Miss Garcia.

Miss Garcia attended SHU and earned a bachelor in art therapy and later a master degree in special education along with her teaching certificate.

“I enjoy being able to have students for multiple years,” says Miss Garcia. “This allows me to see the leaps and bounds that our children strive so hard to accomplish every day! All the small tasks and problems that they struggle with are eventually overcome.”

Mrs. Maryann Wisner says, that “the opportunity to address students’ individual needs in a small class and working closely with parents’ are what she most enjoys about working at Clelian Heights for the last six years.

Mrs. Wisner is a Lock Haven University graduate with a degree in special and early childhood education. In 2008, she earned a master’s degree in special education from Seton Hill University.



Executive Director Sister Ritamary asks a student, to share her skills on a sewing card as Mrs. Katie Datz (HR 201) encourages her.

Mrs. Mary Beth Holleran is in her eighth year of teaching at Clelian. Previously, she worked at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind Children for ten years and at the Tillotson School in the Whitehall/Baldwin area of Pittsburgh for two years. She earned her bachelor degree from Duquesne University and her master’s in education with vision certification from the University of Pittsburgh. Mrs. Holleran enjoys the “warm, friendly atmosphere and the dedicated staff” at Clelian Heights.



Miss Fligger and a student enjoy the Scrambler on a field trip to Idlewild Park in Ligonier, PA held during the Extended Learning Program this summer

With over 36 years of teaching experience, Mrs. Betty McCormick has utilized her professionalism to best serve her students at Clelian Heights over the last eleven years. “Having taught in a general education atmosphere, I saw the need to work with students of all abilities. It enabled me to grow in my knowledge and love of teaching to work with children of all ages and abilities.”

Mrs. McCormick taught for 25 years in Somerset County area school districts. She earned her bachelor’s from the University of Pittsburgh and her master’s in early childhood education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She also received her certification for teaching special education from SHU.

Some of our teachers work part-time to assist with educational programming in partnership with the homeroom teachers.

Sister Sara Marie Wojcik, SC, provides educational support services to our students on the part-time basis. She serves as a tutor and provides testing for students to help them meet their IEP goals. Sister Sara brought with her many years of elementary education in area public and parochial schools when she came to Clelian Heights five years ago. The bulk of her teaching experience (22 years) was earned at the DePaul School for Hearing and Speech.

“The special needs population is, for me, a beautiful example of the Kingdom of God,” says Sister Sara Marie. “These children remind me daily that there is a holy mystery in our purpose on earth. Children and adults with special needs are remarkable examples of people who live exactly as God created them to be.”

Sister Sara earned her bachelor degree in sociology and education from SHU and a master’s degree from Duquesne in education and certification as a reading specialist. She also received a master’s equivalency in hearing impairment from the University of Pittsburgh.

Sister Vivian Chiodini, ASCJ, also provides tutoring services to our students but her main responsibility is providing character and values training on a weekly basis to all students in the school program.

With 44 years of teaching experience, Sister Vivian still

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The Clelian Center: Adult Vocational Training

The Clelian Center provides adult vocational training, evaluation, and employment opportunities in a year round schedule. All contracted work is done on our campus. Our adults complete all work and receive wages for the services provided. Depending upon the contract, they may earn a wage based on hourly performance or by the piece.

The Clelian Center Director is Sister Shawn Lyons, ASCJ with a supervising staff including: Job Coach - Connie Gipson, Program Specialists - Karen O'Donnell, Vanessa Delynko and Helen Todd; Job Supervisors - Mary Jean Bryan, Lawrence Demangone, Sister Margo Rey, ASCJ; Job Trainers - Liz Eisenstatt, Kevin LaSlavic, Colleen Radebaugh, Sandy Sucke and Margie McElroy

Currently, the Clelian Center has several contracts for mailing services with area companies including non-profit organizations and a monthly newsletter for the Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce. Fine motor skills are needed for collating, folding and labeling. Assembly requires cognitive skills to complete each mailing before it is shipped to the post office.

In the small parts assembly area, contracts have been held for companies that make residential windows and fence parts such as Ventana USA and Kencove Farm Fence Inc. The skills developed include counting accuracy, packaging with bagging and heat sealing, and manipulation of parts that have to be partially assembled and then packed into cartons.

Other outside contracts are completed in our commercial laundry which provides services to rehabilitation facilities such as Centers for Rehab Services and other community businesses. Skills are somewhat more physical and include repetitive lifting, folding and bundling.

In-house employment opportunities include food service, house-keeping, grounds maintenance and janitorial services.

Employment Services provides job coaching and community employment assistance. Adults are hired by local businesses and after a brief training period, with assistance provided by Clelian Center staff, each individual is expected to maintain a regular part-time work schedule, secure transportation to the work site and earn a regular wage. Businesses such as the Courtyard-Marriot have partnered with our Center to assist our adults in training for employment in situations such as light housekeeping.

The Captain and Sandy Dog Biscuit bakery produces all natural dog treats. Adults work through the entire process from baking to packaging. Several contracts are held with area pet retail businesses including a local pizza shop which sells the "pup pizza", a popular pizza shaped treat, as a novelty gift item.

In September 2009, the Clelian Center expanded its umbrella of services to open the Adult Training Facility (ATF) program which is licensed by the Commonwealth of PA, Department of Mental Retardation, and Department of Welfare. The Program Supervisor is Sister Shawn Lyons, ASCJ and the Program Director is Lynn Moon. Staff includes Scott Karen and Maria Hilty.

Adults enrolled in this program achieve community integration goals through group outings to community cultural events and other group activities. The daily schedule is a blend of enrichment and physical activities including music, exercise, and games with multiple short periods of light duty work such as small parts assembly, laundry

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Sister Margo (right) assists our workers with bolt sorting and bagging.



Wrapping assembled parts for shipping to the client.



A job well done! The finished product of all natural biscuits in regular and holiday packaging.



In-training at the Courtyard-Marriot in Greensburg.



Clelian Center Program Specialist, Karen O'Donnell (right) and a friend have some fun while working in our kitchen.

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duty and food service assistance.

“The new ATF will allow us to provide a more focused program for some of the adults at Clelian. It is always our goal to allow these individuals to reach and exceed their personal abilities,” says Sister Shawn. “The ATF is a wonderful addition to the services we offer.”

Work is always needed. If your company could use the services of the Clelian Center please contact Sister Shawn to discuss the needs of your business at 724-837-8120.

Our Clelian Family: cont'd from page 2

enjoys her interactions with the students. “I enjoy the happy spirit and sheer simplicity I witness daily in our students. They are truly themselves and don’t ever pretend to impress others,” says Sister Vivian. “Their interactions with each other and with me are refreshing and enjoyable.”

Sister Vivian earned her bachelor’s degree in education from Fordham University and her master’s in reading and language arts from Duquesne University.

Miss Amber Blair, newly hired this year as a part-time music teacher, just graduated from Seton Hill University with a bachelor degree in music therapy and voice performance. She is currently attending the University of Pittsburgh for a master’s degree in social work. She previously completed a music therapy clinical internship at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC.

Miss Blair says, “All children are a gift from God. I feel that children, adolescents and young adults of this population deserve special love, protection and attention.”

Clelian Heights School also provides a Transition to Work Program for all students 14 years of age and older. This program prepares our students for future employment in the community. Along with homeroom teachers, a special team of three teachers are utilized to coordinate the curriculum, community outings, and in-house vocational training of the students in this program. This team includes Mrs. Gwen Diddle, Mr. Ron Dezzutti, and Mrs. Carol Kasnevich.

Mrs. Gwen Diddle is a co-teacher with Mr. Dezzutti in homeroom 109 and acts as the coordinator of the Transition to Work Program. She schedules and coordinates all the community volunteer work the students do throughout the year. In her six years of employment at Clelian she has worn many hats. She has been a PCA and is currently the schools swim-

ming teacher and swim coach for the Special Olympics team. She earned a bachelor’s degree in parks and recreation from Slippery Rock University of PA. She recently earned her master’s degree from Seton Hill University.

Mr. Ron Dezzutti works part-time and serves as a co-teacher of homeroom 109 and assists with aspects of the Transition to Work program with Mrs. Diddle. He chaperones the students who do community work, assists them with job applications and spends time in the other classrooms teaching as well. He is entering his second year of teaching part-time at Clelian Heights. He previously spent 37 years with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. He also has 23 years teaching experience and 14 years in educational administration. He earned his bachelor degree in special education at Indiana University of PA. He attended Duquesne University and earned a master’s degree in special education and elementary administration where he also earned his principal certification.

Mr. Dezzutti says, “I feel blessed to be able to work with the students to bring out their potential.” He finds the Sisters to be an inspiration as well. “Their hard work is a wonderful example of how we should all live our lives in service to others.”

Mrs. Carol Kasnevich serves part-time coordinating the vocational training of the Transition to Work Program. She works with students in-house on various activities such as light-duty housekeeping, laundry and food service skills.

Prior to her employment at Clelian she served as a special education teacher with the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit.

Mrs. Kasnevich earned her bachelor’s degree from Seton Hill University in psychology and elementary education and her Master’s in special education from Indiana University of PA.

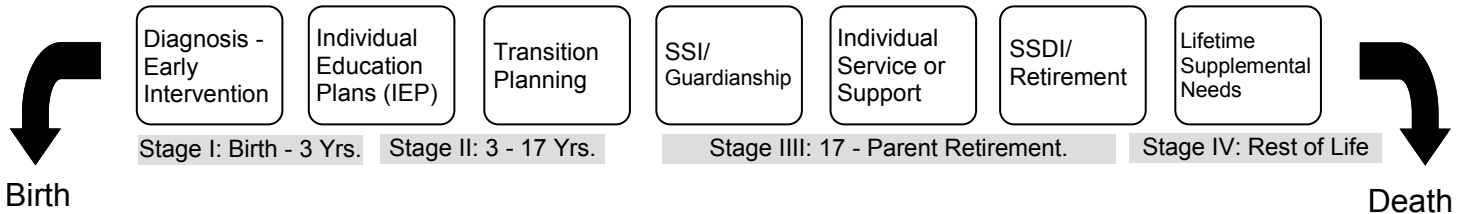
Special Services

PLANNING FOR A LIFETIME

Parents of children with special needs live in the present moment, but they must also lay the groundwork for the success, safety and security of their children in the future. This is a process that begins as soon as a child receives a diagnosis and it demands a parents constant vigilance and participation. Parents can utilize the tools and information available to face such issues as transitions from one program to another, entitlements, funding streams and ultimately long care support. These are difficult issues, but they can be more easily dealt with when they are seen as part of the whole process rather than as an isolated crisis.

This is a Life Planning Stages Timeline developed by Guyaux, Mandler, Mah Special Care Planning team. This is a guideline for parents with the understanding that it is not intended to be interpreted as specific legal advice. Individuals are encouraged to seek the guidance of their personal legal advisor.

For information regarding any of the steps outlined below please contact Lisa Liston, Coordinator of Special Services, at 724-837-8120 ext. 125.



Advancement Office

NEW SEWAGE TREATMENT PROJECT COMPLETED

In addition to the great students, helpful families, professional staff and dedicated Sisters, a big part of what makes Clelian Heights so special is the picturesque campus itself.

Proper operation of a facility as large as ours requires continual attention. Being in a rural setting surrounded by rolling hills and wooded area, while beautiful, does require some specific maintenance that is often taken for granted.

Since its beginnings, Clelian Heights has maintained its own sewage treatment system in anticipation of the day that the Westmoreland County Sewage Authority would extend services to our area. Having waited these 48 years, and with growth in students and staff over time, plus weather and age, the efficiency of our treatment plant was compromised to the point of needing replacement. Attempting to replace the plant on our own was cost prohibitive but in the fall of 2007 with confirmation from the sewage authority that there was no plan for future sewage line expansion through our area, we found it necessary to seek private assistance to move forward with a plan for replacement.

It is through the friendship and generosity of two wonderful benefactors, Thomas Usher and Mark Gera, that this project has been completed. We owe our thanks and

gratitude to the Thomas J. and Sandra L. Usher Family Foundation which has provided the funding for the treatment plant package and its construction. Also to Mark Gera of Gibson-Thomas Engineering Co., who has provided all the engineering services needed throughout the project.



HELP US UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION!

We are updating our database! Please complete the information on the form below and mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope. Take further advantage of this opportunity to assure your inclusion in the 2009-2010 Annual Report by sending in a donation as well. Deadline for inclusion in annual report is June 30, 2010. Thank you for your assistance!



I AM A: Current: Parent Staff Student Adult Client Graduate Volunteer

Friend of a Current Parent, Staff, Student, Client, Graduate, Apostle of the Sacred Heart

(Circle all that apply) WHO? _____

Relative of a Current Parent, Staff, Student, Client, Graduate, Apostle of the Sacred Heart

(Circle all that apply) WHO? _____

I AM A: Former: Parent Staff Student Adult Client Graduate Volunteer

Friend of a Former Parent, Staff, Student, Client, Graduate, Apostle of the Sacred Heart

(Circle all that apply) WHO? _____

Relative of a Former Parent, Staff, Student, Client, Graduate, Apostle of the Sacred Heart

(Circle all that apply) WHO? _____

I AM A: Friend of Clelian Heights:

Local Business or Vendor

Member Kiwanis Club: _____

Member Knights of Columbus: Council # _____

Member Lions Club: _____

Member of Rotary Club: _____

Other: _____

I am no longer able to help support Clelian Heights, please remove my address from the mailing list

Thank You!

Name(s): _____ Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ZIP: _____

New Address or Phone Number Written Above

I would also like to enclose a gift to the: Endowment Fund Project Fund Operational Fund

Payment Method:

Check: Payable to Clelian Heights School

Visa MasterCard Discover

Card #: _____

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

Signature: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Don't Miss It!!

*12th Annual
Wholey's
Old Fashioned*



Chicken Barbecue

Sunday - November 1, 2009

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Advanced Tickets: \$10.00 Adults

\$5.00 Children (8 & Under)

Otherwise, \$12.00 at the door

For Info: 724-837-8120 ext. 124

**2010 Lottery
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