

## Chapter 15: It Takes a Community-Ashtabula and Ashtabula County Contributions

Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries could not have come into being and survived for 63 years without the support of the community – Ashtabula, Ashtabula County, and friends beyond the county borders. Without the many levies that city and community voters passed, Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft would have had to close its doors. Without donations and volunteers, they would have not been able to provide the quality of education and services that they have provided. Without the enthusiasm, pride, and support of city and county citizens, Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft could not have been the center of hope for so many families with developmentally disabled and mentally retarded children, and without them, the children themselves would not have had the tools they needed to achieve their potential and live fulfilling lives.

It isn't possible to name all of the organizations and individuals that have contributed their time, caring, and money to Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft, but an unknown or accidentally unacknowledged contribution is still a contribution, part of the bricks that helped build the foundation of the lives of so many Happy Hearts pupils and Ash/Craft workers, and families beyond their walls. Thank you to everyone who made Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft possible through the years.

### 1960s

#### Conneaut Rotary Club Donates to Happy Hearts School

July 1963. Tom Graf, director of Happy Hearts School accepted a tape recorder and progress timer from Beret Drennen, presented in behalf of the Conneaut Rotary Club. Mr. Drennen was retiring president of the service organization. Aids in speech development, these devices were put on display at the Ashtabula County Fair at the booth sponsored by the Council for Retarded Children.



## Retarded Students Bowl

*Happy Hearts Physical Education Director, Steve Voitovich, shows two students the proper grip in bowling.*

“These children get a personal satisfaction out of doing this,” said Steven Voitovich physical education director, Happy Hearts School, Friday as he watched 24 mentally retarded youngsters bowl at Ashtabula Bowling Center.

Mr. Voitovich, a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, added, “Bowling is an activity which has a carry-over value into their adult lives.

He continued, “It gives these kids a chance to learn something they can do in their spare time. It’s amazing what they can learn.” Commenting on the remarkable physical abilities of some of the youngsters, Mr. Voitovich pointed out one boy and noted, “That one can do 100 sit-ups and there’s one that can do about 50 pushups.”

Bowling is only one of the number of activities offered by the physical education department of Ashtabula County Child Welfare. Activities include bowling, trampoline, tumbling, marching, dancing, group games and exercises.



## Happy Hearts Students Give Back

*Students at Happy Hearts School under the direction of Steve Voitovich, teacher, and Miss Elizabeth Chaffee, Child Welfare Director, package educational pamphlets for the Ashtabula County Mental Health Association. The leaflets will be distributed to waiting rooms and offices of doctors, lawyers, dentists, beauty salons, barber shops and depots.*

## **Knights of Columbus Dance Will Aid Happy Hearts Scouting**

*May 1964. Arrangements for a benefit dance are checked over by Dominic Landolfi, second from left. The event, to be sponsored by Knights of Columbus District 35, will aid Happy Hearts School Scouting program. Looking on are Joseph Urban, Scoutmaster, left, Mrs. Myron Hudson, council president, Mrs. Elva Roux, Cub Scout leader, and Mrs. Dorothy Covert, Girl Scout leader.*



For the benefit of Happy Hearts School, Knights of Columbus District 35 will sponsor a dance on June 6. Bob Bilicic and his orchestra will play from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Skateland, North Bend Road. Refreshments will be served.

District Deputy Dominic Landolfi planned the dance for the newly-organized Boy, Girl, and Cub Scouts Troops at the school. Although Happy Hearts School is the institutional representative for the Scouts, it cannot provide funds for the scouting movement since it is a tax-supported school. The scouting program is the responsibility of the Council for Retarded Children, official parent organization of the school.

Funds will be used to purchase equipment so that 13 Boy Scouts, 11 Girl Scouts and eight Cub Scouts may take part in the program. District 35 councils sponsoring the dance are Ashtabula, Conneaut, Geneva, and Jefferson.

## **Mrs. Edward Rose Heads Officer Slate to be installed by CCL Federation**

August 1964. Installation of 1964-1965 officers of the Ashtabula Federation of the Ohio Child Conservation League will be conducted in the community room of the Ashtabula County Savings and Loan Co.

A sewing machine and record player were accepted by Mrs. Vincent Bishop, teacher at the Happy Hearts School. Mrs. Bishop stated that since the home economics program started a year and a half ago, 24 boys and girls ranging from 13 to 17 years participated in sewing and cooking classes. She displayed items the children made for Mother's Day, including cooking aprons. The record player will be used in the physical education classes at the school under the direction of Steve Woitovich.



## **Live Long Club Will Send Retarded Children to Camp**

June 9, 1964. Through the efforts of the Live Long and Like it Club, two mentally retarded children from the area will have the experience of attending summer camp.

Money for their camp entrance fees was raised in a white elephant sale held in May. Original plans called for sending one child to camp, but the sale was so successful that it will be possible to send two.

The camp, in Mentor, is directed by the Salvation Army. It offers arts and crafts, swimming, hikes, nature study, campfire get togethers, physical fitness activities and recreation. All activities are geared to the ability of the children and special individual care is given.

While the Live Long and Like It, Club is sponsored by the Ashtabula City Recreation Department, the project originated with the club members and was carried out independently.

## **Happy Hearts Students Make Dog Days Buttons**



*Dog Days buttons to be used by downtown store employees during the Prairie Dog Days, are prepared at Happy Hearts School, Ash/Craft store, by Ann Rabbitts (right) supervised by Mrs. Gertrude Smith. Ashtabula area merchants will celebrate Dog Days Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.*

## 1970s

### Happy Hearts Christmas Dance

*December 23, 1970. With Christmas just around the corner, children of Happy Hearts School are treated to the music of the Majestics at the annual Christmas Dance. The group played through the courtesy of the Musicians Union. The dance is one of several such events sponsored by Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children.*



### Project Screen Donated

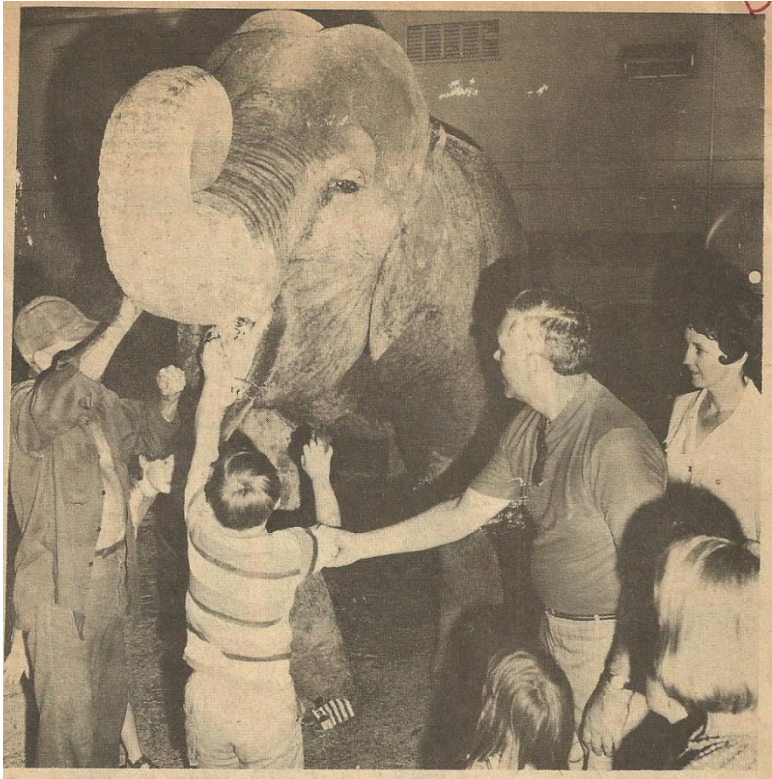


*April 23, 1971. A projection screen is donated to the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation by the Association of Ashtabula County Teachers of Trainable Retarded. Carl Swartz, Chair of the Purchasing Committee, displays the screen for Wayne Reese, Director of Happy Hearts School and Miss Alyce Lange, who is president of the Association which has also donated a one-way mirror*

*for a classroom door.*



## Circus Proceeds Will Benefit Happy Hearts



*June 30, 1971. A Circus Elephant is fed with care by David Urban at Tuesday's performance of the Wharton Circus at the Saybrook Plaza. Keeping watchful eyes on the little boy are Dr. Edward James and Mrs. Stanley Gaumer. The circus, sponsored by the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children, will present two shows Thursday at the VFW Grounds, Route 20, at 2 and 8 p.m. Proceeds will benefit Happy Hearts School's summer recreation program.*

The Wharton Circus sponsored by the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children will perform Thursday at the VFW grounds, Route 20.

Two shows will be given, one at 2 p.m. and another at 8 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the summer recreation program at Happy Hearts School which runs twice a week for six weeks. Thirty-two students attend, ranging in ages from three to 17. There are 10 counselors and a director employed by the program.

ACCRC founded Happy Hearts School in 1955. Although the school is now tax supported, the Council works on behalf of the total program. It sponsors extras that taxpayer monies cannot be used for.

Due to rain, a free show was presented Tuesday at the Saybrook Plaza. Tickets for Tuesday's scheduled show will be valid for either of Thursday's shows.

## **Ashtabula Star Beacon Editorial**

Friday, October 15, 1971

In our Opinion

Program Would Suffer

There are probably places in Ohio which would benefit from the takeover of programs for mentally retarded children by the State Department of Education. Ashtabula County is not one of those places.

Ohio officials have been studying the court ruling which said Pennsylvania's mentally retarded children should be included in the state's free public education system.

It seems Ashtabula County and its Happy Hearts School would already fit the definition of a free public education system. No school system is really free of cost, since taxes have to support them.

In Ashtabula County's case, the source of income is threefold. The largest amount comes from a seven-tenths of a one mill levy which county voters approved. Happy Hearts school also gets tuition payments from the public schools. And it receives some state funds. The income in all cases is from taxes—local, county, and state in origin.

Ashtabula County would suffer from state administration of the program simply because it is unlikely the quality of programs dictated by the state would meet that maintained here currently. And much of the money which now finds its way into the local program would be siphoned off for state administration costs.

The response was refreshing from voters some years back when Happy Hearts sought a bond issue for a new school and a levy for operating costs. The result is the program now carried out in Kingsville.

It was Senate Bill 169 voted about four years ago which said that counties of the state must establish boards of mental retardation and programs for the handicapped children. The law made the boards answerable primarily to county commissioners.

In Ashtabula County's case, for example, it was the board of county commissioners which submitted the tax issues to pay for the school and operation.

We imagine there are many counties in the state where programs for the mentally retarded are not adequate.

Ashtabula County has an excellent program and the voters here are primarily responsible for that excellence.

It is rare indeed to find school programs with unanimous public support. We are convinced the success of Happy Hearts rests on its local identity.

It can only suffer from state takeover.



## Santa Visits Happy Hearts Children

*December 24, 1971. Excited children from Happy Hearts School, 146 in number, greet Santa Claus as he strolled among the luncheon tables at Ole Kings Tavern Monday. Owner Dan Rossi donated the lunch and employees gave their services for*

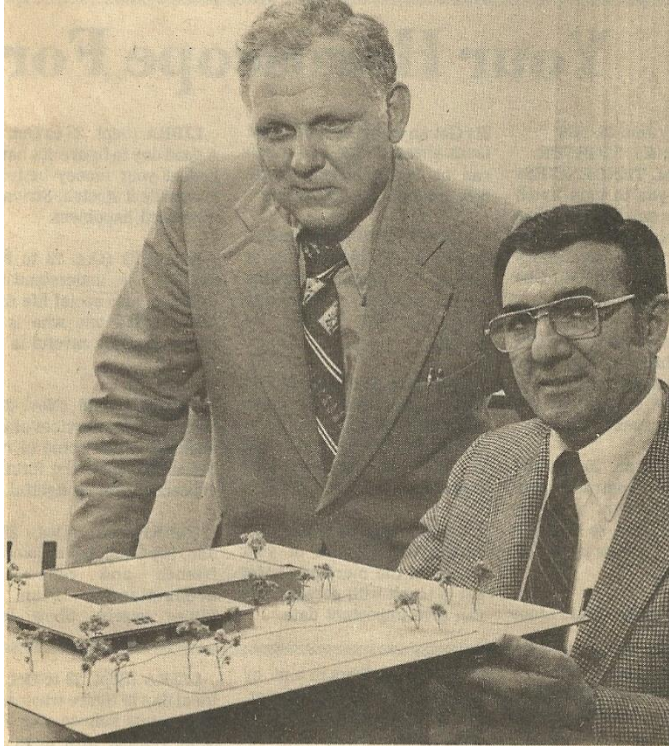


*the party. North Kingsville Police Chief Nick Walker arranged the affair and took individual pictures of each child with Santa as he presented a gift to each. Harold Bowdler donated fruit baskets to the children. Each child will be presented a print of himself with Santa, courtesy of the North Kingsville Police Department.*

*October 16, 1975. Kingsville Area Lions Club recently presented a hydraulic patient lifter to the Happy Hearts School. Here, Vicki Brown, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dari Brown, is raised to the edge of a swimming pool by means of the lifter. Assisting are Mrs. Sandy Kanicki (left) and Mrs. Nancy Banner (center), who are physical development specialists at the school. David Harcourt of the Kingsville Area Lions Club watches. The lifter enables one staff member to lift and move students safely and with as little physical effort as possible. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo.*







*January 25, 1976. New Adult Workshop at Happy Hearts School is displayed in a scale model by architect Angelo Argentieri (left) to Dr. William Hall of Happy Hearts School. The \$700,000 facility will be built near the Happy Hearts School in Kingsville and is expected to be done by the early summer of 1977.*

*April 8, 1976. The Carlisle Teen Board recently held a fashion show for students at Happy Hearts School in Kingsville. Two board members participating were Julie Stevens and Bettina Braun (seated left and right), Standing are (from left) Susan Crawford, Carlisle's teen board adviser; Happy Hearts students Patty Crofoot and Annette Bluhm; and teacher Mrs. Dorothy Bishop.*



# 1980s

## **Ashtabula Exchange Club Presents Summer Sunshine Special at Happy Hearts School**

Members of the Exchange Club of Ashtabula provided a “Sunshine Special” to the students and staff of Happy Hearts School. Among the day’s events were races, hay rides, and a picnic lunch. Balloons were distributed by president Floyd Culver, who was dressed in clown costume. Mike Kahanea, chairman of the event, awarded the race participants with special prizes. Each student also was given a memento of the day. About 30 members of the club attended the picnic luncheon and participated in the day’s events. Reggie Kirk is coordinator of the club’s youth services.

About 150 Happy Hearts students were served lunch, given hay and pony rides and awarded prizes as part of the Exchange Club’s Youth Service Program. The event was coordinated by Mike Kahanea of the Exchange Club and Ann Zeitler of Happy Hearts School.

## **Ohio Association for Retarded Citizens Recognizes St. John Senior High School**

November 1980

The Ohio Association for Retarded Citizens recognized St. John Senior High School for outstanding efforts on behalf of the mentally retarded citizens of Ashtabula County through presentation of a certificate. Charles Thomas, president of the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Citizens presented a certificate to Don Cannell of St. John School. Instructors Sister Mary Joy and Mrs. Stanley Gaumer both teach inter-faith religion classes to the mentally handicapped.

Dance Committee

Sheila Woode-Co-  
Chairman

Pat Thomas – Co-  
Chairman

Lee Church

Denise Davis

Dr. Edward James

Bill Jenner

Charlotte Lovas

Loretta Meredyk

Margaret Nappi

Mary Ruffo

James Sabados

Charles Thomas

Bea and Don  
Zeller



## **A Prayer for the Retarded**

(From the program of the Annual Happy Hearts Benefit Dance, February 28, 1981)

Inspire us, O God with such a deep love of the retarded that we will be actively concerned for their welfare as well as that of all the mentally deficient for time and for eternity.

Teach us to show, by word and deed, the same zealous interest in protecting and furthering the happiness of these special children of God as we would do for ourselves.

Guide and strengthen the School Director, the teachers, the members of the Parent Council, and all others in high positions and low, who are entrusted with the task of protecting for all the retardates those rights which come from You and You alone.

Teach us likewise to be worthy instruments in sharing with the mentally handicapped—Your children and our brothers---the same peace, freedom, and security with which you have blessed us.

Amen

## **A Prayer from Retarded People for “Normal” People**

Inspire them, O God, with such deep humility that they don't feel superior to us, because they aren't. You created all of us to love, teach, and learn from each other.

Help us show them through our daily lives that their own lives are filled with simple blessings like walking, talking, thinking, and being without the extra effort it sometimes takes us to do the same things. Help us treat them with the dignity that they don't always extend to us.

Give us the strength to defend ourselves when some of the more enlightened ones think they can make fun of us, torment, and abuse us. Sustain us with love and forgiveness. Help us overcome our anger at those who think they have a right to mistreat us because we are different or because they think we are stupid. We are not.

Open our eyes and hearts more widely and deeply to Your love, so we can pass it on to them through our interactions with them. We all need to love each other better.

Amen

## **Dr. Magnone Visited Happy Hearts**

*November 1, 1981. Dr. Rudy Magnone, Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities visited Happy Hearts School Thursday. Students who visited with Dr. Magnone were Elias Vasquez (from left); Shon Taylor; and Jacob Zelczer. Photo by Pat Brink.*



## **Freedom Shrine Dedication**

*November, 1981. Dedication Ceremony of the Freedom Shrine took place Thursday at Happy Hearts School, with Happy Hearts students, employees, and staff of Ash/Craft Industries attending. The Exchange Club of Ashtabula presented the shrine, which is composed of copies of historical documents including the Constitution and Declaration of*

*Independence. Shown are (left to right) Terri Church, Ash/Craft; Reginald Kirk, Exchange Club President; Robert Hunter, Ash/Craft; Angela Milbrandt, Happy Hearts; Richard Baldwin, chairman of the Freedom Shrine committee and Andy Fields, Happy Hearts. Photo by Pat Brink.*



## Brotherhood of the Serpents Holds a Fundraiser



November 1, 1988

Brotherhood of the Serpents Motorcycle Club Inc. held a fundraiser October 1 at Annie's Pizza Place. Members of the club (from right) Nina Hamilton; Jackie and Larry Jones donated \$600 as well as toys and clothing to Outreach, parents support group of Happy Hearts School, and Association for Retarded Citizens. Also

pictured are (from left) Cindy Phillips, Happy Hearts principal; Kris DeCaro, ARC, and Jean Fields of Outreach. An additional \$600 was donated to Catholic service League to provide winter clothing for needy children. Photo by Nicki Wilpula.



## Leos Roar Through Ashtabula and Ashtabula County

Wednesday, June 15, 1983. Today, on the fifth anniversary of its charter, Kingsville's Leo Club has 17 members. officers for the club are (left to right) Orville Pickett, treasurer; Claude Gaumer, president elect.; Jerry Manes, past president; and Jerry Russell, secretary. Group leaders are Ken Harley of Ashtabula and Albert Rushton of North Kingsville. Photo by Vern Fuchs.



## **Leos Roar with Pride**

by Melanie Hensel

The envelope's return address read 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. and the note inside began "You are fortunate to have the assistance of Mr. Ken Harley and Mr. Albert Rushton.."

The correspondence was addressed to Kingsville chapter of the International Lions Club by the nation's first lady acknowledging the club for two of its members who had been instrumental in organizing an exclusive charter in 1978. The charter would offer fellowship and organizational life for mentally handicapped young men and continues today on the fifth anniversary of that charter, as the Leo Club.

Although group leader Ken Harley claims he apprehensively assumed the position as director of the organization shortly after his own membership into Lions, his pride in his Leos is apparent.

Soon after he became director of the Leos, Ken Harley acquired Albert Rushton, 75, as his assistant. Asked how Nancy Reagan had learned of the local organization Ken said that Alice



Rushton, Albert's dedicated wife, had sent word of their work to the White House. To their surprise, a letter arrived with hand-signed pictures of the president and his wife. The pictures and the letter now sit framed on the coffee table in the Harley home on East 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Ashtabula.

Ken Harley added that Mrs. Reagan has a great interest in mentally handicapped citizens and consequently took special interest in their organization which now includes 17 members. Eight are residents of the Maples Group Home for Mentally Handicapped Men, and nine reside at home, he said. Most of them are either students at Happy Hearts School or employed with Ash/Craft Industries. Ken describes Leos as a "service" of the Lions instead of a branch of the organization. Describing the format of the Leos, he says that although 18 is the required age for membership, many of the men are in their 40s.

The group meets bi-monthly at 8 p.m. Wednesdays at the Maples Group Home, for what Ken describes as mini-business meetings. The evening opens with The Pledge of Allegiance, and then the call to order and roll call are carried out. These are followed by a topic which the boys will "kick around," and it may include anything from marching in a parade or planting spruce trees to crafting a project like bird houses from plastic milk bottles or holding a barbecue.

Everyone has a responsibility too, said Harley. The club elects officers, and the remaining members are named to the board of directors. We also take a lot of pictures and have a historian who keeps a scrapbook.

According to Ken, the boys occasionally generate funds through projects like selling candy at Halloween for the Lions. "But we don't build a large treasury. I just don't want it. Our dues are very small – 25 cents per month per member, and if we get too much, we have a pizza party!"

Leo members too have special pride in their organization. Dressed in symbolic Leo uniforms, burgundy and navy vests trimmed in white bearing the Lion's emblem, Harley's boys rode antique cars this year in a Memorial Day parade.

Each boy is unique too, Harley has observed. "One boy comes in, sits down, and hasn't said two words in five years, but he's the kind of boy who gets along with everyone," he says.

Ken's regard for his group has earned him respect, and reflecting on the general tone of a meeting, he remarked, "It's too bad that all boys can't get along like these boys. They've worked together all day long, at school and at work, but they continue to love each other. They slap each other on the back, and they're very proud and supportive of one another.

"I am sure that the success of the Leo Club is due, in large part, to the interest and commitment of these gentlemen," the White House letter concludes.

## **Reverse Raffle to Benefit ARC**

*Preparing decorations for a reverse raffle and dinner to benefit the Association for Retarded Citizens of Ashtabula on November 4 are (from left) Wilma Spang, ticket chairwoman; Ash/Craft*



*workers Larry Moroski; Tamela Hayes; and Claude Gaumer; and Don Cosner, ARC president. The fund raiser will be held at Grotto Hall and will feature a \$1,500 grand prize. The event, the largest fund-raiser of the year for ARC, supports various projects to benefit retarded citizens in the area. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Warren Dillaway.*

## **Moose Donates**



*April 24, 1989. The local Moose Lodge presented a check for \$561 to the Association for Retarded Citizens, proceeds from a recent spaghetti dinner at the club. (From left) Association members, Peggy Cosner, ways and means; Don Cosner, chairman accepted the check from Dick Tessmar, governor of the Moose Lodge along with other officers, Bruce Lynn; Jim Conroy; Al Salisbury, (back left) Ed Laughlin, Fred Pacans, Bob Todaro, Robert Guy and Lawn McCormack.*

*Conneaut News-Herald photo by Diana Lewis.*



## 1990s



### ***Dotty May Demonstrates Bowling Technique***

*September 27, 1990. A Helping Hand. Helping Ashtabula County Nursing Home resident Lyman Cornish with the proper technique for using the new bowling ball with a handle donated by the Kiwanis Club is Kings Lanes proprietor Dotty May as Kiwanis Club Secretary Willard Giddings looks on. Dotty already hosts a League for Handicapped Bowlers on Saturday mornings and is interested in opening up other opportunities for wheelchair bowlers and otherwise handicapped athletes, as well as proving the necessary equipment. Interested parties should call Kings Lanes or Jill Dudas. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Jim Matthews.*

### ***Special Olympics Donation***

*May 20, 1994. Special Olympics Donation. Ashtabula County Special Olympics received a \$250 donation from the Harbor Moose Lodge 558 Free and Accepted Masons toward the cost of attending the Ohio Summer Olympics. From left are Jill Jenner, local coordinator for Special Olympics; Joe Lovas of Moose 558 and Pamela Barnett for Special Olympics. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Jim Matthews.*





## **Popcorn for Sale**

*May 12, 1994. Happy Hearts School is selling popcorn popped by the "Popcorn Gang" in Mary Ellen Bargerhuff's class. The money is used to offset class field trips and other project expenses. The Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) recently donated a new commercial type popper*

*to aid the students in learning employability skills. Student Hans Stoltz dumps out a fresh batch as Mary Ellen Bargerhuff (left) and ARC officers Kris DeCaro and Nadine Moroski watch the operation. Jim Matthews took the Ashtabula Star Beacon photo.*

## **Knights of Columbus Campaign**

*September 15, 1991. Bruno Kohowski (left), chairman of the Knights of Columbus Measure-Up Campaign presents the proceeds from the Knights annual fund-raiser to Charles Harbert, executive director of Ashtabula County Residential Services and ACRS Board members Charlotte Lovas; Betty Dickson; and Dorothy Bishop. The local Maples homes benefit from the campaign. Diana Lewis took the photo for the Ashtabula Star Beacon.*





## 2000s

### **Adelphia Cable**

November 11, 2000

Students at Happy Hearts School who receive physical therapy will benefit from a recent donation to the school. Employees of Adelphia Cable got together this summer and held a bake sale and raffle. They raised more than \$1,000 and donated the money to Happy Hearts to purchase physical therapy equipment.

### **Discussing Plans for a United Commercial Traveler's Donation**



*Discussing plans for the \$600 donation given to Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries by Lake Shore Council No. 330 United Commercial Travelers are (left to right) Duane Searl, UTC senior counselor; James Giannell, Happy Hearts Principal; James Billy, UTC past senior counselor; and Larry Korland, Ash Craft Director of Adult Services. The money will be spent for Christmas presents for students of the school and employees of the Ash/Craft Workshop. Photo by Herb Grant.*

## **Knights of Columbus Donate Funds to Happy Hearts November 7, 2004**

Geneva-Madison Council 5286 of the Knights of Columbus donated \$721 dollars to Happy Hearts School. Pictured from left are Carl Broberg, Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Mike DeMarino, Director of Education at Happy Hearts School, Mike Kahance, Past Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Jill Jenner, Special Olympics Coordinator, and Anne Zeitler, Superintendent of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental



Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The Knights of Columbus also presented \$721 dollar checks to Broadmoor School in Mentor, and Ashtabula County Special Olympics as part of its state-wide spring “Measure-Up Campaign” to raise funds for various charities and agencies that provide services for people with developmental disabilities.

Happy Hearts has used past donations to purchase playground equipment and will use the new gift to purchase therapy and recreation equipment. Special Olympics will use the funds to sponsor competitions in Nordic skiing, bowling, basketball, and swimming.

## **Let’s Eat at Massucci Field!**

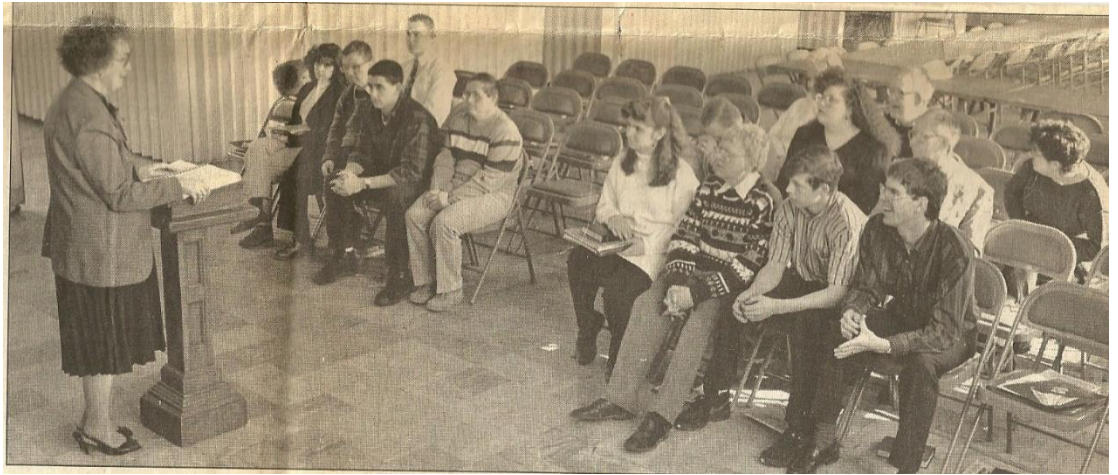
June 19, 2010. Clients from Ash/Craft, Special Olympic officials and an Ashtabula County representative pose with one of two picnic tables built and donated by Ash/Craft Industries to Massucci Field (Counterclockwise around first table from bottom left) Joe Allen, Special Olympics softball coach; Damian Kingston; Ron Burlingame, Special Olympics softball coach; Bill Jenner, Special Olympics organizer; and Claude Gaumer. (From left, clockwise around top table) Adam Henson; Jeff Spencer; Jim Flower; Dan Juhota, Ashtabula baseball field attendant; Dick Flower; David Baker; and Bill Campbell. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Warren Dillaway.





## Inter-Denominational and Community Sunday School Class

For 38 years, Inez Gaumer of Ashtabula taught an ecumenical Sunday School class for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled students that met at the First Presbyterian Church in



Ashtabula. Her students came from many communities in Ashtabula and Ashtabula County, including Conneaut, Saybrook, Jefferson, Kingsville, and Pierpont. In 2007, she and her husband Stan received one of the Cup of Cold Water Awards that the Ashtabula Area Ministerial Association presents to acknowledge work done for the benefit of the community. Gene Moroski provided the music and wrote the Christmas plays that the class performed every year.

Members of Interfaith Religion Class- from Christmas Program brochure

December 13, 1992

Sam Arcara

Shirley Bahr

Carolyn Beary

Alice Barthwick

Daniel Brunell

Josie Colluzzi

Barbara Costello

Patty Crofoot

Barbie Fenton

Claude Gaumer

Patty Hile

Kathy Hart

Randy Hershey

Lela Holcomb

Wanda Hopkins

Mary Kehoe

Bonnie Kray

Charles Lowry

Bill Martin

Tom McElroy

Karen Miller

Richard Miller

Nancy Mohrmann

Larry Moroski

Helen Myers

Sissy Peterson

John Pickett

Orville Pickett

Hannu Roivas

Jerry Russell

Frances Ruthkowski

Cindy Smith

Joanna Stawicki

Rodney Stevens

Richard Stewart

Linda Strong

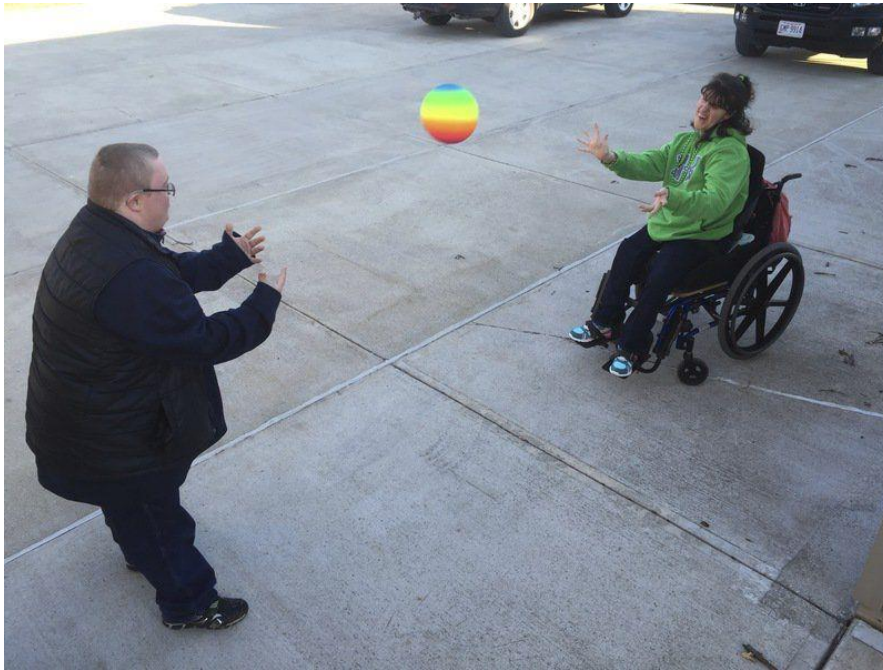
Audrey Thomas

Keith Townsend

Staff: Inez Gaumer

Gene Moroski

## Out in the Community



March 20, 2016. Hannah Bowser, 25, who has cerebral palsy right, plays catch with A.J. DeHaven, who has Downs Syndrome 24, on Thursday outside of her Austinburg home. The two became close friends after meeting several years ago as Ash/Craft Industries workers. Their parents said their relationship has helped them become more social, and Hannah wants more people to know about the social and economic challenges disabled

people face day to day. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Justin Dennis.

## Special Story

### Three Friends: Scrap Booking Newspaper Clippings About Happy Hearts and Ash Craft and Community

*Nadine Moroski(left) and Pat Hunter work on scrap books to preserve the history of Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries.*







*Pat Hunter (left) and Inez Gaumer working to preserve Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft history through newspaper clippings.*

Three friends living in three different places formed three bridges and helped create and connect Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries from their beginnings to span the 1950s to 2018. Each gave birth to a son with special needs: Pat is Robert's mother; Nadine is Larry's mother; and Inez is Claude's mother. When doctors told them that their sons had no chance of developing normally and advised them to put their children in institutions, they resolved that they would work as hard and long as it took to give their sons the chance to achieve as much as possible and look forward to a future. Nadine and Gene Moroski followed through on their vision for a school for their son Larry and in 1954, joined with other parents from Ashtabula and Ashtabula County to make their dream a reality. Later, Inez and Stanley Gaumer sought the same future for their son Claude, and Pat and Joseph Hunter for their son, Robert. For more than fifty years they worked to ensure a future for their own children and the children of other Ashtabula and Ashtabula County parents of children with special needs.

The list of the tangible achievements of the three friends and other like-minded parents and community people is a long one. It includes Happy Hearts School and its satellites; the Park; the Playground; Ash/Craft Sheltered Workshop and its community outreach. The list has subdivisions like the summer camps for disabled students; the Ash/Craft Greenhouse; the Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft dances; the nationally recognized Orff Band; participating in the Special Olympics for many years; participating in ARC; and the years of memberships on the MR/DD and Ash/Craft Boards.

The scrapbook clippings are themselves bridges between the Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities and its work in the city and county, including Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft industries and the Ashtabula County newspapers. Most of the newspaper clippings are of stories from dedicated Ashtabula Star Beacon reporters, but a few from the Jefferson Gazette and the Conneaut News-Herald with equally dedicated reporters are mixed in

with the Star Beacon. Without each other, the newspapers and the MR/DD Board couldn't have told the story of Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft. Without dedicated and caring reporters, the stories of Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft would be confined to word of mouth.

The children and young adults of Happy Hearts and the adults of Ash/Craft Industries are the most important tangible assets, the most important legacy, of these three friends and so many others like them. They are their parents' legacy, the MR/DD Board legacy, part of the Ashtabula and Ashtabula County legacy and beyond that. They are living, touchable proof that people with handicaps have potential and if it is developed it can benefit their families and communities. Bridges sometimes sag or collapse like the Ashtabula County Railroad bridge, but citizens working together can rebuild and maintain bridges and firmly cross far into the future.