Clelian Heights’ 50th Anniversary celebrations began on March 27 with a Mass of thanksgiving for 50 years of service to the community and 150 years of Mother Clelia’s charismatic influence in the Church. Mother Clelia is the founding sister of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the community of sisters who own and operate Clelian Heights. It bears her name because this special mission was chosen on the 100th anniversary of her birth to honor her desire to always serve those whose need is often forgotten or ignored.

In 1961 there were no special services for those with intellectual disabilities. There were institutions. Clelian Heights would not be an institution. It would be a place offering education, training, patient and loving care, an opportunity for quality living and independence. This, given to all those who would enter its doors. It would offer residential accommodations during school sessions, if needed, but the focus would always be around the family and on building independent living and vocational skills through education so that the children could better fit into and enjoy their family and community environments; so that institutionalization would not be in their futures.
Fifty years ago Clelian Heights School for Exceptional Children opened its doors and began this special ministry to children with developmental disabilities. Located on a beautiful 44 acre site in a sprawling farm house with a barn converted into a two-room school house Clelian Heights had its humble beginning. There were 4 children with a staff of 4 sisters that first summer. But the need was so great that Clelian Heights enrollment grew quickly and within two years there was a waiting list for the school program. As a private facility, the early pioneers of Clelian relied upon the kindness of strangers who soon became friends. They made connections within and beyond the Greensburg community. A building fund was started so that by 1965 new state-of-the-art facilities were being constructed. Completed in 1968, the new facilities—school, vocational training area, residences for children and renovated the farm house for a residence for young women—were able to accommodate all those who wished to come.

Today, the Clelian Heights campus accommodates over 90 children and 80 adults with a staff of over 145. It includes a school for children ages 5 through 21; a therapeutic recreation center; an adult vocational workshop and training facility, the Clelian Center, which includes commercial laundry operations and a dog biscuit bakery; a residential facility for men, Chip’s House; and the Sweeney and Melenyzer apartment buildings for women.

On Sunday, March 27, Clelian Heights celebrated its 50th Anniversary and the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Mother Clelia Merloni with the Most Reverend Bishop Lawrence E. Brandt as the principal celebrant and homilist at a mass held in the recreation center. It was a beautiful liturgy with an entrance procession that included people from each aspect of life and ministry here at Clelian Heights as well as a Knights of Columbus honor guard. A reception in the main dining room followed with great food, fun and laughter as well as the sharing of years of happy memories. Thanks to each of you who are a part of our history, especially those who helped with the celebration and who guided the children in the decoration of the dining room—it was a unique display of art. We couldn’t do it without you!

(Continued on page 3)
On Friday, May 20, with nearly 300 friends, family members, and guests Clelian Heights celebrated its 50th Anniversary Heart-to-Heart Awards Banquet held at the Four Points by Sheraton in Greensburg.

It is out of the spirit of caring and appreciation for friends that the Heart-to-Heart Awards were established to honor friends and benefactors without whom Clelian Heights could not accomplish so much. Here is a sketch of each of those Heart-to-Heart Awardees honored that evening:

**Charles and Cecelia Decker** enrolled their son ‘Chip’ at Clelian in 1966. Quickly the Deckers became actively involved in life at Clelian Heights. Charles became the Scout Master of Clelian Heights’ Boy Scout Troop #413. Cecelia, a registered nurse, volunteered as an on-call school nurse. Together they also volunteered as drivers accompanying and caring for students on field trips and at all the Special Olympics events. After a brief illness in 1980, Chip went home to heaven joining his younger brother, Todd. In fulfilling Chip’s dream, the Decker’s, the sisters, and the whole community raised funds for Chip’s House - a place where Chip’s friends could stay at Clelian, live together, and work at the Clelian Center. Within two years that dream was a reality.

**Charles Demangone** met Sr. Celine, founding Director, through his brothers, Richard, a student and Lawrence, a teacher, at Clelian Heights. In 1972 as the school expanded, Charles joined the staff teaching the older students. As the curriculum developed, Charles took on a leadership role transitioning his students into vocational activities. In the late 70’s when the workshop was licensed as the Clelian Center, he served as a job coach taking care and personal interest in training the students he had grown to know and love so well. As the Clelian Center grew, Charles became production manager in charge of contracted work with local businesses and industries. His efforts to insure a pleasant and enjoyable work environment, safe and productive work habits, quality control and a high level of production made both happy and satisfied customers and employees. In total, Charles spent 34 years at Clelian Heights dedicating himself to making the quality of life ever better for those he taught. Currently, Charles resides in China teaching English to adults.

**Lawrence Demangone** began his teaching career at Clelian in 1970 by invitation of Sister Celine. As additional classrooms were needed Sr. Celine was very careful in her selection of staff. She was very impressed with the Demangone family’s involvement in education and the family values they lived. She readily welcomed Lawrence to the growing faculty. Lawrence has dedicated the past 41 years to this special ministry at Clelian Heights. He says that even though he was offered other jobs through the years, he would never trade them for what he was doing here at Clelian.
Heights. Lawrence began as teacher of the very youngest children. He showed tremendous patience and loving, gentle care for each child. For many years he also taught all the music classes which included annual Christmas and spring performances and, in the 80’s and 90’s, accompanied the Clelian Singers on the road. Lawrence is presently a training specialist in the Clelian Center.

Dennis “Dewey” and Alicia Harter came to Clelian Heights in January of 1992 to become the residential supervisors at Chip’s House, the group home for men. Since then, Clelian Heights has been their home and Chip’s House an inviting and happy place to live for the men under their care. Dewey and Alicia have made it a haven for the men, many of whom have been with them these past 19 years. In addition to working at Chip’s House, Dewey and Alicia have been involved in the Clelian Heights ministry in many ways and so have worn many ‘hats’ over the years. They say their experience here at Clelian challenges them to see and live with their hearts just as Antoine de Saint-Exupéry expressed in The Little Prince: “It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

Philip Masciantonio first became acquainted with Clelian Heights through mutual friends whose children attended the school. Phil began serving on the Advisory Board for Clelian Heights 14 years ago and for the last two years he was Board Chairperson. The experience he has gained by serving on several community and foundation boards has made his guidance an invaluable blessing for our board. Over the years Phil has developed a deep appreciation of the positive impact made by Clelian Heights on the local community.

Monsignor William Rathgeb’s ties with Clelian Heights began long before he was assigned to be the school’s chaplain in 1991. Rathgeb Dairy provided milk and even calves (one named Vincent De Paul) to Clelian Heights when it first opened in 1961. It was his father who first introduced him to the pioneer sisters who began the ministry. Monsignor Rathgeb became Clelian Heights’ chaplain 30 years later while serving in the diocesan Tribunal. He resided at Clelian for 13 years. Monsignor continues to serve on Clelian Heights’ Advisory Board. He says his experiences at Clelian Heights gave him the opportunity to become very close to God’s very special people including the sisters and the staff. He often returns to visit and celebrate Mass as time permits. He considers Clelian Heights to be one of the important treasures of the Diocese. “It’s daily ministry is to serve the needs of very special people whose love and appreciation is a real example to us of the beauty of Christian living.”

Carol Sue Rocker has been a friend of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and supporter of Clelian Heights since 1970. She has never met a stranger. Throughout her life, Carol Sue has been active in community organizations. She served in multiple roles for Jeannette District Memorial Hospital including Auxiliary president, Board of Directors member and Gift Shop volunteer. Carol Sue is currently a member of the Westmoreland County Community College Education Foundation Board and the Clelian Heights Advisory Board. Her unwavering support in spite of health issues has been a blessing over these many years.

Sam Wholey became familiar with Clelian Heights through his father, Robert Wholey. For several summers since 1975, at Sam’s suggestion, the Robert Wholey Co. sponsored a barbeque for the Clelian children and Sam and his brothers and sisters were on hand cooking the delicious barbeque chicken. As a student at Duquesne University, Sam participated in a special education practicum at Clelian. When the Clelian Heights’ Advisory Board was formed, Robert Wholey was invited as a member. Business obligations kept him from full participation and soon Sam was nominated to the Board. For 36 years Sam has been actively involved in Clelian’s ministry. His role on the Advisory Board Planned Giving Committee in the mid-90’s led to the Wholey’s Old-Fashioned Chicken Barbecue as an annual fund-raising event for the school and it has continued to be a successful family activity each year.

For more information about the Heart-to-Heart Banquet and our honorees see the news post on our web site.
Clelian Heights’ 2011 Prom held on May 26 at the Greensburg Country Club was a very special event for 37 Clelian Heights students and their guests. The young men looked especially handsome and the young women especially beautiful in their fine prom tux’s and elegant gowns.

The Prom theme, Island Romance, was beautifully depicted thanks to the help of parents and friends who were involved in the prom preparations, especially those on the decoration committee: Gwen Diddle, Jennifer Garcia, John Hunter, Amanda Montell, Catherine Petrosky, and Debbie Pologruto.

Highlight of Prom Night was the crowning, by Principal Sr. Charlene Celli, of the graduating Kings and Queens: Ronald Nowakowski, Jeremy Wolfe, Courtney Gaffney, and Kelly Hawkins.

Promenade Master of Ceremonies and D. J. was Brandon Datz. Photographer for the evening was Shannon Pologruto, and Videographer, Mariana Pillabaum. Special thanks to all the Prom sponsors for their support!

Visit our news post on www.clelianheights.org to see more pictures!
The “Friends of Clelian Heights Organization”, acronym-FOCHO, was started many years ago as a parent support group and evolved into an organization that includes the families of Clelian students and adults as well as their friends, family members, alumnae families, and community organizations. It’s mission as described by the current president, Patti DeStefano, is to “provide a support network to enhance services at Clelian Heights.” Today, FOCHO members hold a variety of fun and fund-raising events to benefit those who attend Clelian Heights. Each year, the group makes a large donation to the school for a specific need. This year, funds will be used to assist in purchasing new sports equipment.

FOCHO sponsors several annual activities: the Halloween Dance, the St. Patrick Day Dance, the Staff Appreciation Luncheon, and volunteer staffing of the school Library. Fund-raising for these activities includes Capri Sun juice pouch recycling, SCRIP gift card sales, Land’s End school uniform sales, a Scholastic Book sale, and Spaghetti Dinner.

“We welcome and encourage new members—friends and family who would be interested in joining us! An annual family membership is $5.00,” says Patti DeStefano. For more information contact Patti through the school at 724-837-8120 or via email at PattiD3@comcast.net.

www.clelianheights.org
Multi-sensory approaches to learning are used both in special education and mainstream classrooms and they are very effective.

Two programs used at Clelian Heights using the multi-sensory approach with much success in math and reading are TouchMath and Reading Mastery. Both of these multi-sensory programs combine pictures, sound, and touch to teach the early concepts of numbers, letters, and the results of combining them, such as numbers combined for a math problem, or letters combined into a word, or words into a sentence.

Since each of the children’s abilities vary, both of these programs allow the children to proceed at their own pace and skill level, which instills in them the confidence and understanding they need to successfully continue to the next level.

TouchMath combines verbal and auditory cues as the child and/or aide count along with tactile reinforcement. The child physically touches the corresponding spot on each number in a specific sequence. This multi-sensory approach helps students to grasp the concepts of number meaning and the skill of counting in a step-by-step process at their own pace.

As number recognition skills grow, the concepts of addition and subtraction are introduced with horizontal number sequences first, then vertical problems. “I added a fine sand paper to my circle and discs to give yet one more level to that tactile sensory stimulation for my students,” says teacher, Maryann Wiser. “My goal is to giving them quantity recognition for ‘two’, recognition that it’s more than a number, that it is ‘two’ cartons of milk or two boys playing.”

The goal is to develop each child’s ability to generalize their skills. Doing this throughout the school day as they move from subject to subject is the first step. Then carrying it out, using the ability of number recognition and understanding to function well at home and in the community, that is accomplishing the goal.

A partnering program also used at Clelian Heights is TouchMoney which uses the same multi-sensory touch fundamentals to teach students money concepts.

Each of our students has a written Individual Education Program Plan (IEP) which reflects educational decisions (goals) made as a team after assessing and identifying the individual student's disability and educational needs. The assessment helps the parents and teachers understand the student's strengths and disability and how that disability affects the learning process. The IEP specifies the student’s educational goals and the methods to reach them. Using the ToughMath program is written into the IEP.

The initial purchase of the TouchMath textbooks and educational materials were all secured through grants and donations by supporters of Clelian Heights.

Reading Mastery uses graphomene (picture) and phonomene (sound) to express reading concepts. Reading Mastery requires the full attention of the child as he/she receives a cue to “start” then sound out the word phonetically as his/her finger slides along the letters of the word. The child makes the sound of each letter as the finger touches the letter. Eventually, the letter sounds are linked in a more natural way into words and the words are then linked into sentences and sentences into paragraphs.

“This is especially good for students who may fidget or lose focus quickly,” says teacher Mary Beth Holleran. “The child waits on that cue to start and there is an immediate reward when they have completed sliding their finger and have read the word. The students are then eager to do the next word. It becomes almost like a game in which they are having fun but are truly learning to read.”
The therapeutic programs offered at Clelian Heights to the school students are part of their Individual Educational Plan (IEP) support services. These school-based services include speech therapy (highlighted in a previous issue of Shavings), physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Our therapists help the students to achieve daily tasks based upon everyday school activities.

There is one full-time physical therapist on staff, Lori Oddo, who earned a bachelor degree in biology from the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown and a master degree in Physical Therapy from Chatham University. Prior to joining our staff in 2007, she was employed with Excela Health and Ligonier Physical Therapy. Lori really enjoys her work and loves providing therapy for the Clelian children.

Mrs. Oddo believes that physical therapy provides a dual benefit for each child. The first benefit is the actual strengthening of muscles and refining of coordination skills but secondly, and more importantly, it also gives the student the confidence to interact with their friends. Allowing them the independence to enjoy activities with their peers.

“I learn something new everyday,” says Mrs. Oddo, “I’ve never worked at a place where there is so much love. You leave here everyday with a smile knowing in some way you’ve made a difference in their lives and they have made a difference in yours.”

The physical therapy area is large enough to provide space for a mat table, weight equipment, and plenty of open exercise space, even enough for an indoor swing! All of the equipment was donated by individuals and businesses, or was purchased through the fundraising efforts of organizations, or from proceeds from our school fundraisers such as the Annual Wholey’s Old Fashioned Chicken Barbecue or Night at the Races.

In occupational therapy, children may have to learn to put on their coat, hold a pencil, sit calmly at a desk, and a wide range of other skills. The occupational therapy area has also grown and been greatly enhanced thanks to the support of our many donors. A large swing was donated by Excela Health and a local pediatric clinic donated platform swings, a net swing, mat tables, and seating/positioning equipment. Several grants and a gift from the Westmoreland Rotary have enabled the purchase of ball chairs, weighted equipment, deep pressure equipment, fine motor resources and other equipment.

Currently, more funds are being raised to procure “Classroom Therapy Kits” at a cost of approximately $1,000 each. Kits contain a ball chair, theraputty, weighted blanket, twidget, animal squishes, hand-held massager, bean bag chair, training scissors, yuck-e-balls or similar therapeutic items. These can be used to assist students with issues related to calming, focus, attention, fine motor-skill coordination and sensory issues.

There is a full-time and a part-time occupational therapist on staff. Beth Rigby, full-time therapist, earned her bachelor degree in occupational therapy from Mt. Aloysius College. Prior to joining our staff this past school year, Ms. Rigby was employed at Centers for Rehab Services (UPMC) and Westmoreland Excela Health System.

Leslie Weinell, part-time occupational therapist, has an associate degree in occupational therapy from the Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce Campus. She earned her clinical hours in occupational therapy at Briarcliff Pavilion and Westmorland Manor, among other locations. Prior to her employment here she spent several years working in area daycare centers.

Our adult clients who are in need of any therapeutic services receive those through outside agencies at the discretion of their private physician. We have made our facility available to visiting therapists for the ease and convenience of our adults while at work at the Clelian Center or at one of our on-campus residences.
According to Beth Meier, she and her husband John were looking for a place for their kindergartner aged son, Matthew to attend school. “He was frustrated and I didn’t know where to turn,” said Mrs. Meier. Through an aide at his school they found out about Clelian Heights and visited. “I loved it immediately,” said his mother and got Matthew enrolled by October in 2000. “We haven’t looked back since! We knew we made the right choice.” She says, “the Clelian ‘family’ has always been welcoming to our family.” She told a story of the time when they adopted their daughter from China. “Matthew’s teacher invited me to bring our new daughter for a visit to Matthew’s classroom and introduce her to his friends there.” She said, “Matthew was a very proud big brother!”

“Matthew has learned so much at Clelian. He has made great progress. He was receiving private therapy (including physical, occupational and speech), but the fact that his therapy continued there has been a great benefit to him. Also, the swimming program has helped him immensely. He could barely swim when he started at Clelian and now is competing in swimming for Special Olympics,” said Mrs. Meier. In fact, Matthew just returned from Penn State, where he competed in the Pennsylvania State Games for the very first time in swimming. He won two medals, a silver and a gold! Matthew also competes in Special Olympics track and field competitions.

“In addition, the Transition to Work program has been wonderful for him. This year he worked at Caritas Christi and enjoyed it very much. He plays piano and he was asked to give a concert for the sisters there that he enjoyed very much,” said Mrs. Meier. “The Extended School Year (ESY) summer program has been very good for him, and we appreciate that it’s been offered.”

Recently, he became a member of the boys’ basketball team and attended the prom last year at Clelian. “Matthew’s godparents have attended most of his events at Clelian over the years, basketball games, the Prom last year, school pageants, etc, and his godfather always remarks about what a special place Clelian is,” said Mrs. Meier. “We couldn’t agree more!”

“Clelian Heights has improved the quality of life for our entire family, because my husband and I have such a level of comfort with Matthew attending school there,” said Mrs. Meier. “I put him on the bus and I don’t worry about him, because I am sending him to the nurturing environment of Clelian. He is very innocent and gentle, the loving and caring environment has suited Matthew so well. I feel a sense of peace when I enter there and I know he does too.”
A community organization that has been a long time supporter of Clelian Heights is the Knights of Columbus. Individual Councils from Armstrong, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties have been a part of the Clelian Mission almost since its founding fifty years ago. Since 1992, the Knights of Columbus have donated nearly $60,000 toward Clelian Heights’ projects.

Some of the Knights of Columbus Councils support our annual Christmas and Easter appeals, others are regular advertisers for our fundraising events like the Annual Wholey’s Old Fashioned Chicken Barbecue or the Night at the Races, and some hold their own special fund raising events for us. Others send Christmas cards with gifts enclosed for the children and adults each year.

The Youngwood Father Gilbert Straub Council #8452 has an annual archery shoot each spring in New Stanton with the proceeds going to Clelian Heights. Member, Bruce and wife, Diana Danko, co-chairs, secure donated prizes and recruit individuals who have the skill and enjoy the excitement of bow and arrow completion. Over the years, the Gilbert Straub Council has raised over $10,000 through various fund-raisers for projects such as upgrading classroom lighting and windows, improvement to the children’s dining room, renovation of the home economics area, improvements to Chip’s House and the Apartments.

Murrysville area Manordale Valley Council #4226 has, among other things, a horse race event as one of their fund-raisers to benefit Clelian. The event is well attended by those in the community and is very successful for the Knights. They have donated over $15,000 to assist in campus projects over the last sixteen years. Their gifts have been instrumental in our ability to replace classroom windows with energy efficient ones, to add cable access for the school internet project, to assist with the home economics room renovations, and to complete the security access project, just to name a few.

Many of the Councils are supportive year after year and some support us on alternating years or for specific events or projects as mentioned above. The Greensburg Diocesan Chapter includes twenty-four Knights of Columbus Councils and has donated over $6,000 through the efforts of their membership and several councils have made significant donations above and beyond the donations through the Diocesan Chapter.

Since 1992, the Greensburg Council #1480 has donated $5,000 and the Fr. Francis Hertzog Council #1381 of the New Kensington area, nearly $9,000. In addition, the Kiski Valley Council #3174 based in Vandergrift, nearly $1,400 and the Lucermines, Sacred Heart of Jesus area council #10960, nearly $2,000. Other chapters who support Clelian Heights include the Mon Valley Chapter with a fifteen council membership. The chapter has donated over $1,200 in the last few years. In addition, the St. Vincent Assembly #918, nearly $1,400.

In March, members of the Knights of Columbus served as the honor guard for our dual Eucharistic celebration of Clelian Heights’ 50th Anniversary and the 150th birthday anniversary of Mother Clelia Merloni, foundress of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For whom Clelian Heights was named.

(Continued on page 11)
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 Annual Report by sending in a donation as well.
Deadline for inclusion based on fiscal year beginning July 1 ending June 30.

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 Cleilian Heights: Please provide location of membership or other

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 for the Project Fund:

Payment Method:
□ Check: Payable to Cleilian Heights School      Enclosed is my gift of $________________________
  Check#:________________________  Signature:________________________
□ Visa      □ MasterCard      □ Discover
Card #:________________________________   Expiration Date:________________________

Advancement Office—Partners in our Mission

(Continued from page 10)

In May, Gerald G. Andrews, Knights of Columbus Pennsylvania State Treasurer, represented the Knights at Cleilian’s 50th Anniversary Heart-to-Heart Awards Banquet held at Four Points by Sheraton Greensburg which several Councils supported with advertising and donations.

The Knights are a very special part of our Cleilian ministry and we are so grateful to every Council for their support. We have hosted meetings here at Cleilian Heights where the Knights could tour our campus and have the opportunity to see what a wonderful impact their generosity in assisting with these improvements has made for our students. It also has given them a better awareness of our work and of future needs.

“The area Knights are a wonderful group of men who exemplify in an extraordinary way their founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity,” says Sister Benjamin, ASCJ, Cleilian Heights’ Director of Mission Advancement.

In our next issue of Shavings we will meet more partners in our mission.
Don’t Miss It!!

14th Annual Wholey’s Old Fashioned Chicken Barbecue

Sunday - September 11, 2011
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

2011 & 2012 Events

14th Annual Wholey’s Old Fashioned Chicken Barbecue
(September 11, 2011)
Held at Clelian Heights

11th Annual Night at the Races
(March 24, 2012)
Harrison Room

2011 Lottery Calendars
$25.00 Donation Each

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