

“The country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when the baby gets hold of a hammer”- Will Rogers

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Volume 5 • Issue 1 • January, 2013

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Mayor Tim DeGeeter Reflects On A Successful First Year

by Jeannie Roberts

When Tim DeGeeter meets with Parma residents one-on-one during his “Mayor’s In” meetings – this month’s will be from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Jan. 30, 2013 – he is reminded that, as mayor of the state’s seventh-largest city, a lot can be learned from staying connected with residents. Being accessible has been a priority during his first year in office; entering his second year, he is looking forward to continuing to reap the benefits of that enhanced communication.

“Staying connected with residents is so important,” DeGeeter says, “because, obviously, these are the people we serve. We want residents to understand that, working together, we really can do concrete things to move Parma forward.”

While there is still plenty of work left, DeGeeter has done a lot to move the city forward in his first year. Looking back, he feels a sense of challenge and hard work and satisfaction. “Parmatown has a buyer,” he says, “and that in itself is huge. When you look up the hill on Powers Road, the new library is coming up. We’re hoping that, in a few years, this area will be a vital energetic city center.”

While all that is happening, he is looking forward to the challenges he knows will keep coming to his office.

But consider, though, for a moment, some of the rookie



Mayor Tim DeGeeter works personally with residents to hear concerns and search for answers.

mayor’s first-year accomplishments:

The renewal of the police levy passed resoundingly, ensuring that training and equipment will be kept up to date and that Parma can look to increase its staffing. The Mayor continued the city’s “Walk-about” program, in which he, the Police Chief, Safety Director and Council members go door-to-door in each ward to talk personally with residents about potential safety concerns. Also, the “Meet on the Beat” program encourages uniformed police officers to make personal contact with the business owners on patrols.

Residents can register for recreation programs online or in person. Online registration offers residents a much more convenient way to sign up for recreational offerings.

Collaborative agreements with neighboring communities allowed Parma residents to share recreation facilities with

Seven Hills that give Parma residents discount rates at Seven Hills’ recreation center, and also for Parma and Parma Heights to share summer band concert venues. Additionally, the city is working collaboratively on several projects with Cuyahoga County, including IT services.

Social media efforts have increased residents’ ability to communicate with City Hall – the city’s Facebook page has more than doubled its community in the first year, and City Hall started a Twitter account - @ParmaMayor – that has nearly 250 followers.

Additionally, as the city’s contract with Republic Waste is expected to expire at the end of this month, a new contract, entered into with Republic Waste with the City of Berea, will accomplish some very exciting wins for Parma – garbage collection will remain free for residents; recycling is expected to rise in Parma, thus reducing the city’s tonnage to landfills; and the city could save about \$800,000 in a year when the city’s budget desperately needs it because of budget cuts out of Columbus.

In his first year, DeGeeter hosted four economic summit meetings with the business community. The feedback from those has been overwhelmingly positive, and the dialogue is something the mayor wants to continue. “Our business community understands that City Hall is here to help encourage a healthy local economy, which

serves us all,” DeGeeter said. “We think we have created a good connection with our business owners, and we are looking forward to maintaining a good relationship with them.”

That relationship was evident in a renewed agreement with OSG-Sterling Die, which granted a 46 percent rebate on payroll taxes paid to the city for the next 12 years. The agreement encourages expansion and jobs, which could trigger an even more lucrative agreement.

While keeping an eye on the business community,

the administration has also encouraged family friendly events, which have been well-received. Family movie night was a huge success, and new recreation programs aimed at tots have been extremely popular. Beautifying the city has been on the agenda as well, and streetscape improvements have included storefront and sidewalk upgrades.

“We live here and raise our families here,” DeGeeter said. “We all want the best for Parma, and that’s why we’re working hard every day. We are looking forward to our second year.”

Friends Of Parma Theater Begin First Of Many Fact Finding Tours



Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization Executive Director Jeff Ramsey displaying some of the history of the community to members of the Friends of the Parma Theater.

by Daniel P. McCarthy

On December 15, the Friends of the Parma Theater left from the parking lot of City Hall to travel on the first of many planned “fact finding missions” for the purpose of observing and learning from other groups and institutions, who in a similar fashion were formed in order to transform existing resources into valuable community assets. The first stop was at the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, with the focus on the restored Capitol Theatre in the Gordon Square Arts District. This beautiful space began as a silent movie

house in 1920. The Capitol Theatre has become an important anchor for the Gordon Square Arts District in the West 65th. and Detroit area, and the experience of revitalizing this area by acquiring, restoring, and re-purposing facilities to attract, house and showcase the Arts is what the Friends of the Parma Theater group came to learn about. We were not disappointed, as Jeff Ramsey, Executive Director, led us on a tour of the restored movie theater, complete with beautiful visual displays of historic photos and artifacts from

Recycle Your Christmas Lights!

by Mayor Mike Byrne

Parma Heights has a green solution to those piles of broken, tangled Christmas lights – recycle them at the Service Garage in the Greenbrier Commons on Saturday, January 12 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

“Residents can bring broken or unwanted strings of lights, electrical cords and power strips,” explained Building, Housing and Recycling Coordinator Michelle Teresi. “All of the material will be taken to the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District for recycling,” she added.

Residents with questions are asked to call the Parma Heights Service Department at 440-884-9607, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

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Parma Business

The President's Corner

by Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President

Very often residents and family members call me about natural gas rates. Over the years, deregulation in the natural gas industry in Ohio has led to a fair amount of competition and the creation of the Ohio Natural Gas Choice Program. As a result, residents are now faced with selecting a natural gas supplier and rate plan that meets their unique circumstances, including budgetary concerns, time constraints and acceptable level of risk.

To assist residents with selecting a natural gas supplier, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) has established a website where you can compare suppliers and their respective rate plans. To check out the site, simply visit www.puco.ohio.gov and click on the link for the "Apples to Apples Rate Charts." Once there you will want to click on the chart that describes all of the suppliers within your service area. Most Parma residents are within



Parma City Council President Sean P. Brennan

the Columbia Gas of Ohio's service area, therefore, you will want to click on this chart. Some residents may be within Dominion East Ohio's service area, thus, you will want to click on that link.

Once you are at the correct site, you will be shown how much Columbia or Dominion are charging, as well as their

competitors. In fact, you will also see the names of suppliers and their contact information, as well as the terms and conditions of each supplier's plans. As the site states, "As with all contracts, consumers should carefully read and understand all terms and conditions before signing any forms or agreeing to enroll with a supplier."

The Apples to Apples site also provides a "Self-Calculation Worksheet," which allows you to compare what you currently pay for natural gas with what you will pay if you choose to change suppliers. If you have further questions about natural gas choice or the Apples to Apples charts, you may contact the PUCO at 1-800-686-PUCO (7826).

The PUCO website also provides information regarding energy assistance programs whether you use electricity or natural gas to heat your home, including the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), the Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) and others. Growing up I recall a couple of winters when my mom received assistance from

HEAP to keep us warm. So, if you or anyone you know needs this type of assistance, please check it out and share the information.

I hope that you find my column helpful and informative. In fact, my hope is that the information will save you money on your natural gas bill. As always, if you have suggestions for future columns, please feel free to contact me at (440) 885-8091 or councilmanbrennan@sbcglobal.net. Stay warm this winter!

First Annual "Wine & Dine" Raises \$7500 For Maggie's Place Ohio

by Tricia Kuvinen

December 12, 2012 – The lovely setting provided by the College Club of Cleveland was the scene of "Wine & Dine", a new benefit event for Maggie's Place Ohio held on November 15. Delicious food and wine from Mia Bella Restaurant in Little Italy, live harp music provided by Jay Mecaskey, a silent auction of unique packages and over 70 guests rounded out the event, generating \$7500 for The Zechariah House.

Maggie's Place, a community of hospitality homes for expectant women, operates the Zechariah House in Parma. Maggie's Place provides safe housing, nourishing food, clothing, counseling, parenting preparation, employment and educational opportunities for pregnant women who may be alone, on the streets or facing other difficult



Erin Valencia, Greg Soltis and Christine Nowak

life circumstances. Women must be at least 18 years of age, non-drug using and pregnant to be admitted, and may stay up to a year after their child's birth.

The \$7500 raised from guests attending "Wine & Dine" will support the ongoing operation of the Zechariah House. Each mother in residence at Maggie's Place has the opportunity to complete life skills sessions such as budgeting, parenting, job searching and personal growth and discovery. Mothers can also increase their educational level while living at The Zechariah House, by completing their GED, job training or attending classes, positioning them for better job opportunities. At a time when Ohio's jobless rate persists at nearly 9% and the child poverty level in Cleveland stands at 21.6%, Maggie's Place is playing an important role in the lives of new

parents.

To learn more about Maggie's Place Ohio, visit www.maggiesplace.org, Like us on Facebook or call 440.866.2620 to arrange for a tour.

About Maggie's Place

Maggie's Place is a community of homes that provide hospitality for pregnant women who are alone or on the streets. We have a two-fold strategy in assisting mothers to grow. First, Maggie's Place provides for the immediate physical and emotional needs of our guests including shelter, food, clothing, and a supportive community. As such, we are a family and a community. In addition, Maggie's Place connects the mothers to the appropriate agencies and resources including prenatal care, health insurance, low-cost housing, and education programs so mothers can reach their short-term and long-term goals.



Harpist Jay Mecaskey



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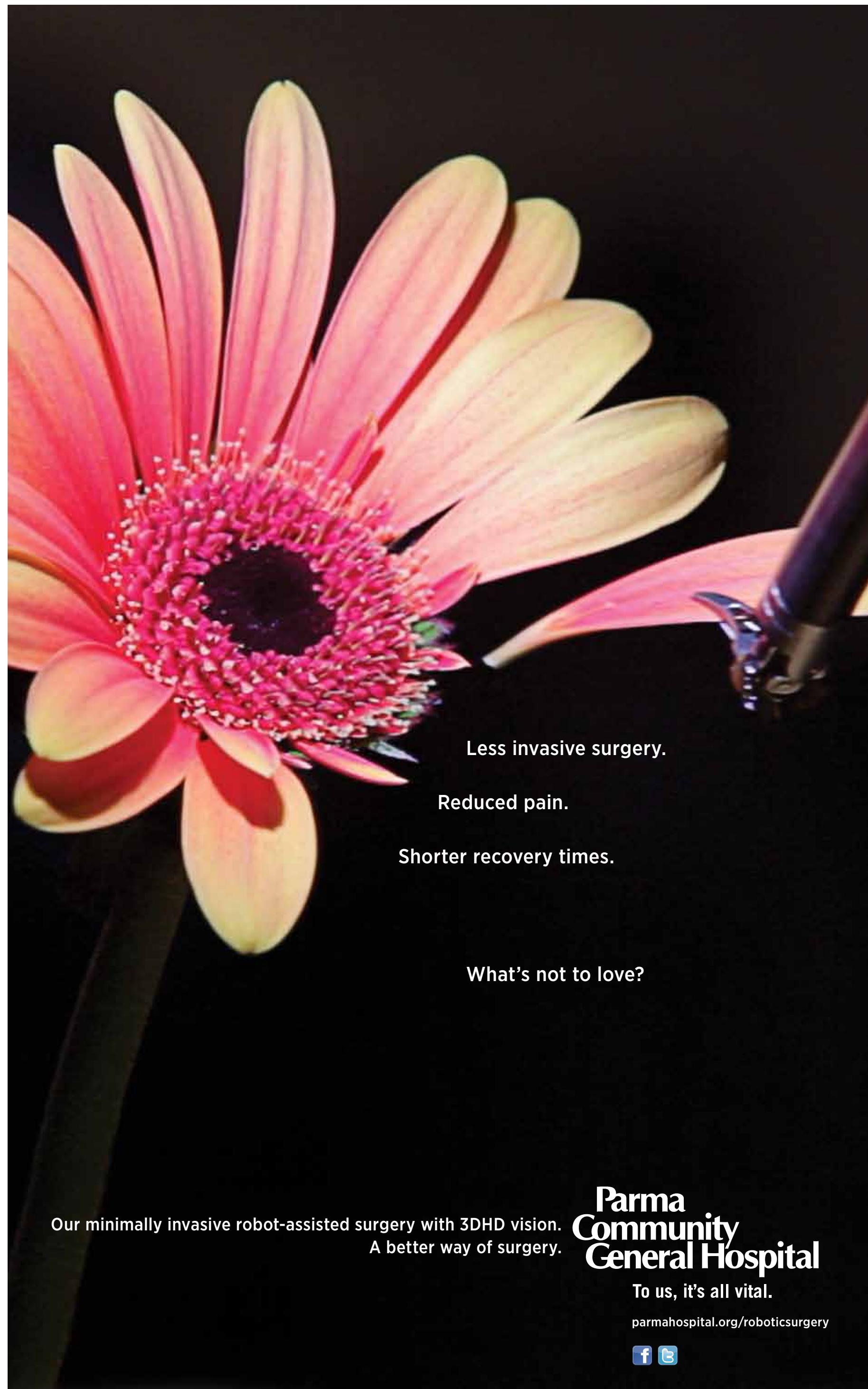
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Parma Health

Three New VPs Join Parma Hospital's Administrative Team

by CJ Sheppard

Parma Community General Hospital welcomes a new Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, a new Vice President of Physician Alignment and Business Development and a new Chief Nursing Officer.

David A. Cook, CPA, takes the helm from Barry L. Franklin, who retired after 30 years as Parma Hospital's Chief Financial Officer. Cook has 28 years of management experience, serving most recently as a VP of Finance for University Hospitals Health System's community hospitals. He has worked in financial management at hospitals throughout the region, from MetroHealth Medical Center in the 1980s and St. Luke's Medical Center in the '90s to 14 years in various financial capacities at EMH Regional Healthcare System in Elyria, where he served as Chief Financial Officer for four years.

Cook has a bachelor's degree in economics and accounting from Ohio Wesleyan University. He is mar-



David Cook

ried, with three children, and lives in Strongsville.

Michael Mainwaring, with 18 years of experience in healthcare administration, joins the administrative team to lead medical staff development, market assessment, practice valuation, strate-



Mike Mainwaring

gic planning and physician integration. He also has oversight of Marketing and Diagnostic Imaging and serves as chief operating officer of Powers Professional Corporation, the hospital's employed physician group, as well as PRL, its property corporation. Mainwaring previously served as a vice president of Business Development for the Cleveland Clinic and held leadership positions at Southwest General Health Center.

Mainwaring has a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Pittsburgh, with a concentration in Healthcare Administration. He received his undergraduate degree in Biology from Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pa. He is a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives and received the Regent's Award for the Young Executive of the year in 2000. He is also a member of the Healthcare Executive Association of Northeast Ohio and serves on the Board for the American Red Cross of Medina County. Mainwaring is a resident of Medina, where he lives with his wife and two sons.

Sharon K. Thomas, RN, BSN, MBA has joined the leadership team as the new Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), replacing the retiring Pamela Falasco. Thomas comes to Parma Hospital from St. Vincent Charity Hospital, where she spent 11 years as its CNO. During her tenure, she improved patient, nurs-



Sharon Thomas

ing and physician satisfaction scores, reduced Emergency Department diversion time and boosted patient safety metrics. She also served as acting CEO for a period during a medical leave for the administrator. Her nursing background, as both a manager and staff and charge nurse, is in critical care.

Thomas has a bachelor of science in nursing from Kent State University and an MBA/master's of Health Care Administration from Cleveland State University. She has been a clinical instructor in nursing program for both Bryant & Stratton College and ATS Institute of Technology. Thomas lives in North Olmsted with her daughter and two sons.

"I am excited by these excellent additions to my team and the Parma Hospital family," said Parma Hospital President & CEO Terrence G. Deis. "Dave comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience, having served as a finance executive in both an independent hospital environment as well as within a large regional health system. He will be a great asset to our organization.

"Mike has a long history of working with area independent physicians," Deis added. "We expect that he will make an immediate impact on our ability to align even more closely with our current high-quality medical staff, continued on page 5

New Outpatient Center Opens On Parma Hospital Campus

by CJ Sheppard

Parma Community General Hospital has opened a new Outpatient Center on its campus, with its own parking lot and convenient scheduling.

Located in the former SurgiCenter opposite Medical Arts Center 4, the Outpatient Center at 6305 Powers Blvd. combines a variety of outpatient services in a more accessible location instead of having to come to the main hospital for:

- Diagnostic Radiology
- Digital and 3D Tomosynthesis
- DEXA Bone Densitometry
- Ultrasound
- CT Scan
- PET Scan
- Outpatient Lab
- The Spine/Pain Program
- Preadmission Testing

For patient convenience, the Outpatient Center offers early morning, evening, and Saturday appointments. The Center's hours are Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and on Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"We know that our patients love the easy access and one-stop shopping for outpatient healthcare at our WellPointe Pavilion in Broadview Heights," said Kathi O'Connor, vice president of operations and outpatient services. "We brought that concept to our main campus, where patients can park close to the door, walk just a few steps into the lobby to be greeted and registered, and have all of their tests and procedures done in one area."

Appointments can be made by calling 440-743-2054.

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Asset Corner #37

by Gene Lovasy

January's Asset Category: Positive Identity Help young people bring out their best The way people feel about themselves can fluctuate with circumstances. Depending on what's happening, you may feel confident or unsure, optimistic or pessimistic, in control or not in control. What's important is what a person's identity is like most of the time. People who have a strong, positive sense of self maintain these qualities even when difficulties arise. They continue to be hopeful and optimistic, and believe they can make a difference.

Research shows the more young people have a sense of power, purpose, worth, and promise, the more likely they are to grow up healthy. Search Institute has identified these four assets in the Positive Identity category that are crucial for helping young people:

#37 Personal Power – Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." (42%*)

#38 Self-esteem – Young person reports having high self-esteem. (48%*)

#39 Sense of Purpose – Young person reports that "my life has purpose." (57%*)

#40 Positive View of Personal Future – Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. (72%*)

(* The percent of youth who experience or have this asset in their lives. Data based on an aggregate Search Institute sample of 148,189 students surveyed in 2003. The sample included students in 202 cities in 27 states.)

This month's column will focus on Asset #37 Personal Power:

Having personal power means understanding and accepting the things we can and can't control. You can find a new job, work out a conflict, or move to a new location if you choose. When young people feel empowered, they feel more confident to make their own choices—to get good grades, participate in activities they enjoy, and take action to find solutions to problems.

Here are the facts:
Young people are more likely to grow up healthy if they feel a sense of

control over the things that happen to them. A sense of personal power gives young people the confidence to embrace positive attitudes and behaviors, and walk away from risky situations and behaviors. Caring adults provide opportunities for young people to make their own decisions.

Tips for building this asset:
Young people who have a strong sense of their own power believe that when good things happen to them, they had some control over the outcome. If things go wrong, help young people focus on the positive steps they can take to remedy the situation. Help them see how they can make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

Also try this
In your home and family: Teach your child practical skills, such as how to change a tire, cook a meal, and sew on a button. Well-prepared young people are more likely to feel a sense of personal power.

In your neighborhood and community: Support young people's efforts to be industrious. For example, buy lemonade from their lemonade stand, read their homemade newspaper, and attend a play they put on in their garage.

In your school or youth program: Challenge the young people in your class or program to come up with a creative way to raise money for an underprivileged family or a charity in your area. Then put the plan into action. Serving others helps young people realize they can make a difference in the world, which gives them an enormous sense of personal power.

ASSET RELATED NEWS
I Don't forget about Community Ambassadors (www.ComAmb.org) & Parma Hts. Baptist Church collaborating to provide free homework help now for kids in grades K - 12. Assistance is being provided every Wednesday evening, from 7:15 to 8:15 pm, at the CA location in Parmatown Mall next to Payless Shoes. For additional information contact, Jeff Van Putten at 440.886.6100 or jeff@phbaptist.org.
I More news from Community Ambassadors.....In 2013, Community Ambassadors is launching HEROES, a

father-son initiative seeking to support men who desire to be the very best dad they can be. Throughout the year, Community Ambassadors will host monthly events that will give opportunity for fathers and sons to engage in fun, free activities (like paper airplane contests) that encourage relationship and growth. The first HEROES event will be held on Friday, January 18th, from 7:00 - 8:30 PM at Parmatown Mall. Also, Community Ambassadors will be holding a Ministerial Round Table at the Parma Area Family Collaborative offices on Wednesday, February 6, at 8:30 AM. These meetings serve to engage area church leaders in an effort to dialogue on community issues and to collaborate resources that may effectively address the community's most pressing needs.

I A free youth leadership development program is being conducted out of the Parma Area Family Collaborative by our local MyCom staff representatives. Meetings are currently taking place from 3 to 5:00 p.m., every Tuesday & Thursday at Parma Sr. H.S. Call Jean Micklewright at 440.336.0275 or Kathy Hall at 440.842.7043 for details.

I Visiting this web page, <http://www.cuyahogalibrary.org/ProgramGuides.aspx> will give you links to every library branches' calendar and printable Winter Quarter Program Guide. The County Library has embraced Developmental Assets and is a truly wonderful resource for our families. Give 'em a visit.

Share your asset building ideas and/or thoughts about the developmental asset concept by visiting the "asset corner" facebook page. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Visit www2.parmacityschools.org/assets or www.search-institute.org/assets for more information about the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them. Or go here <http://www.parentfurther.com/> for great asset-based parenting tips, tricks, activities and ideas.

Joint Replacement, Major Weight Loss Among Solutions For Healthy New Year

by CJ Sheppard

Start the new year focusing on good health. Parma Hospital has upcoming sessions for individuals contemplating joint replacement surgery, as well as for those seeking to lose weight, either through metabolic weight loss or bariatric surgery.

Joint Camp ensures optimal outcomes for anyone considering joint replacement surgery, such as a total hip, knee or shoulder replacement, with one of the highly skilled orthopedic surgeons at Parma Hospital.

New Outpatient Center Opens On Parma Hospital Campus

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while also recruiting additional quality physicians."

Finally, on the most recent addition of a new Chief Nursing Officer, Deis said: "Sharon is an experienced nurse executive with a strong reputation for improving the patient experience and employee engagement. We expect she will have an immediate dramatic and positive effect on our organization and our community."

Certified by the Joint Commission, the Joint Camp team works with patients in advance of surgery to ensure that they are prepared for the road ahead. Call 440-743-4024 to register for sessions on January 7 or 21, from 2 to 4 p.m. in Parma Hospital's Auditorium. Joint Camp also will be held on February 4 and 18 and March 4 and 18.

For those looking for a physician-supervised weight loss program with proven results, look no further than the Metabolic Clinic at Parma Hospital. New Direction gives you the tools to manage weight loss and carve out a healthier future. Attend an orientation class on January 2 or February 6 at the Metabolic Clinic, MAC 2, Suite 303. Call 440-743-2995 for more information.

For people whose dieting and exercise activities have not effectively managed their excess weight, bariatric surgery provides an effective and proven method for weight loss when other methods have failed. Come to a free informative program, Weight Loss Solutions, on either January 15 or February 19 at 7 p.m. in Parma Hospital's Auditorium. Register by calling 440-743-2900.

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Inspiration

Celebrate The New Year With Mary

by Kathryn Yates

For some, nothing rings more hol- lowly than the ringing in of a new year. Who hasn't grappled with the meaning of yet another cork-popping, ball-drop- ping, Cinderella hour Yippee! all to mark the passage of time? Even more perplexing is the next day's celebration in which, again, nothing has occurred except more passage of time in the framework of "new time" – an excellent day to do absolutely nothing construc- tive, like watch football. The pagan god Janus is often referred to at this time because he had two heads enabling him to see both the past and the future and the first calendar month of the New Year was named after him. And indeed, that is what many attempt to do in our soci- ety today. Built into this cork-popping, football watching, goodie-eating spell of leisure and kissing, psychics will be called upon to give their projections, as well as the economists, and the old year will be recapped in all its awfulness and glory. We are reminded of Janus in our



Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Charles Borromeo Parish

culture more than any Christian would like to admit. But there is more to this time of year than the accumulation of traditions, steeped in entertainment and pleasure. There is, we intellectual- ize, the reason for the season, and that

season doesn't end the day after Christ- mas with an Americanized version of Boxing Day, or even on January 2nd, when many return to work.

Consider Liturgical time as an alternative to our own secular and rather banal ordinary time and its attendant traditions. Beginning in Advent, the Blessed Virgin becomes endangered with impending ston- ing when she reveals her pregnancy to Joseph who then sought a quiet divorce from his engagement. Many Catholics today still confuse the feast day of the Immaculate Conception on Decem- ber the 8th as the day commemorating Mary's conception of Jesus, which it is not. It is the Immaculate Conception of Mary by her mother, St. Anne, that is actually celebrated, a distinctly Catho- lic belief. As a side note, one priest stated recently: There is no such thing as an "immaculate reception" – there is nothing clean about catching a pig's skin covered in blood, sweat, and dirt!

Tragedy follows the glory of Christ's

birth, with the evil King Herod the First who sought to protect his dynasty against any future coups. In secular time, he seemed to succeed. The Hero- dian dynasty reigned for quite a while (34 BCE to 92 CE) despite heinous acts of bloodshed that included the killings of his wife and two sons - King Herod himself having died a horrible death in 4 BCE covered in worms from what scholars believed to be scabies. Suc- ceeded by three sons who ruled his kingdom as a tetrarchy, it is thought that his son, Herod Antipas, was the ruler of Galilee at the time of Christ's teach- ing and death. The dynasty ended with the death of Herod's great-grandson, Agrippa II, in 92 CE.

Having been elected to the position of "King of the Jews" by the Roman Sen- ate in 39 to 40 BC, Herod (a self-styled Jew, not considered to be a true Jew by the Pharisaic tradition) ordered the kill- ing of all male infants under the age of two in the little town of Bethlehem upon hearing through the Magi that another "King of the Jews" was to be born in his kingdom. Disputed by historians today, as Josephus Flavius the historian didn't mention the massacre in his accounts, the reality of the event is preserved in Matthew's writings and the number murdered is placed at approximately twenty infants in the city of Bethlehem with more in the surrounding vicinity. The Catholic Church commemorates this day as the Feast of the Holy Inno- cents on December 28th.

This year, one cannot help but to draw parallels of the massacre of twenty children gunned down in Sandy Hook, Connecticut on December 14th, 2012 with that of the Holy Innocents. The evil of King Herod seems to surface in the acts of a lone gunman over 2000 years later. The intercession of the Blessed Virgin is needed more than ever in our culture. On May 13, 1846, the third ses- sion of the Sixth Provincial Council held in Baltimore decreed the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, to be the Patroness of the United States of America. On May 8th, 2012, Cath- olic churches in America celebrated her Immaculate Conception, though church attendance did not reflect the numbers of registered Catholics. It was a Holy Day of Obligation, as is New Year's Day – the feast of the Solemnity of Mary celebrated every January 1st.

In Liturgical time, the Christmas Season begins with the first Sunday in Advent, a time of trial and tribulation as witnessed through the events surround- ing the Nativity, culminates in the birth of Christ on December 25th, and ends with the Feast of the Three Kings, usu- ally celebrated January 6th. There are three Holy Days of Obligation in this period, a very intense and rich period of Catholic teaching and a time for intense prayer as well. Liturgical time is some- thing to reflect on – it puts our history into perspective, and with practice, grounds us in our faith, giving meaning to time. Without it, you may as well be a football, or a glittery ball that is watched world-wide as it descends at the stroke of midnight...both are as hollow as the word "holiday" suggests.

Empowerment Rally

by Jennifer Smolinski

Midtown Towers Apartments with Forest City Enterprises hosted and Empowerment Rally on Saturday, November 17, 2012. This rally was held to empower our community to speak

up against bullying and drugs and encourage involvement in positive pro- grams around the community.

The event was held at the new Parma Area Family Collaborative build- ing which is the old Hanna Elementary

School. With much help from the com- munity we were able to raise \$876.00 which was donated to Robby's Voice.

Robby's Voice is a Non-profit organization designed to educate the public on drug awareness and preven- tion. <http://www.robbyvoice.com/>

This event also aided All Faiths Pantry <http://allfaithspantry.org/> and Cub Scout Pack 24 with canned food and peanut butter totaling 364 items.

Activities included: bracelet mak- ing with B-W University, fingerprinting and Photo I.D.'s for the children with Parma Auxiliary Police, Cub Scouts practiced knot tying with attendees, and COX Communication was our DJ.

Sponsors and Supporters included: ABC Rental, ABLE, Adams Building Company, Advanced Asphalt Paving, Inc., All Faiths Pantry, All Trade Con- tracting Inc., American International Construction, Baldwin-Wallace Uni- versity Public Relations Center, Carpet Advantage, Characters Sports Bar and Grill, Community Business Schools Part- nership, COX Communications, Inc., Cub Scout Pack 24, Cuyahoga Public Library, Drug Awareness & Prevention, For Rent Media Solutions, Franco's Pizza, Parma Area Family Collaborative, Parma City Schools, Parma Auxiliary Police, Parma Fire, Parma Police Department, Phil Vedda & Sons, Robby's Voice, Stan- cato's, State Farm Insurance, Subway, 107.3 The Wave, West Creek Preservation & 40 Developmental Assets.

Midtown would like to thank all of the supporters and sponsors who aided in preparation and execution of the event. With your help we had over 100 attend- ees at the Empowerment Rally. We are pleased to call it a success. This event was open to the public and we will continue to make improvements for next year's rally. We look forward to seeing you next year and continuing our movement against drugs and bullying year round.

What's Right? What's Wrong?

by Daniel Taddeo

Relationships: Relationships are connections between people, places, and things and how they relate to one another. They can be voluntary or involuntary, positive or negative, con- structive or destructive.

There are good relationships but no perfect ones because there are no per- fect people. The challenge is to nurture the best relationships possible with fam- ily members, friends and coworkers.

I want to focus here on people rela- tionships that are voluntary, positive and constructive. What are the ingredi- ents of such relationships? What follows is my attempt to answer this question.

Six guiding principles in estab- lishing healthy relationships appear in the Bible in the fourth chapter of Phi- lippians, where we are encouraged to meditate on any virtue and anything praiseworthy, including the follow- ing: whatever things are true (accurate, factual, genuine); noble (honorable, sincere, trustworthy); just (honest, impartial, lawful); pure (moral, sin- less, uncorrupted); lovely (enjoyable,

loving, pleasing); and of good report (beneficial, prudent, suitable).

Avoiding the negative aspects of conduct is a great enhancement to building meaningful relationships. In Ephesians 4:31-32 we read, "Let all bit- terness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, ten- derhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Should we not adhere to this instruction, we not only hurt ourselves and others, but also we displease God.

As important as it is to have a lov- ing relationship with people, it is even more critical that every individual experience a personal relationship with the God of Scripture. Better to have a personal relationship with Him than to attend church and not have it. Of course, having it and attending church would be even more beneficial.

Cultivating voluntary, positive, constructive personal relationships helps make the impossible possible. Life is all about relationships.

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Parma's City Beat

Worldstock's City Beat

by Wayne Mesker

Due to my interest & involvement in community issues, politics & larger social issues, I have three recent events and an important “Initiative” to report about, so welcome to Worldstock's City Beat.

Steve Gall

On Sunday, Dec. 9th , I attended the swearing-in ceremony for Steven E. Gall as Judge of the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court , held in the Council Chambers at Parma City Hall.

Cited as being calm and steadfast in his handling of pressure and high profile cases during his career as a prosecutor, Judge Gall was described by friends & colleagues as a dedicated, caring and compassionate individual who will be an asset to the Court. After taking the oath of office, he was visibly moved to tears as he spoke about the campaign and the election, thanking all that had a hand in his victor .

Friends of Parma Theater

On Saturday, Dec. 15th, I rode a bus to the Gordon Square Arts District in Cleveland with our citizens committee from Friends Of Parma Theater to tour their Capitol Theatre and to have a conversation with Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization executive director Jeff Ramsey.

Mr. Ramsey was very hospitable and helpful as he welcomed our group into his offices in the renovated Gordon Square Arcade building. He did his best to answer all of our questions and offer advice on where to seek further help and answers. Thanks to Mr. Ramsey and thanks to Ward 2 Councilwoman Debbie Lime for arranging the trip and meeting .

You can keep up with Friends Of Parma Theater on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfParmaTheater> or on our developing website, www.friendsofparmatheater.com.

Free Adult Education Classes

by Valerie Jerome

GED Preparatory Classes

Employment Connection - Brookpark
11699 Brookpark Road, Parma
Orientation: 8:30 a.m.,
second Thursday of each month
Class: 9 a.m. – Noon or 1– 4 p.m.,
Tuesday and Friday

GED-IT:
Wednesday, 1 – 3:30 p.m.
Valley Forge High School, 9999 Independence Blvd., Parma Heights
Orientation: 6:30 p.m.,
Tuesday, January 8
Class: 6:30 – 9 p.m., Tuesday
and Thursday

GED-IT:
Wednesday, 6:30 – 9 p.m.,
Tri-C Western Campus C118
11000 Pleasant Valley Road, Parma,
Orientation: 9 a.m.,
Saturday, January 12
Class: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Saturday
Cuyahoga County Library
Parma-South Branch



Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Steven Gall stands with those whom he credits with helping him to persuade voters to vote him into office in November of 2012.

Parma City Council

On Monday, Dec. 17th , I attended the Parma City Council meeting in order to hear from Roy Williams. Roy is the V.P. of new Parmatown Mall owners, Phillips Edison. Although they are headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, the company also has Ohio offices in Cincinnati. Mr. Williams himself is an Ohioan, having grown up in Rootstown. The company is very excited to be here and looking forward to being an "active" partner in our community. A future interview with Mr. Williams will be forthcoming.

We also were treated to an informative presentation by Frank Greenland, who is the Director of Watershed Programs of Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. Mr. Greenland answered questions by Councilwomen Mary Galinas, Debbie Lime and Council President Sean Brennan.

"One Heartbeat" ROCKS (Reaching Our Children with Kindness & Sensitivity)

Just after the tragedy in Chardon last year, an idea came to me to enlist people to form a plan:

"One Heartbeat" ROCKS (Reaching Our Children with Kindness & Sensitivity)

7335 Ridge Road, Parma
Orientation: 9:30 a.m., Monday,
January 14
Class: 9:30 a.m. – noon, Monday and
Wednesday
ESOL Classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
Employment Connection - Brookpark
11699 Brookpark Road, Parma
Orientation: 1 p.m., second Thursday
of each month
Class: Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m.
– Noon or 1 – 4 p.m.
Valley Forge High School
9999 Independence Blvd.,
Parma Heights, OH 44130
Orientation: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday,
January 8
Class: 6:30-9 p.m., Tuesday
and Thursday

ESOL-IT
Class: 6:30 – 9 p.m., Wednesday
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Parma-Snow Branch
1700 Snow Road, Parma

A return to the value system "our" parents, teachers and society taught us in the 1950s and '60s.

This initiative would encompass



Common Pleas Judge Steven Gall stands with former Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason.

Changes Coming To GED Test In 2014

by Valerie Jerome

There are big changes coming to the GED (General Educational Development) test in 2014: the price is set to triple in cost from \$40 to \$120; the test will be computer-based and will

Orientation: 9 a.m., Monday,
January 14
Class: 9-11:30 a.m., Monday
and Friday
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Parma-South Branch
7335 Ridge Road, Parma, OH 44129
Orientation: Noon, Monday,
January 14
Class: Noon-2:30 p.m., Monday
and Wednesday
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Parma Heights Branch
6206 Pearl Road, Parma Heights,
Orientation: 9:30 a.m., Tuesday,
January 15
Class: 9:30 a.m. –noon, Tuesday
and Thursday
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Parma-Ridge Branch
5850 Ridge Road, Parma, OH 44129
Orientation: Call 440-885-8797

ESOL-IT:
9:30 a.m. – Noon, Wednesday
Students must attend an orientation

education, counseling and outreach to all school-age children and to "at-risk" youth. It would include members of government, law enforcement, media, educators, social work/ psychology and the community. I had an initial meeting with State Rep. Nick J. Celebrezze early last March and he promised to help, but that's as far as we got. Children "live what they learn" and we need to Reach Our Children now before it's too late.

It's going to take a village to "Reach Our Children." I'm hoping that we will be able to start by holding a “Community Forum” in Parma sometime in the near future to initiate a dialogue between committed individuals to begin formulating a plan.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/230083400457761/>

no longer be offered on paper. Also, the format is to change from multiple choice to fill-in-the-blank, short answer and extended response questions.

But, that’s not all. The current test is scheduled to end on December 31, 2013. If the test-taker has not passed one or more parts of the test, beginning January 1, 2014, the examinee will need to take the entire new test. Prior scores will not be counted.

The Parma City Schools Adult Education Services Department offers free test preparation classes at 20 sites located throughout Greater Cleveland.

In Parma and Parma Heights, classes are held at Cuyahoga Community College Western Campus, Valley Forge High School and Cuyahoga County Library Parma-South Branch. Students must attend an orientation session to register for class.

For more class and test information, please visit the Adult Education Department at www.parmacityschools.org or call 440-885-8797.

to register for class. For more information, please visit Adult Education Services at parmacityschools.org or call 440-885-8797.

Perspective

Part One

The Elephant In The Room (That Everyone Ignores)

by Lee Kamps

I am sure that most people have heard that expression used to describe a problem or an issue that seems large and difficult to face or solve as “an elephant in the room”. That describes the situation involving Medicaid.

Medicaid is the federal and state

health insurance program designed to provide the poor and indigent with medical care. It was passed at the same time as Medicare on July 30 1965. Like Medicare, Medicaid became effective on July 1 1966. Unlike Medicare which is earned by participation in the work force, Medicaid is a true entitlement.

That means that whoever meets the eligibility criteria can qualify for Medicaid. While Medicare is an insurance program, Medicaid is a welfare program that is funded completely from general revenues. Unlike Medicare which is administered by the Social Security Administration and has uni-

form eligibility and benefits all across the nation; Medicaid is jointly administered and funded by the federal government and the individual states. Therefore Medicaid eligibility as well as benefits can vary considerably among the individual states.

During the next year, there will be a lot of talk and discussion on the role of Medicaid as the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) takes effect on January 1 2014. A key provision of the act is the expansion of Medicaid to cover more people, especially those who are uninsured. Right now in order to qualify for Medicaid, one must be either over age 65, totally and permanently disabled, legally blind, pregnant, caring for dependent children or a child under age 18 and have income and resources below the standard for eligibility.

This leaves out many single adults as well as adults who do not have minor children since if they are not disabled, not legally blind or under age 65; at the present those individuals cannot qualify for Medicaid no matter how low their income may be. In addition the Medicaid eligibility limit of income for a single adult in Ohio is only \$631 per month (67% of the federal poverty level).

In 2014 under the ACA, the requirement for eligibility for Medicaid will be based only on income and resources. The income limit for Medicaid eligibility will be increased to 133% of the federal poverty level. For a single adult, that translates to a monthly income under \$1264 per month, literally a doubling of the income level for Medicaid eligibility right now in Ohio. Obviously this increase in the income for Medicaid eligibility will make many more people eligible for Medicaid. This will increase the amount of money necessary to cover all those people who will be on Medicaid.

However under the ACA, the federal government will pick up 100% of the cost to the states of expanding the Medicaid eligibility initially. But the federal share will decrease gradually until the states will be picking up more of the costs by 2018.

When the Supreme Court made its decision upholding the ACA, the decision left it up to the states whether or not to go along with the Medicaid expansion under the act. Currently Ohio has not yet made any decision whether or not to go along with the Medicaid expansion. If Ohio does not go along with the Medicaid expansion, it stands to lose millions of federal dollars that would be available to fund the Medicaid program as well as having more of its citizens uninsured. Uninsured people cause health care costs for the rest of us to increase since hospitals and medical practices pass through those costs for uncompensated care to those who have the ability to pay.

The source for the information is through the official Medicaid website <http://www.medicaid.gov/AffordableCareAct/Affordable-Care-Act.html> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicaid>.

Next month I will have more to say about how Medicaid dollars are being spent in part two.

Forget Diamonds, Santa Baby-- A Decent Job Is This Girl's Best Friend

by Brigitte Gerard

I don't share the common “gimme” mentality, which rewards lots of people who don't produce much with their lives, except for illegitimate children. I don't want government assistance; I want a stable, full-time job that pays a living wage. I want independence, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and confidence. They are the mark of free and strong people, who exhibit and exercise them.

Government assistance in most cases isn't a realistic way to cultivate these characteristics. It's more likely that people on assistance become dissatisfied, demanding, lazy, envious, jealous and covetous, and that they stay on assistance as a way of life for generations. Sure, some people break free of that, but they're rare.

I want a job that enhances my autonomy. Anyone remember that word? I'm an independent, colorful woman, but working several part time jobs is exhausting and leaves very little time for taking care of a household, spending time with my son and our friends and engaging my self-reliance and resourcefulness. It saps my confidence and makes it hard for me to grab hold of personal and professional opportunities I would otherwise jump on.

If I don't work, I can't pay my rent.

So I'm not too sympathetic to people who rely on the government to pay theirs, feed their kids for them, give them a phone and free service, free medical care, especially when those people display an entitled attitude, aren't looking for a job and are producing more children they can't support. Yeah, I know a lot of those people get a job because they can't read, write or speak English properly or do basic math. The government pays for free training for those people to acquire those skills so they can get a job, even though the government had already provided a free education to them as children to get those skills.

Our government is like Santa Claus: generous (and paternalistic, another forgotten word) with its gifts. And yes, gifts are things that are not earned. These governmental gifts are not unlike the presents a kept woman (yet another archaic term) receives from a man with whom she has a secret relationship.

Ho, ho, ho, indeed.

Our government is subsidizing and perpetuating poverty. At the same time, it's punishing people who create jobs and business opportunities. These are the people who can help me get back into the middle class, where work is valued not only for its own sake, but

for the dignity, comfort and status people achieve by working. Washington wants to punish business people with a confiscatory tax code, crippling the very people who can help me help myself remain independent and free.

Jacqueline Novogratz is a woman who understands how to help people help themselves. She is the founder and CEO of Acumen Fund, which helps people in the developing world rise above poverty by making small loans to them for starting businesses, enabling them to provide goods and services and create wealth with and for each other. This isn't a freebie. Acumen Fund requires sustainable business plans and repayment schedules from its loan recipients. Using market oriented approaches (capitalism, in other words), the fund has created more than 20,000 jobs and has changed lives in Africa and Asia, especially for women.

Here in America, we have decades of housing projects, illiteracy, innumeracy, illegitimacy, unemployment, hopelessness, anger and envy. Thank, but no thanks, Santa. I'd rather have a decent job than what you're offering.

Gimmee liberty or gimmee death.

Thank You!

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Perspective

Why Meat, Animal Product Consumption Causes Most Suffering Worldwide

by Lucy Mckernan

No vegan apologist am I!

It's time to say it like it is: meat and other animal products (eggs, all dairy, fish) is THE LEADING CAUSE OF SUFFERING ON THIS, MY, OUR PLANET. Here's why:

1) In the U.S. alone, 10 billion animals suffer and die horribly annually for food consumption; the numbers worldwide are staggering. If it's true that "the moral progress of a nation can be judged by the way it treats its animals," we're going to be screwed; oh, wait, we already are.

2) It has been cross-culturally established and confirmed: CO2 emissions/greenhouse gases from livestock are TWENTY-FIVE TIMES greater than all other sources; and animal farming now officially is considered to be the leading cause of CO2 emissions; the only way around this is a plant-based, vegan diet.

3) The amount of fresh water and crops to feed livestock used for meat far exceeds that required to feed the world, and offer the over 1B without water the H2O they need for health and safety. Human starvation and waterborne disease would be eliminated if everyone practiced vegan diet.

4) Soil and crops are completely degraded around the world for soy, corn, etc. crops to feed livestock.

5) Eating meat may well be one of the reasons for so many conflicts over "illegal" immigrants in America. The film Fast Food Nation spells it out: immigrants work in the most dangerous, deadly jobs anywhere, and are routinely exploited by our government for meat packing and slaughtering.

6) Meat and other animal products consumption exacerbate the wealth gap worldwide.

7) Fish is no longer safe, not even fish harvested in deep, cold ocean waters because of mercury and other contaminants. Over-harvesting of fish in the Pacific Northwest caused a moratorium there on the market.

8) All living creatures suffer because flora worldwide has declined precipitously; our rainforests have been clear cut to grow livestock feed. Birds are at least 10 percent declined. We've never seen this fast a rate of species extinction at any time in history. Birds, deer, fish and all that creeps, flies and swims suffer, and so will we; so are we.

9) The web of life means that all we do comes back to us. If you choose to eat meat and ignore the plight of other humans and animals on this planet, you are no better than the 1% ultra rich who lords it over the rest of us financially, because you are doing greater harm.

10) Karma is a cross-cultural belief and phenomenon; you cannot

escape Karma. If you purchase products made from animals, or engage in activities that harm them, including but not limited to: eggs, dairy, meat, fur, gelatin, leather, fish, medical and/or cosmetics tested on animals, wool, silk, feathers of any kind, pay to go to circuses, water "sport" shows with sea creatures, any zoo or show of any kind that uses or exploits animals, you have harmed them, and you cannot hope to escape harm unless you now go vegan.

11) Eating a plant-based diet single-handedly do away with coronary heart disease, diabetes, many forms of cancer, premature death, depression and anxiety, and a host of other medical conditions plaguing those practicing the western diet which

includes animal products.

The only thing you'll have to sacrifice? The myth that eating animal products – perpetuated by their producers – is somehow healthier, when mounting, overwhelming evidence continues to turn up everywhere you look. Isn't it ironic to think that all this untold suffering was for nothing? No one needs meat, eggs or dairy. If you would like to learn the truth about animal products, I recommend the film Forks Over Knives or Peaceable Kingdom as well as Peaceable Kingdom: The Journey Home. Another great source for medical health via a vegan diet would have to be any issue of Physicians for Responsible Medicine magazine.

Doro Pesch: 30 Years & Still Banging Heads

by Bryan N Griffin Jr

2013 will mark the 30th anniversary of German metal vocalist Doro Pesch. During her tenure, she has performed with the band, Warlock (Personally, one of my all-time favorite metal bands). It started in 1983 with BURNING THE WITCHES. Three other albums followed, which were HELLBOUND, TRUE AS STEEL, and TRIUMPH AND AGONY. After 1988, she broke up and went on her own, and called her act, DORO.

Doro is one of the pioneers of female driven heavy metal, along with Lita Ford, former guitarist of an all-female hard rock group, called The Runaways (featuring Joan Jett). Unlike Ford, though, Doro lasted the longest. Since that time, Doro has inspired other women to get into the heavy metal music business. She is loved by many all over the world with such songs as Fur Immer, All We Are, and many others. Doro has performed at the world famous Wacken Open Air Festival in Germany numerous times.

In November of last year, Doro put out her most recent album, RAISE YOUR FIRST. Pardon my German,



and backing vocals. Joe Taylor plays guitars and back up vocals. Johnny Dee does drums. Oliver Politai performs on keyboards and guitars. Bas Maas (seriously, that is his real name) also shreds on the axe, meaning he plays guitar.

Doro will be performing in Cleveland at Peabody's on Sunday, February 10th, with another female led heavy metal band, called Sister Sin, a Swedish group featuring Liv Jagrell behind the mike. Peabody's is located in Downtown Cleveland, near Cleveland State University on the corner of Euclid Avenue and East 21st, just behind Rascal House Pizza (excellent pizza joint). Tickets are \$15 if you plan ahead, or \$18 on the day of the show. Doors open up at 7pm. Shows usually start and 8pm.

<http://www.sistersin.com/> <http://www.doromusic.de/> <http://www.peabodys.com/>

but it is a damn good album. The record starts with the longer title track, Raise Your First In The Air. From first to last track, it kicks some serious metal derriere, with a couple of ballads in between, like It Still Hurts, featuring Lemmy from punk metal band, Motocaddy.

Doro's current band line-up consists of Nick Douglas at bass, keyboards,

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Caregiver's Kitchen

Caregiver's Kitchen: Gentle Help For Loss

by Patty Knox

Those who have lost a loved one and are marking the first Christmas without their cherished family member know that it is hard to find joy in the Christmas carols they hear. The multicolored lights seem to mock grief. There was nothing Merry about this Christmas.

Take heart. There are many others who know how you feel. It is a sad fact of life that the older we get, the more relatives and friends we know who have died. When it is someone especially close to you, a parent, sibling or good friend, it is natural to pause and think

about their life and all the times you had together. It would be unnatural not to be distracted from the normal tempo of daily life. It is a good time to pay tribute by going through old photographs, writing down recollections of things the person said, a timeline of your relationship with that unique person noting corresponding approximate dates of shared experiences, highlights of your times together, and what he or she meant to you personally. As time goes on, those memories will become less painful and more sweet, until they will bring a smile to your face. But your memory will never be better than it is

now, so make it top priority to take the time to write down everything you remember. Trust me, now is the best time. It will honor the life of the one who has passed into eternity.

Now, for you. If, as a caregiver, you have lost the one you have been caring for, you are not immune --even if it is your profession as a nurse aide -- from feeling the impact of the loss. Especially if it was someone related to you, it is important to take time out to absorb the loss. You can't expect to go on as if nothing has happened. Most people have the problem with their employers not allowing enough time for bereavement days off after a key person in your life has died. Make no mistake, the grieving process cannot be rushed. It takes its time, whether you like it or not. You have to go through mourning your loss, and every person is different. The notorious five stages of grief, in whatever order they present themselves, are a common part of the human experience. Allow yourself to grieve. What you resist, persists.

Because of recent events on a national scale, for the first time in modern history we, as a country, are mourning the loss of twenty little children. The slaughter of the innocents. What is hardest is that we may never know why. One cannot make sense of some tragedies. At least when Herod killed every baby boy under the age of two years old throughout his kingdom, to make sure to kill the promised Messiah who had been born, it had a certain logic. It seemed a sure way to accomplish his goal. But God sent a messenger angel who compelled Joseph to escape to Egypt, and Joseph obeyed, which glorified God. Still, the slaughter left many Hebrew families in mourning.

Allow yourself a "time out" from


all business as usual routines. True friends will understand. The others will have to deal with it. You have a right to do what you have to do, for your own sanity's sake. I let two Christmases go by with no decorations in my own home after each of my parents died, because it felt right to observe a Blue Christmas without them. Give yourself time.

Blue moods call out for comfort food. Warm, consoling, friendly family recipes. Baked anything. Cabbage and noodles. Soups, stews, homemade macaroni and cheese made with cream, butter and twice as much grated cheddar cheese as the recipe calls for. Virtually anything white: pasta, homemade bread, baked potatoes, gooey melted mozzarella, as much French vanilla ice cream as you want. Throw a pot chuck roast seasoned with salt, pepper and a little Worcestershire sauce together with carrots, potatoes and onions in a pot with about an inch of water in the bottom, tightly seal with foil and bake it for a couple hours at 325 degrees until it comes apart with a fork. Almost no effort, which is all the energy you have right now. Bake your favorite cookie, if you're up to it. If not, there's always Malley's milk chocolate, my personal coping device.

Take out the photographs of your loved one, when you're ready, try to pinpoint the year, the occasion, the memory you have of that time, and write it down. Revisit those memories as often as you like. When they cause you more joy than pain, when they bring a smile to your face instead of tears to your eyes, you will know that you have gotten through the worst part of grief. Psalm 51: 12 says it best, as the psalmist begs the Lord: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy willing spirit." He can, and he will.

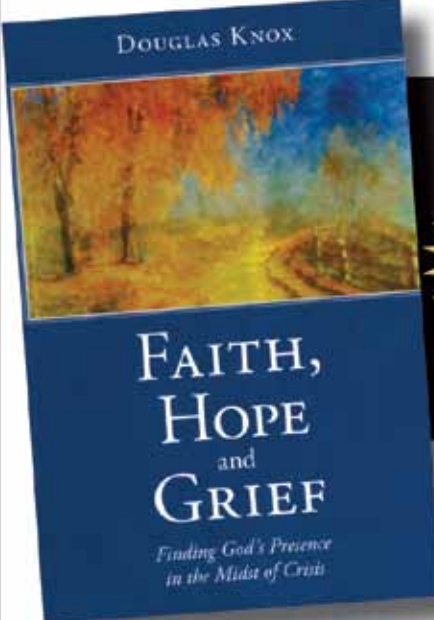
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Parma Observer

Art Therapy At Pleasant Lake Villa: Inspiring Hope And Promoting Healing

by Jennifer Keirn

Exceptional patient care and rich quality of life are the hallmarks of life at Pleasant Lake Villa, a skilled nursing facility that consistently earns the highest ranking of five stars from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). One of the ways that Pleasant Lake Villa creates this top-ranked environment is through a unique art therapy program that inspires hope and promotes healing through painting, drawing and crafting.

When Judy Presley arrived at Pleasant Lake Villa in February 2012, she'd already endured multiple hospitalizations and eight surgeries for treatment of a diabetic ulcer on her foot. She feared the possibility of an amputation and was losing hope in her prospect of recovery. That's until Judy was fortunate enough to take a room just across the hall from Pleasant Lake Villa's art studio, where art therapist Georgeta Enesel gently encouraged her to try an art class. "That class was the start of making me feel like I wanted to go on and I wanted to heal," says Judy. "Georgeta was the person who started that feeling for me."

The art therapy program that Georgeta leads for Pleasant Lake Villa residents is much more than just classes. Her approach encourages independence, stimulates the mind and gives residents a chance to express themselves creatively when verbal communication becomes difficult.

"Where the mind goes, the body follows," says Georgeta, who came to the United States 10 years ago after 30 years as an art teacher in Romania. "It stimulates their emotions and gives them a chance to be part of the community. Each of their personalities comes through in their art."

Many residents are hesitant when Georgeta first invites them to class. "They say, 'no, I am not an artist.' They are afraid," she says. "But step-by-step they get involved and become proud to



say they are artists."

Dennis Kancler has noticed a significant change in his mother Virginia since she began participating in the art therapy program. "My mother has so much creativity that we never saw until she came to Georgeta's class,"

during World War II. She comes to class as often as possible, sometimes twice a day. Georgeta's studio is filled with the artwork of Pleasant Lake Villa residents, including painted and sketched portraits, abstract art, crafted angels and circular mandalas. Every



says Dennis. "Once she started the program, I've never seen her happier." Virginia mixed media artwork reflects her rich memories of a full life, including her years as a dancer in the USO

year, Pleasant Lake Villa residents enter their artwork in the Cuyahoga County Fair's art competition, and many come home with blue ribbons.

"Even if they don't have a professional technique, the art is coming from the soul, from the heart, through the fingers to the paper," Georgeta says. "They have a feeling that 'I did that!'" Georgeta is full of stories of other patients at Pleasant Lake Villa who have benefited from her art therapy program. Patients who once watched her classes passively are now active participants. One 91-year-old patient with dementia regained the ability to write through painting. Patients with macular degeneration and even blindness have found new ways to express themselves. Judith is now living inde-

pendently and is well on her road to recovery. She's still working on her art and has returned to another favorite hobby — racing her 1993 Ford Mustang. She's planning to return to Pleasant Lake Villa soon as a volunteer in the art therapy program.

"Georgeta has been given a gift," says Judy. "We became a family. That's what distinguishes it from other programs."

The Value of Art Therapy

- A 1997 study of elderly nursing home residents who participated in a pottery class showed a boost in self-esteem and a reduction in anxiety. (Source: Art Therapy: The Journal of the Art Therapy Association)

- Cancer patients who participated in four months of art therapy reported less tiredness, anxiety, depression and other quality-of-life factors. (Source: American Journal of Pain and Symptom Management)

- Patients with dementia have been shown to improve in reminiscence through art therapy that might not be possible verbally. (Source: Art Therapy: The Journal of the Art Therapy Association)

- Observation of a group of elderly patients in a long term care facility demonstrated the ability of art therapy to help patients cope with the challenges of aging. (Source: Geriatric Nursing)

- A case study of a stroke patient who participated in 10 weeks of art therapy showed increases in visual perception and cognition, as well as motor activity and function. (Source: Art Therapy: The Journal of the Art Therapy Association)

- Art therapy dates back to the 1940s and today is used widely in schools, mental health facilities, prisons, long term care facilities and in treatment of a wide variety of illnesses and disabilities.



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Parma Observer

Friends Of Parma Theater Begin First Of Many Fact Finding Tours

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the earliest days of the Capitol Theatre, as well as detailed descriptions of how the theater was systematically restored and redesigned.

We proceeded to tour the fantastically restored, renovated and preserved Gordon Square Arcade building, where the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization maintains their offices. In a conference room there, our group had what I would describe as an incredibly informative meeting with Executive Director Jeff Ramsey, where he patiently listened to our story, offered many insightful, very useful suggestions as to how we might approach our challenges and opportunities concerning what we are trying to achieve, and provided what I would consider a working



blueprint for how we should proceed as time goes forward- all this while drinking fine coffee with delicious pastries, surrounded by impressive graphs,

charts, and stunning photographs of the success that has been enjoyed by this dedicated group committed to fostering positive group in their community. What struck me most was the photos of the neighborhood of West 65th. and Detroit in 1979 when the group was formed. The tops of some of the buildings were damaged to the point where it appeared to be as in photos of war-torn places. I have to dig deep into my memory from that time, and then looking around at what they have accomplished in this same neighborhood, realize what is possible.

We in Parma are far more fortunate; we have a great neighborhood in the Polish Village District in the Ridge and Snow Rd. area, with an historic theater that we hope to acquire and transform into what we believe will be an equally successful anchor of what should be an emerging Arts community right here in Parma, which the citizens of the seventh largest city in the state most certainly deserve, and will have it if they want it. Further missions are planned, and since so many communities have risen to the challenge of redeveloping their neighborhood assets, we have only to listen to their advice and study what they have achieved in order for us to navigate a meaningful path to success. Want to help? You are cordially invited to join us.



Audience members were beginning to file in for a morning matinee showing of the film "A Christmas Story" (filmed in Cleveland) while our tour was being conducted.



A fact finding mission bus tour on December 15th. with members of the Friends of the Parma Theater.

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