

# Clelian Heights Newsletter

*A Family Affair*



# Shavings

Summer 2010

## *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 Mission 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](http://www.clelianheights.org).

# Congratulations Graduates!



## *Words from Our Executive Director, Sister Ritamary Schulz, ASCJ, to the Graduates during Our Baccalaureate Mass*

“This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice!” (Psalm 118:24) Truly this is a day of celebration and accomplishment as we recognize our new, 2010 graduates: Josh, Samantha Jo, Sarah, Ben, Katelyn, Sarah, Joey, Allison and Ricky. Each graduate has completed work in the school program successfully and all are now ready to face the next step along the journey of new experiences. However, not only have they accomplished the school program, they have also learned the more important tools for life which include caring, compassion and love for others. In addition, they have continued to develop an inner sense of kindness and understanding. These are true skills that will carry them in the days and years to come.

In the first reading today, are the words of St. Paul: “God loves you as his own special people. Be gentle, kind and patient and above all, loving.” (Col. 3:12...14) This message has

*(Continued on page 7)*

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## Our Clelian Family: Therapists Profiles

### SPEECH THERAPY

The therapeutic programs offered at Clelian Heights are offered to all school aged students that are required to have these support services as part of their Individual Educational Plan (IEP). These school-based services can include speech, physical or occupational therapy. Our therapists help the students to achieve daily tasks based upon everyday school activities.

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#### Currently, 99% of students receive speech therapy.

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In speech therapy, the staff work in a traditional one-on-one setting but they also work with classrooms in group sessions.

The ultimate goal of our therapists is to have each child achieve the objective that has been set for them and eventually work themselves out of the need for services so that therapy is no longer a part of the IEP.

Currently, 99% of students at Clelian Heights have speech therapy as part of their IEP. Our team of speech therapists consists of two full-time therapists and one part-time therapist all of whom have been certified by the American Speech and Hearing Association and have earned a Certificate of Clinical Competency in Speech and Language. In addition, another part-time speech therapist from the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit, (Shelley Daloise) comes to Clelian once a week to work with specific students.

Together, they work to develop total communication skills, from those who are completely non-verbal to the highest functioning student with autism that can talk for hours about a million topics. Using augmentative communication including signs, gestures, and picture identification, they strive to give students the skills needed to communicate in the classroom, with aides and teachers as well as with their friends.

Speech Therapy also includes oral motor-movement therapy such as swallowing and chewing.

Traditional speech practices are implemented as well with one-on-one coaching, repetition, and speech sequencing. Group sessions allow for teaching the children how to communicate with each other and how to recognize when someone is trying to communicate with them.

Therapy can also include non-verbal speech practices especially with students who have an autistic diagnosis. Students may be very verbal but can misinterpret body language cues. They may not under-

stand the concept of looking at someone when speaking to them or while being addressed by a teacher. Often students have to review skills in multi-step directions and how that relates to classroom tasks.

Leah McElroy is our newest speech therapist and is beginning her fourth school year at Clelian. She is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in the communication science and disorders and earned a master's degree in speech-language pathology from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. This is her first place of employment upon graduating but a place she knows well since Clelian is where she earned her observation hours as a graduate student as well as her nine month clinical fellowship.

Miss McElroy enjoys her career in speech therapy because it helps students to improve their skills in functional communication enabling them to express themselves and interact with peers, the staff in the classroom, and in their local community.



Leah McElroy works with a student in a classroom during the Extended School Year (ESY) program held for several weeks in the summer.

“I enjoy the enthusiasm of the students during therapy,” says Miss McElroy, “especially when they make even the slightest progress.”

She also likes the structure of Clelian Heights as a Kindergarten to age 21 program in one building. It allows for more individualized attention and growth between the therapist and the student.

Now entering her tenth year at Clelian Heights, Jennifer DeRusha loves everything about her job.

“I love the students, the families, the Sisters, the

staff,” she said. “I love what I do!”

Mrs. DeRusha earned her bachelor’s degree in communicative disorders and master’s degree in speech language pathology from the University of Akron, OH. She also earned a certificate of education for speech. Her previous employment experiences include the Medina Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities, Subacute Rehab, and the ARC of Westmoreland.



Jennifer DeRusha assists a student during a group classroom session.

Mrs. DeRusha finds that using a child’s individual strengths is a very important part of improving their speech skills and how they use those skills in the world around them.

“If a child is more tactile or needs to make gestures while sounding a word, we will start with that gesture and work our way up from that level,” says DeRusha. “Whatever it takes to make it ‘click’ with them, makes it work, is where I will start to build.”

Mary Ann DeAngelo is the only part-time speech therapist on staff. Mrs. DeAngelo has been coming to Clelian Heights for 15 years, most of which was as an employee of the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit for whom she worked for 38 years until she retired in 2001. Upon her retirement, she began to work at Clelian part-time, one day a week to assist the speech staff with their case load.

“I enjoy working with the children and staff. The children are so loving and happy to see you.” says Mrs. DeAngelo. “There is an upbeat atmosphere in the entire facility which starts with the Sisters. It is great working under the guidance of Sister Charlene. She is very involved and is clearly deeply devoted to Clelian.”

Mrs. DeAngelo has worked in numerous school districts throughout the county, in special education and in parochial schools over her long career. But it is the special education therapy that she finds to be the most

rewarding.

“It is the progress I see in the children,” she says, “they are so appreciative and hardworking during therapy. Their enthusiasm and positive attitude create a wonderful working environment.” She also credits her fellow speech staff with being easy to work with and acknowledges that they collaborate well as a team.

Thanks to generous donations to the school, the speech therapy department recently acquired the Kauffman’s Speech Praxis Treatment Kits and a set of Autism Photo Cards.

The Praxis kits are a great therapy tool for students who understand what is being said but cannot respond by using speech. This condition known as Apraxia is in very simple terms an inability of the brain to send a message to the mouth to form speech. The person knows what is being said and in their mind they are saying the words but it simply does not come out of their mouth in an understandable way.

The Praxis kits help the child to break speech into step by step sequences that are linked together to form a complete word and then eventually a sequence of words.

The Autism Photo cards are a great tool utilized by the therapists to assist the students with communication skills as it pertains to a picture on the card. These cards generate the questions of Who? What? When? Where? and Why? giving the student the opportunity to formulate and practice the concepts of time, reasoning, sequencing and other verbal cues which are typically weaker skills for those with an autism diagnosis.

We will introduce our other therapists in physical and occupational therapy in future issues of our *Shavings* newsletter.



Mary Ann DeAngelo works with a student during individual therapy.

## The School Program: Transition to Work Program

Secondary transition planning is required by the Federal Government and the Pennsylvania Department of Education for any child, ages 14-21, with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The goal of the program is to prepare students for the transition from school to gainful employment or additional educational opportunities upon graduation. Many tools and resources are used to assess each student in the areas of: personal interests, physical ability, skill aptitude and behavior.

At Clelian Heights, we refer to secondary transition planning as the “Transition to Work” program. This program integrates the functional academics of the daily school curriculum with skill sets and programs related to future employment or post-secondary educational interests.

“Our attempt is to get the students ready for the world around them,” said Sister Charlene Celli, ASCJ, Principal. “We provide practical experiences at different jobs. For example, cooking, carpentry or even automotive. We want to prepare our students to become as independent as possible.”



Students distribute promotional information for a local business.

There are three program coordinators on staff, Gwen Diddle, Ron Dezutti and Carol Kasnevich. Initially, an “Interest Inventory” is taken by each student. The results serve as a guide to help direct the students toward general areas of interest for potential employment or additional education and vocational training. As students get older, the focus begins to narrow, providing students with actual experiences that relate to their interests.

Mrs. Diddle forms partnerships with the local businesses and regional community services, non-profits and churches to secure volunteer opportunities for our students. These outings are regularly scheduled during the school year and simulate the world of work. Experiences can include deliveries, inventory, sorting goods and materials, and preparing clothing for the sales floor.

Students also assist with large mailings. They handle all folding, collating and stuffing of envelopes. Students develop their clerical skills even further by assisting the business office with labeling time cards and occasionally assist the main office with other clerical needs.

The group also has a snack and water cart which is stationed in the hall during the lunch break. Students are responsible for stocking the cart, sales and customer service. It is an opportunity for students to develop communication skills and sharpen their proficiency with money.

Mr. Dezutti assists students with future employment knowledge and experiences. He reviews simulated job applications and holds practice job interviews. He also arranges for career exploration opportunities where he takes a student who is interested in a certain vocation to visit a work site and they speak with the prospective employer about a job opportunity or career. This is all to simulate the actual hiring process a student may go through upon graduation when looking for employment.

“A student and I went to a local country club for a career exploration visit. The process went so well they decided to hire our student to assist in the dining room. He would prepare for guests, folding napkins, setting the tables,” said Mr. Dezutti. “He just called me the other day. He is doing so well, they have increased his hours to several days a week and they have him doing more and more every day. For this young man, this is exactly how this program should work. I am very proud of him and he is happy and proud of himself.”



Volunteering at a local non-profit thrift store.

## The Clelian Center: Adult Training Facility

The Clelian Center Adult Training Facility Services (ATF) is a specialized program focusing on further developing life and personal living skills.

The program centers around six main skill sets: daily living, life skills, fine and gross motor development, fine arts, community integration and basic employment skills.

Personal daily living skills include those skills needed to take care of oneself: hygiene, dressing, eating, etc. and self-help skills include skills involved in maintaining one's personal environment: appropriate clothing choices, laundry, household chores and responsibilities, basic food prep. This type of ability training often overlaps and becomes integrated with other activities: dressing skills are practiced while changing into swimwear and then back into street clothes; food prep items are used for daily snacks. Community integration includes trips for shopping, dining, entertainment, the use of library and post office, etc. –in all these activities, where skill areas are involved.

Fine and gross motor development and social skills are also enhanced through various enjoyable group recreational activities including: crafts, puzzles, board games, ski ball, Wii games, aerobics, and swimming, to mention a few.

The group is exposed to fine arts activities with music and art projects including on-campus special programming by various performance groups. Or they may blend their community integration skills with a theatrical performance off-campus incorporating an activity such as dining out.

Development of basic employment skills is also encouraged. Small parts assembly, collating, folding etc. are practiced.

The ATF staff and Clelian Center Director, Sister Shawn Lyons, ASCJ, have created some special projects that incorporate all the skill areas and also build an awareness of group responsibility and group success. The ATF is producing seasonal crafts and baked goods. They are also making specialty decorative soaps. This idea was met with much enthusiasm by the clients. In all these projects the clients are assisted by staff. Each client participates at their own skill level and the

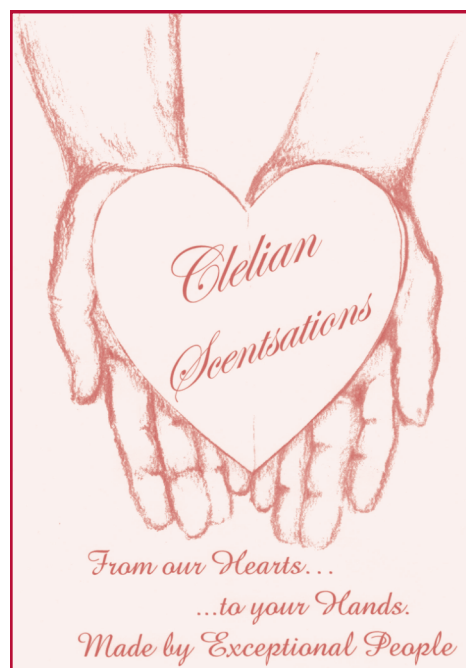


Lynn Moon (center) watches as liquid soap is poured into molds by the individuals in the Adult Training Facility.

results are sold from a craft cart during the lunch break. Taking turns at this task is developing skills with sales and customer service as well. The proceeds go toward purchasing more supplies.

With the soap making, the clients are doing the majority of the project by themselves. "It is very important for the ATF clients to interact with each other in this collaborative effort," says ATF staff member, Maria Hilty. They cut the raw product, microwave it, and add scent and dye to each mold. Some of the soaps have decorative accents inserted inside. Everyone helps to cut and design the packaging for each soap. The soaps, "Clelian Scentsations", are hypoallergenic and all natural, made from Shea butter and glycerin, and are lightly scented with lavender and eucalyptus. If you are interested in learning more about "Clelian Scentsations", contact the Clelian Center at 724-837-812.

Lynn Moon, program specialist at the ATF, says that this part of the ATF program has "instilled a sense of pride in each individual." The adults are especially happy to see that the outcome of their efforts is appreciated by others. This has given them a great feeling of joy and accomplishment.



## Special Services

### Writing a Letter of Intent for Your Child

This vital document should be with your other important papers and records should you suddenly be unable to care for yourself or your dependant child/adult due to a serious accident, illness or even possibly due to death. Filled with basic information relating to medical needs, medication details, educational information (IEP) or individual support plan (ISP), financial documentation, work schedules, family medical/heredity information, etc; the Letter of Intent also includes details that will provide insight into the daily care and well being of the individual for whomever shall become their full-time caregiver either temporarily or permanently. These details can truly make the adjustment for everyone, both caregiver and individual, much less stressful.



about the individual and what they might experience in a typical day. Who they are, what they like and sometimes, more importantly, *how they* might like to do it! Make lists of favorite games, foods, music, etc. What does he or she dislike? What are their sleeping habits? Grooming habits? You will continuously work on this document as he or she evolves and develops new habits, likes and dislikes. Every detail will be important not only to the caregiver but most especially to him or her.

Let other family members know about this special document so that it is not overlooked during that initial time of crisis. If you have any questions about this article, please contact, Lisa Liston, our Special Services Coordinator at 724-837-8120 ext. 125.

In the Letter of Intent, you want to provide details

## Advancement Office



# Clelian Heights

School for Exceptional Children

Home About Us Programs Adult Services Staff & Facilities Admissions Support Us Events Join Us Galleries



## Welcome to Clelian Heights

Our new Clelian Heights website should be up and running on-line by the beginning of the new school year with more features for prospective families, current families, donors, and friends.

This updated website has an easy to navigate menu bar with drop-down selections to help you in your search for information. There is much more information that is easily accessed and much of it can be downloaded directly from the web-site.

There are two on-line videos available for interested families and others who may want a brief “tour” of Clelian Heights and what our facility has to offer. Five galleries of photos show the activities in the classrooms, residences and in the Clelian Center. A list of resource and agency web-sites are available to families as well.

For instance, there is an up to date calendar with information available at a glance. Newsletters and donor reports are downloadable. Applications for employment, volunteering, and student practicum's are also available. Donors may review completed projects, check for giving opportunities, print a donation form or may opt to donate on-line using a PayPal donation button.

“Being on-line and using a web-site with a simplified format and beneficial information is a powerful tool,” says Director of Mission Advancement, Sister Benjamin Merlotti, ASCJ. “Our plan is that the site be a useful resource for all of our audiences. This is just another extension that Clelian Heights offers its families, friends and supporters.”

**Our web-site address will not change. It is [www.clelianheights.org](http://www.clelianheights.org).**

## 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 2010-2011 Annual Report by sending in a donation as well.

Deadline for inclusion in annual report is June 30, 2011. 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 Lions Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Kiwanis Club: \_\_\_\_\_ Member of Rotary Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Knights of Columbus: Council # \_\_\_\_\_ 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: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

New Address or Phone Number Written Above

This gift is to be recorded as an Anonymous donation

I would also like to enclose a gift:

Payment Method:

Enclosed is my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check: Payable to Clelian Heights School

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa  MasterCard  Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

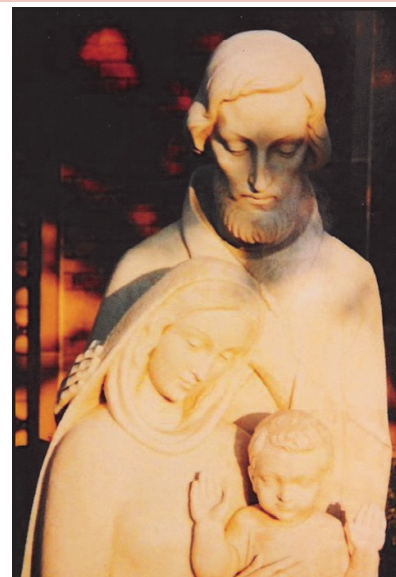
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## (Continued from Page 1) Words from our Executive Director

(Continued from page 1)

been expressed in so many ways over these past years in our mission at Clelian Heights and in the lives of our graduates. We as faculty and staff have witnessed the goodness and caring that each graduate has given as well as has been given. These gifts of reaching out to one another, being attentive to other classmates, recognizing other's need for help are indeed special gifts. For our students-our graduates-response to others reflects an understanding and compassion that reaches to the depths of their souls.

Let us congratulate our graduates, and let us help and support them as they continue to journey into young adulthood. Let us also learn from them a kindness and goodness that is their special gift from God. We support you graduates, we are grateful for the special part you have played in living the mission of caring and love at Clelian Heights as reflected in the love of the Holy Family, and we will continue to support you in love as you face the challenges before you. Congratulations and as we have taught you, we thank you for teaching us! God bless you!



# Clelian Heights

135 Clelian Heights Lane • Greensburg, PA 15601-6665

*A Family Affair*



*Building for the Future*

*"For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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15601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Don't Miss It!!**  
**13th Annual**  
**Wholey's**  
**Old Fashioned**  
**Chicken Barbecue**

**Sunday - November 7, 2010**  
**2:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

**Advanced Tickets:**  
**\$12.00 Adults**  
**\$6.00 Children (8 & Under)**  
**Otherwise, \$14.00 at the Door**

**For Info: 724-837-8120 ext. 124**

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR** **2010 & 2011 Events**

**13th Annual Wholey's Old Fashioned  
Chicken Barbecue**  
(November 7, 2010)  
Held at Clelian Heights

**10th Annual Night at the Races**  
(March 19, 2011)  
Harrison Room

**Clelian Heights 50th Anniversary**  
(May 20, 2011)  
Four Points at Sheraton Greensburg

**2011 Lottery  
Calendars**

**\$25.00  
Donation Each**

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