

Cheryl Ann Programs News Review

SPRING 2017

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 2

Cheryl Ann's First Board Receives Award

Boyd Granger Accepts Heckler Award on Behalf Of Fellow Members

This year's Albert Heckler Award was 50 years in the making.

Each year, Cheryl Ann Programs presents the Albert Heckler Award to an outstanding volunteer or advocate. It's the organization's only award, given out each spring.

This year, the award was presented to Boyd Granger, who is the last surviving member of the county's first Board of Developmental Disabilities (in those days, called the Board of Mental Retardation). In accepting the award on behalf of his fellow board members, Boyd represents all the members of the first board that helped build Cheryl Ann into the vital, forward-thinking organization that it is today. That first board built a firm foundation, in more ways than one.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of Ohio's county boards of developmental disabilities (DD) by the Ohio General Assembly in 1967.

That first county board was, by all accounts, a great group that worked together well and kept its vision on the best interests of the county's developmentally disabled citizens. Serving along with Boyd

were Albert Heckler, chairman; Clarence Post, Dr. Boniface Forsthoefel, George Wilson, Lois Koch and Lloyd Bird.

In Mercer County, as in many of Ohio's counties, parents and other advocates had launched efforts to offer education and support to people with developmental disabilities long before these boards were formed. (Some of the early local efforts were described in Superintendent Shawn Thieman's article in the Winter 2017 issue of the *News Review*.)

But the formation of a county board formalized those efforts and gave them official weight and strength, Boyd said. "Before the board was formed, efforts to educate these children were sporadic—there may have been a special education classroom here and there. But people saw the need for something more—and from that, the board was created," he said.

Whether parents, professionals or other advocates, people who are immersed today in the day-to-day care of a child with developmental disabilities may not always realize or appreciate how far the movement has come in the past 50 years, and how many people were involved in helping it along. Boyd recalls that early initiatives had to be innovative; educators had to think outside the box to accommo-
(Continued on page three)



Boyd Granger, a member of Cheryl Ann's first county Board, with the Albert Heckler Award.

Parent advocates had been working to establish programs to educate and support their children for years—but the state's decision to found County Boards in 1967 gave their efforts official weight and strength.

Her Life Ended Tragically Early, but Her Legacy Lives with Us

Cheryl Ann Coate Lent Her Name to Us

A name is so much more than just a word to call someone or something—it is a carefully selected title that brings a lifetime of identity. One of the more meaningful tasks that I have been a part of in my life is the naming of our three children. As I recall, my wife borrowed several books that contained nothing but names—long names, short names, easy to say names, and impossible to say names. The lists of names were overwhelming, but after about seven months of debating we always came up with a name that in our minds was perfect.

I am sure that the process of name selection is very similar for organizations. I don't know the history of how Steve Jobs selected Apple as the name for his company, but I can't imagine the same success if it had been called Tomato. Similarly, I can't imagine history class with a first president other than George Washington. So much of our identity and perceptions are shaped by names.

By the fall of 1961, the Mercer County Council for Retarded Children knew that it couldn't continue to move to a different location every year. It was ready to build its first school building at the Mercer County Fairgrounds. It was then that the Council desired a more recognizable name. The



Cheryl Ann Superintendent Shawn Thieman

Council asked Amy Coate if it could use her daughter's name for the school. Amy responded by saying that she was proud to let Cheryl Ann's name be used for the school

that helped her so much.

Cheryl Ann Coate was born in Celina on March 22, 1947. She was the youngest of five children. On June 12, 1951, Cheryl Ann was accidentally struck in the head with a baseball bat. Prior to the accident, she had been a perfectly normal child, but the blow's impact caused a blood clot in her head. Doctors said that surgery was impossible and that they hoped the blood clot would dissolve over time. Cheryl Ann was hospitalized in both Dayton and Cincinnati with specialists agreeing that nothing could be done.

Cheryl Ann was a tiny and shy four-year-old when the accident happened, but this traumatic experience would forever change her life. From this time forward, she suffered periodic attacks of convulsions. She gained a lot of weight and became very sociable. "She talked to everybody and never met a stranger," her mother said in an old interview. It eventually became apparent that Cheryl Ann had suffered significant brain damage and that she would be unable to attend school like other children her age.

In 1956, the Mercer County Council for Retarded Children was ready to open its first class for disabled children in Coldwater. That first class included eight children—one of them being Cheryl Ann. She loved school and hated to stay home, even on holidays. Cheryl Ann loved music, taking rides in the country, and talking to people. She liked nice clothes, pets and jigsaw puzzles (the harder the better).

On May 17, 1959, Cheryl Ann complained of a headache; headaches had plagued her ever since the accident. She laid down to rest



Cheryl Ann Coate loved school and music. Cheryl Ann Programs is named after her.

and had a cerebral hemorrhage; she passed away immediately.

Cheryl Ann attended school for three years. She started school when she was nine years old and passed away when she was 12. Cheryl Ann's tragedy, according to her mother, was that she didn't live long enough to put the things she learned at school to use.

I wish that I were writing this article as a celebration of Cheryl Ann Coate's successes as a 70-year-old woman this year. Sadly, that is not the hand that she was dealt. We are grateful that our organization was able to serve her for three years in our original school. We are lucky and proud that she has been willing to serve us for over 55 years—with her name! I hope that we at Cheryl Ann Programs have somehow made her life more significant by taking her name and using it to serve so many since her passing. Thank you, Cheryl Ann Coate!

Cheryl Ann's First Board

(Continued from page one)

date students with special needs. When he was the superintendent at Parkway Schools, for instance, he remembers a student with disabilities who came to school in a wheelchair on a bus—a bus that was designed only to carry students with typical mobility.

“When she arrived, we had four designated he-man students who helped her get off the bus,” he said. “At the end of the day, four guys were there to help her onto the bus. That’s how infantile we were in those days.”

Boyd later became the superintendent of the Mercer County Board of Education. In that position, he could support local schools as they implemented and/or refined programs for students with disabilities.

He had plenty of help, he said, from people who believed in the cause and were passionate about providing educational opportunities for all. He especially remembers fellow board member Lois Koch, a mother of two who went

back to school to become a special education teacher. She had a real talent for her chosen field, he said. “I worked with a lot of good people,” he said.

Many of the administrators in the county at the time were World War II veterans who had been mentally toughened by their service, Boyd said. They knew how to get things done as they latched onto new ideas such as specialized education for students with disabilities and worked hard to adapt their districts and schools to serve their students better.

He saw the same leadership skills in Dorothy Simons, the board’s choice as Cheryl Ann’s first superintendent. Dorothy had been an officer in the Women’s Air Corps, he said. She led Cheryl Ann from its earliest days and gave it a strong foundation from which

today’s program still benefits.

She was backed up by a talented board, whose members drew from their life experiences to guide Cheryl Ann Programs and fulfill its early promise.

Then as now, serving on a board brings people together for a common cause. If they are committed to doing good work together, board members become more than the sum of their parts, said Phil Fullenkamp,



The Board, along with local dignitaries, is assembled for the dedication of Cheryl Ann School.

who serves as the chairman of the current Board.

“From my point of view, a great board is made up of people who are focused on the mission and purpose of the organization they oversee. And then, every decision they make is governed by that purpose: What’s best for the organization and the people we serve?” he said.

Through the years, Cheryl Ann Programs has been well served by its board, he said. “How do people of different viewpoints and experiences come together to make a good working unit? I think it starts with having good people who care,” he said. “Several members of our board are parents of children who are served by the DD Board. They care greatly that their children and those like them get the best services we can offer.”

That first Board, all agree, was a great board—perhaps all of its members believed in the cause of educating and supporting children with developmental disabilities, and absolutely none of its members believed in taking personal credit for its many accomplishments, least of all Boyd. “I didn’t do anything,” he said of his years of service on the Board. The children, parents and staff who are part of Cheryl Ann Programs respectfully disagree.



Cheryl Ann Employees Honored

Cheryl Ann Programs’ employees marking milestone years of service to the organization were honored at the staff appreciation dinner on March 16 in Celina. From left are Karen Braun, who recently retired; Claire Loughrige, 10 years; Chris Schulte, 35 years; and Kelli Thomas, Gregg Rutledge and Chris Sauer, each 15 years.

SPOTLIGHT ON:
STEVE HAUSFELD

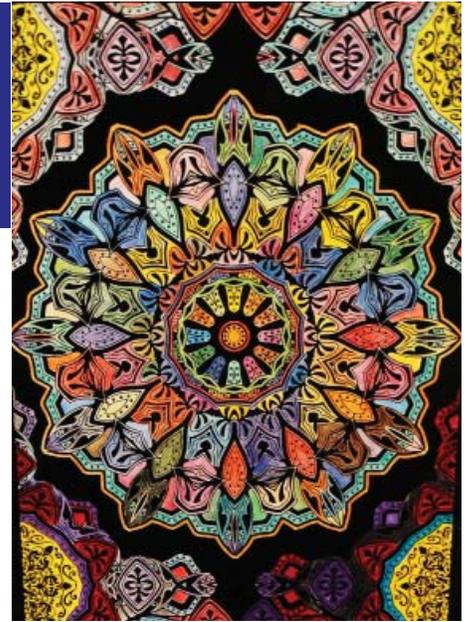
Featuring the
amazing people
at Cheryl Ann



Steve Hausfeld with one of his favorite coloring projects.

Steve Hausfeld likes to take his spare time and turn it into beautiful artwork. Talented with color and design, Steve buys coloring pages from Ben's in Coldwater then goes to work on them with colored pencils in his apartment in Maria Stein. A project can take four or five days to finish and he has completed approximately 400 of them, some of which he has sold.

Steve, 64, is retired from Hemmelgarn & Sons. He volunteers at the St. Peter Neurological Center and is a daily visitor to the residents of the Gardens of St. Henry, where everybody greets him when he walks in. Along with his artistic eye, Steve has a big heart.



Cheryl Ann Programs
4980 Mud Pike
Celina OH 45822