

Chapter Four: Expanding, Enduring, and Enjoying the 1980s

Getting Ready for the 25th Anniversary Open House, April 27, 1980



(Left to right) Terri Church, 20-year teacher Dorothy Bishop, and Tammy Hayes make cookies in Home Economics class to serve to people attending the Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Workshop open house on April 27, 1980.

Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Citizens cordially invites you to attend our Open House to Commemorate Twenty-Five Years of History and Growth including Happy Hearts School, Ash/Craft Industries, Incorporated, The Ash/Craft Greenhouse

Sunday, April 27, 1980, 2505 South Ridge East, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Open House 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Program 2:00 p.m.



Ash/Craft workers (left to right) Beth Fogle, Diane Dickson, and Julie Morse ready their greenhouse plants for display and sale during the 25th Anniversary Open House.

1980: Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Workshop Celebrate 25 Years of Growth

In an Ashtabula Star Beacon story dated April 27, 1980, reporter Catherine Ellsworth wrote about the Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries celebratory open house commemorating 25 years of operation.

The celebration open house, held from 1:30 to 6 p.m., included tours of the school and workshop as well as a program featuring

Dorothy DeBolt who had recently been named Mother of the Year. She and her husband had adopted 20 mentally retarded children. Happy Hearts had grown like the flowers currently blooming in the Ash/Craft greenhouse since it opened in 1955 in the basement of the First Methodist Church on Elm Avenue in Ashtabula with 11 students and a teacher and assistant teacher.



Celebrating 25 Years. April 27, 1980. Noting the 25th Anniversary of the Council for the Mentally Retarded in Ashtabula County, an open house was held at Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries on Sunday. Standing behind the extra-large cake are Douglas Burkhardt, superintendent of Happy Hearts School; Dorothy DeBolt, guest speaker, and Stanley Gaumer, a member of the board of directors of Ash/Craft.

After over a decade of vagabond moving from place to place and the passage of a financing levy, Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft moved into their new quarters on August 1, 1968, and a dedication ceremony took place in November 1968. This first year, the \$600,000 building housed 136 children, and after 14 years of hit or miss facilities, the staff and pupils enjoyed ten classrooms, a gymnasium, cafeteria, health and testing room, workshop and office. In 1980, 127 pupils were enrolled in Happy Hearts School and another 17 children in the home training program. By 1980, programs in the school extended far beyond academics. Children were taught daily living skills such as managing money and personal care, and according to their abilities learned dancing, games, prayers, exercises, music, camping and bowling. A nurse and speech therapists joined the staff and in 1973, the Board received funding to provide residential services for mentally retarded children six years and under and establish a group home for retarded people.

In February 1976, Happy Hearts administrators introduced an Infant Stimulation Program. Funded by Title I, the program was designed to help developmentally delayed children reach their full potential by creating a stimulating environment and guiding their interaction with that environment. Although these children aren't functioning at their age level, Program Director Russell Grippe said that they aren't necessarily mentally handicapped, but could be just behind in some areas.

According to Director Russell Grippe, infants as young as two days old have been referred to the program, and MR/DD Superintendent Dr. Douglas Burkhardt stressed the importance of reaching these children before school age and training and involving parents to help their children. The final goal of the program was educating the community to the importance of early intervention and helping to understand mentally retarded and developmentally delayed children and their families.

Expanding beyond its beginnings with the Happy Hearts School, the Ash/Craft workshop acquired its own board of directors, its own program, and in the fall of 1976, its own quarters, a 20,000 square foot one story building accommodating 200 people. Presently, there are 117 clients in the workshop.

The workshop provides a sheltered environment for moderately and severely retarded and developmentally disabled adults from Ashtabula County. The year around program gives workers or 'clients' the opportunity to reach their full physical, social, and vocational potential. Supervisors use the workshop facilities to teach workers basic skills. The workers are paid, pay taxes, and in some cases, they find employment outside of the workshop.

Larry J. Korland, Adult Services Director, explained that the Ash/Craft program had three parts. The first part of the Ash/Craft program is subcontracting light assembly and packaging jobs for local industries in Lake and Ashtabula Counties. Industries like Emco-Wheaton, Reliance Electric, and Rockwell International use the Ash/Craft workers.

A 3,500-foot square greenhouse on the premises is the second part of the Ash/Craft program. The greenhouse does wholesale and retail business.

The third part of the Ash/Craft program is a merchandising department, concentrating on the manufacturing of craft-type items for wholesale and retail distribution. Some of these items will be available at the open house.

Instruction, counseling, first-aid and nursing services are also available to the workshop clients.

Before the Happy Hearts School, the Ash/Craft Sheltered Workshop, the Boards and parent groups, parents of special needs children often felt isolated. Nadine Moroski, part of the pioneer organizational meeting recalled, “We had no place to go before this group. Even our doctors usually said to institutionalize the child or take them home and give them all the love you can.”

The Happy Hearts School and all the programs, the Ash/Craft Workshop help prepare special needs children to function in and contribute to the community and include their parents as well.



Ann Lovas and teacher Betty Hartley at the Happy Hearts Open House.

The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Citizens sponsored the open house. The 1980s saw a change the Board’s name from the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Citizens to Association for Retarded Citizens of Ashtabula County. The local Association is a member of the Ohio and National Associations for

retarded Citizens, which strengthens the forward movement of the program for legislation and long-range development for retarded people.

Placing New People on the MR/DD Board

In June, 1980, The Rev. Daniel Kulesa, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Ashtabula, became the second new board member within the last few months. Mary Ellen Higley began her term in March.

Later that summer in, August 1980, Ashtabula Star Beacon staff reporter Jerry Robinette reported that the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation had hired a new principal for Happy Hearts. A committee of board members including Superintendent Douglas Burkhardt voted unanimously to hire Andrew Kovac to replace James Conroy who resigned after six years at the school.

Formerly teaching in East Palestine, Andrew Kovac had worked as a special education teacher at the elementary and secondary levels and earned a master's degree in special education and a principal's certificate. He said that there were a lot of mentally retarded kids in his neighborhood while he was growing up and that he was friends with them. "I definitely did not come just for the money."

Superintendent Burkhardt said that he was very happy to have Andrew Kovac take the position. "He's very well qualified. He has the teaching background and the administrative credentials we were looking for. We didn't expect to find someone with his qualifications."

Programming Notes

The Happy Hearts Summer Camp Program was scheduled for three weeks during the summer of 1980, at an estimated cost of approximately \$10,000 less than last year's program. The board also unanimously approved plans to cut the camp from six to three weeks. School age children attend camp free and enjoy various field trips. Most of the present school staff and some personnel from outside the school system, will direct the program.

According to Superintendent Burkhardt, Federal Title I funds were cut \$11,000 from \$74,000 in 1979 to \$63,000 in 1980.

Speech and hearing therapy, infant stimulation, behavior modification units, and the salaries of the school psychologist and the home consultant's salary are all funded through the federal program, which is cutting money state wide. He explained that all of the categories except behavior modification are federally mandated, and he suggested that the Board slash one-quarter of the school psychologist's salary and one-half of the home consultant's salary to make up the fund reduction. The Board unanimously approved his recommendation.

Board members also approved a safety course in swimming instruction for developmentally handicapped students, to be provided by the YMCA-YWCA in Ashtabula. The cost to the board is \$2 a student.

In 1980, the Association for Retarded Citizens donated \$6,000 to develop the Girls Group Home in Conneaut, Maples II. The Maples II hosted an open house on May 3, 1980.



Ash/Craft Industries, Inc.

Ash/Craft Greenhouse Opens

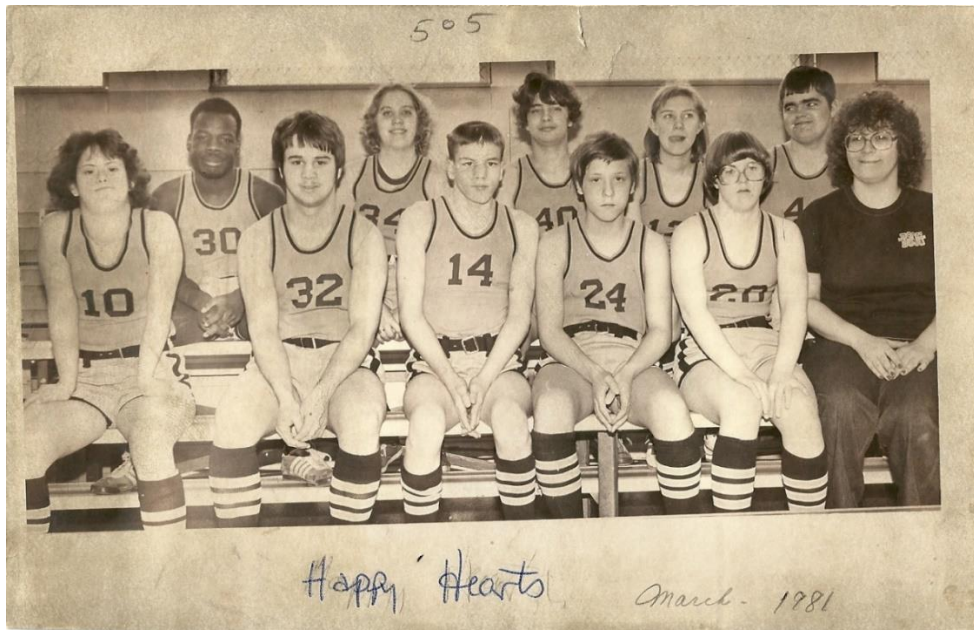
The Ash/Craft newsletter of June 1980 reported that the greenhouse finally opened in January 1980, and that the spring greenhouse plants were the best the workshop had grown. The credit for the excellent plants belonged to the greenhouse workers and their supervisor, Mrs. Cook. Greenhouse sales almost doubled from 1979.

A story in the newsletter stated that the Workshop had been able to provide work for all of its employees without a single day of downtime during the past year. The story stressed the importance of productive work for everyone even with an economic slowdown, because of the Workshop policy of no layoffs. The Ash/Craft program had been built on a strong foundation of quality employees and quality workmanship and good relationships with community and county businesses. "Through the efforts of Mr. Wiegand, Production Manager, we have made contact with new companies, thereby maintaining the flow of work for our employees," the story said.

Plans for the Ash/Craft future included developing and marketing new products to be manufactured at Ash/Craft. The workshop currently enjoyed sufficient sub-contract work, but directors felt a product line expansion would insure work for current and future employees.

1981: Basketball Championship, Lunch Program, and Levy Campaign

The next year, 1981, featured among other events, a championship basketball team, and a school lunch problem and a successful levy campaign.



March 20, 1981

In March 1981, the Happy Hearts co-ed basketball team finished the 1981 season as the second-best basketball team in Ohio. According to Coach Anne Zeitler, the team advanced to the finals after defeating Franklin County in a close, tough contest. Happy Hearts won the game 38-36 in regulation time.

Brian Flaughter was the star of the game, scoring all but two of the team's points. Teammate Jan Searcy of Jefferson added the other basket.

Advancing to the state finals at Larkins Hall of the Ohio State University campus in Columbus, Saturday the team attempted to defeat Montgomery County for the state co-ed title.

The first-year team lost by nine points, 31-22, with Jan Searcy grabbing nine points, and Brian Flaughter contributing eight. Brian Lockett added three points, while David Collins put up a field goal.

Coach Zeitler said the team received a plaque, and each player was awarded a participation patch. As for next year, she said, "I'm hoping to build just a little bit more, but I've got a lot to work with."

School Lunch Funding Cuts Worry County 169 Board: June 1981

Douglas Burkhardt, Superintendent of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, (169 Board) told Board members that they would have to take serious action about the school lunch program for the 169 programs unless the state solves the problem. He said the Board couldn't operate its own school lunch program without federal reimbursement.

Superintendent Burkhardt told the Board that he had received a letter from Robert H. Koon, director of the Division of School Food Service, saying that the federally funded school lunch program could be out of money in May and June and unable to send out reimbursements to schools in Ohio. He said the letter from Robert Koon implied that at this point "it looks like there will be no money for next year's subsidized lunch program because of Reagan's budget cuts." Director Koon said DSFS is still looking for solutions to the problem, but so far, the Division of School Food Service has not come up with a solution to the problem.

Superintendent Burkhardt advised the Board to delay action on the school lunch program until August to see if anything can be done at the state level, and the Board agreed. He said that if the state doesn't take any action by August, the Board will have to consider closing the 169 program's lunch programs altogether. Explaining that the lunch program doesn't pay for itself, he said that it runs between \$4,000 and \$5,000 in the red every year even with reimbursement. "We would have to double or even triple the lunch prices to pay for the program which would put them way out of sight. It would be cheaper to eat in a restaurant at those prices," he said.

Other important 1981 events included the Ashtabula County Association for Retarded Citizens purchasing nine sets of caps and gowns to be reused at a cost of \$112.50, Ashtabula County voters passing a 2-mill levy, and a December Pot Luck dinner honoring retiree Dorothy Bishop.

Looking at Levies

Ash/Craft Bulletin

September, 1981

by Larry Korland

November third is election day and, as you know, we will have a levy on the ballot for the operation of Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries. The people with whom I have spoken about the levy of course, want to know why the levy is needed and what it will do for our program.

Basically, the problem with which we are faced is that the money we receive from all sources is not keeping pace with the amount of services we are providing educationally, vocationally, and in transportation. For example, the money we receive from our current tax levy has only increased 6.5 percent since 1975. However, during this same period of time our combined school and workshop population has increased by approximately 48 percent and we expect continued growth over the next five years.

We all know how costly transportation has become. Imagine operating a bus fleet that travels the entire county every working day of the year. Each day our buses run, we use over 200 gallons of gasoline which translates into over 4,000 gallons a month, to over 48,000 gallons a year, which alone is a considerable amount of money. Considering the tremendous growth of our program, I think you will agree that we have managed to this point, remarkably well.

For us to be able to continue the high quality of service and programs which we have provided over the years, we need your help and support. We urge you to vote this November 3 and ask for your support of our programs when you cast your ballot.

If you need additional information or have additional questions, do not hesitate to give me a call.

Looking at Levies, 1981

Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries Hold Open House

The Ashtabula County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board held an open house Sunday, October 5, 1981 at Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries to generate community support for the Board's levy request on the November ballot. An additional tax of 2 mills for operating expenses to run five years beginning in 1982 will be decided by Ashtabula County voters.



A therapy board and standing table is examined during the Sunday Open House by (left to right) Russ Grippi, Happy Hearts School Coordinator, and Dr. Edward James, president of the Ashtabula County Mental Retardation Board.



Ash/Craft worker James Thompson asks Workshop Specialist Linda Moroski a question about rebuilding gas hose nozzles during the Sunday afternoon open house.

The Five-Year Plan: June 1982

When they passed a 2-mill levy for the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in November 1981, Ashtabula County voters enabled many big and little updates in programs, equipment, and staffing at Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries.

Board officials formulated a five-year plan to ensure that the program will have clear guidelines on how and where the money will be spent. At its last regular

meeting in June 1982, the Board approved the five-year plan and approved several of the projects listed in the plan.

Dr. Douglas Burkhardt emphasized that the Board must approve most projects and purchases in the plan before they can be implemented, and the proposed guidelines are not a rigid agenda that cannot be changed. He said that the Board will review the plan in November when it considers the budget for the year and again in January at the organizational meeting, and that Board members or other officials could add or delete items from the plan. On the cover page of his plan he noted that "The plan shall be organic in that it should be studied at least annually for progress and revision," Dr. Burkhardt wrote on the cover page of the plan.

Some of the projects and purchases listed in the plan have already begun or are ongoing updates that will continue through the five-year plan. The five-year program is a mixture of items that will cost the board money and others that require work and organization, but no money. One project involving more time and effort than money is organizing volunteers and creating policies for a volunteer program.

Some major projects for Happy Hearts School may be approved during the five-year period, including renovation and remodeling to provide additional classroom space, building a stage in the gymnasium, rubberizing the gym floor for safety and adding age-appropriate playground equipment.

Ongoing projects requiring money include installing carpet and drapes and updating gym and school roof repairs. The entire school curriculum will be revised and updated, the volunteer program organized and implemented, and bus routes updated, bus aides added, and buses replaced on an ongoing rotational basis.

Happy Hearts School Slated for Improvements

Part of the five-year plan is focused on updating and improving the Happy Hearts School and according to the plan agenda, many of the improvements will be considered during the remainder of 1982.

Much of the furniture and equipment in the school building dates to its construction nearly 13 years ago. Classroom equipment, furniture, and cafeteria seating items are original and listed to be replaced this year. Other equipment on the hope to purchase list for the school in 1982 included kitchen items to provide additional freezer and storage space, more audio-visual equipment, a podium and portable chairs, portable risers and a public-address system for gym and cafeteria use.

Besides the other curriculum updates, Dr. Burkhardt noted that the Board will consider adding a formal reading program. He also listed hiring two new staff members as a plan priority, stating a certified art enrichment instructor and a social worker for the Infant Stimulation Early Childhood and adult family members were needed.

Dr. Burkhardt also stated that Happy Hearts School needs a breakfast program and targeted 1984 as a starting year to add the program, while noting that so far school officials have not found an effective way to introduce and implement the program.

Ash/Craft Industries Included in the Five-Year Plan

Ash/Craft Sheltered workshop program was also included in the five-year plan, with a list of improvements and additions outlined and tentatively scheduled. A few of the equipment and program improvements on the agenda for the next several years include adding security lighting outside and emergency lighting inside the building, ramps and walkways for doors which currently open out into grass, a dust collecting system for the newly added woodworking area, and an updated public-address system. A recreation area for the adults at the workshop will also be considered.

Possible increases in staff would involve hiring a contract sales representative to help find a marketplace for workshop products and an occupational therapist to help workshop adults become more productive and adapt to changes in production methods.

1983

Mary Ellen Higley Will Lead Board in 1983

The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities re-elected Mary Ellen Higley as its chairwoman at its organization meeting on January 26, 1983.

A teacher at Columbus Junior High School, Mary Ellen Higley has been a Board member since 1980 and served as its 1982 chairwoman. The Board also elected Charles Jeffords who works for the Ashtabula County Board of Education as its 1983 vice chairman.

The board set its regular meeting day, time and place as the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p. at Happy Hearts School, the same as in 1982. During the regular portion of the meeting, the board also adopted a motion to seek bids on two school buses.

As a point of information, Board Superintendent Douglas Burkhardt told the Board that a state Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities report indicated that “the money spent on the Ashtabula County program is less than the state average, less than counties surrounding Ashtabula County, and less than the regional average.” He added that 84.5 percent of the board’s budget is money collected locally from the levy. Only 11 percent of the budget comes from state funding and the rest is federal money,” he said.

Dr. Burkhardt also reported to the Board that the program got a perfect score after a state review just before Christmas. Out of 229 items that were reviewed, 229 of them were marked “compliance” rather than partial-or non-compliance.

Happy Heart Teachers Win in “Cameras in the Curriculum” Contest



Happy Hearts Teachers Carol Pierce, left, and Betty Hartley, show students from their classes the scrapbook which has been sent to Eastman Kodak as part of a competition which could give the classes a donation. The project involved using photography as a learning tool. The class took several field trips, including one to The Gazette, and photos of the trips were taken. The photos are used in classwork and the teachers are “just overwhelmed” with the success of the program. Jefferson Gazette, June 1, 1983.



Happy Hearts students show some of the photos that they took during their field trips to businesses and agencies in the Ashtabula County area. Ashtabula County Sentinel. June 1, 1983.

The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Recognizes the Achievements of Three Happy Hearts Teachers

The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities recently recognized the achievements of Carol Pierce, Betty Hartley, and Carl Schwartz.

Carol Pierce and Betty Hartley won one of 130 national awards presented to teachers who placed in the finals of a "Cameras in the Curriculum" competition featuring over 800 entries. The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Kodak Program sponsored the competition.

Teachers Carol Pierce and Betty Hartley submitted a proposal they called "Community Helpers," which involved taking pictures of various persons in service-oriented jobs, such as mail carriers and firefighters. In the classroom, students are asked to match the pictures with the words that identified the community helpers. Their winning proposal was one of just 12 winning proposals that Ohio teachers submitted and received a \$200 prize. The "Community Helpers" proposal will be published in the NEA-Kodak Curriculum Volume and is eligible for one of six top national awards as well as a monetary prize of up to \$1,500 from the NEA.

The Board also commended teacher Carl Schwartz for his classroom achievements. During the past year, he spearheaded a computer curriculum designed to educate more than 45 mild and severely retarded and handicapped students in the advanced program at Happy Hearts.

According to Board Superintendent Douglas A. Burkhardt, in the last year Carl Schwartz requested and received an Atari educational computer system from the Board which he has been using this year to teach students. Superintendent Burkhardt said, "I don't know of any other school for mentally retarded and handicapped students in the state using computers to teach mild and severely retarded students."

Teacher Schwartz demonstrated the system to board members and briefly reviewed some of the various computer programs he uses to teach basic concepts to students. Programs that he and Board members discussed included the ones created to teach colors, letter recognition, counting, adding, and spelling. He said that students had embraced the computer system, with 90 percent of them successfully using the letter recognition program and 85 percent advancing through the counting program.

According to Carl, he can easily adjust all of the programs to the learning capacity of each individual student. Each program also keeps track of the progress of each student, recording the number of questions answered correctly and incorrectly.

1983: New Computer in Happy Hearts School



A new computer at Happy Hearts School is one of the first attempts in northeastern Ohio to use computers for instruction of mentally retarded and developmentally disabled students. Tim Starkey, one of the new program's most advanced students, is enrolled in the demonstration of one of the computer's programs. Photo by Lisa Sterling. July 14, 1983.

Another newspaper story in the Ashtabula County Sentinel of July 14, 1983 highlighted a new computer which helped Happy Hearts students learn more and how to run the programs of teacher Carl Schwartz.

Happy Hearts principal James Giannell, said that the school is one of the first mental retardation facilities in the state to use a computer.

Carl Schwartz, who teaches the advanced, pre-vocational students at Happy Hearts, proposed the computer program for Happy Hearts. He likes the computer especially because he can program exercises and games for each individual student's needs.

He noted, however, that out of about 12 program he now uses, he has designed and typed nearly every one into the computer system itself. "There are almost no programs written for special needs students," he said.

Principal Giannell said that the students can give the computer yes and no commands and they used that control for about a month, and then teacher Schwartz introduced the keyboard. He said most students can use the keyboard to give the computer commands now. He noted that even children in wheelchairs can use the joy stick to command the computer.

About 10 students are learning to actually program the computer for different things and nearly 40 others are involved in computer-assisted instruction. Computer programs Carl Schwartz has

written can strengthen many skills the students need to practice, including spelling, hand to eye coordination, matching colors, shapes and letters and letter recognition.

“For many of my students it is used mostly as a backup to things they’re learning in other ways,” he said.

1984: Orff Band Represents Ohio at the National Very Special Arts Festival in Washington D.C.



The Orff Players, a group of eight students from Happy Hearts School, will represent Ohio at the National Very Special Arts Festival in Washington, D.C. in May. Travel expenses of \$2,000.00 will be paid by the Association of Retarded Citizens of Ashtabula County, a parent group. Finishing plans for the trip are (left to right) music teacher Mike DeMarino, student Audrey Thomas, AB president Charles Thomas, and travel arranger Merle Bieder. April 11, 1984.

1985



Ash/Craft Industries, Inc.

Ash/Craft Will Provide 85 More Jobs

In a December 10, 1985 story written by Angelo Quaranta, staff writer of the Ashtabula Star Beacon, he quoted Ash/Craft Industries Director Larry Korland as predicting that the recent expansion of the production facilities will provide 85 more jobs for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled clients over the next three years.

Currently, Ash/Craft employs more than 200 people and has increased its manufacturing and assembling capabilities and its instruction and greenhouse space.

Director Korland said that a total of 10,000 square feet was added to the Ash/Craft building and the increase in space allowed Ash/Craft to contract more work from outside companies. Construction was completed in about a year and the expanded area became functional in August. He predicted that over the span of several years, the workshop would be able to employ more than 300 people.

According to Director Korland, besides the Ash/Craft expansion, builders have added 1,800 square feet of greenhouse space and 1,600 square feet of classroom space.

A June 1986 story in the New Directions Community newsletter announced that after the Ash/Craft expansion was completed the last fall, the workshop which had been operating two shifts since 1983, would combine them into one beginning on June 30th. The 60 second shift workers were transferred into the mainstream of work activities on the day shift. Continuing education and speech and physical therapy services were more readily available to single shift workers and the merger allowed the elimination of some duplicated services on both shifts.

Transportation Trails

Mechanic David Weaver reported in the June 1986 issue of New Directions that the Happy Hearts-Ash/Craft Transportation Department was changing to diesel vehicles to save fuel, reduce maintenance, and save the environment. He said that by September 1, 1986, diesel buses would cover one third of the bus routes.

Transportation Coordinator James R. Kane said that the Transportation Department has eighteen routes covering all corners of Ashtabula County and traveling 1,637 miles a day.

1986: Looking at Levies

A June 1986 article in New Directions, the community newsletter of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities spotlights the financial headaches of funding Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries, Inc.

On November 4, 1986 the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (169 Board) sought to replace a 2.0 mill levy that would expire at the end of the year. The current levy was the primary source of the Board's funding to run the school and workshop and the new levy had to be approved if the programs and services were to continue after December 31, 1986.

The Board reviewed the program's needs for the next five years, including a projected increase in enrollment. It was expected that a final determination of the funds needed would be made in late June.

The levy was first approved by the voters in 1981 and collected the same amount today that it did five years ago when it became effective. In fact, as businesses have closed in Ashtabula County, the collection each year has gone down, with 1986 collection being nearly one-half million dollars less than it was in 1981. This has made the past few years very lean, as it has for most of the community.

These factors have made additional funds necessary, since enrollment will be up and collections down. Also, the five-year plans must be made, since our tax collection does not increase as property values go up. We must plan 1991 budgets on 1986-dollar values.

Mrs. Inez Gaumer, a member of the Association for Retarded Citizens of Ashtabula County and parent of an adult at Ash/Craft, has graciously agreed to serve as Levy Campaign Chairperson. The real work begins after the Board has determined its needs. The public has supported our program in the past, and continued support depends on our ability to get the information across to the voters before November 4th.

ARC spent \$3,000 on the levy that failed and in 1987 \$3,500 more for the levy fund.

An article from MR/DD Board Superintendent Richard J. Cozza, Jr. in the June 1986 New Directions Newsletter warned that the crisis point in state funding for educational and social services programs was rapidly approaching. Several events over the next year will greatly impact programs such as County Boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities, he wrote.

Superintendent Cozza identified the events as a second state income tax cut; public opinion about a tax increase; and the Gramm-Rudman budget cuts. He said that a second 5 percent cut in the Ohio State Income Tax would take effect in January 1987 if the state unemployment rate fell to 7 percent or lower. Currently the rate is at 7.4 percent, and it is very possible that this second five percent cut will take place. Since it was the 1984 tax increase that brought needed state funding to MR/DD programs, it is likely that this 5 percent reduction will directly reduce this funding once again. This will severely affect program revenue.

Opinion polls still show that the majority of Ohio residents feel that the 1984 tax increase was unnecessary. It was only through this tax increase that our program received the much-needed funding that kept us from making reductions in service this year. Believe me, it was very necessary to us and to education in general.

The second round of Gramm-Rudman reductions is scheduled to go into effect on October 1st. This round of cuts is to be more severe than those done earlier this year. Federal Revenue Sharing has already been reduced and this will begin to severely limit local and community agencies. The second Gramm-Rudman cut will hit social services hard again.

Your understanding of these issues is important. As the state budget unfolds and as the legislature discusses the next 5 percent tax cut, public input on behalf of this program will be needed to preserve the funding of the State of Ohio achieved over the past few years. Be aware of the political and legislature actions in Columbus over the next 6-9 months, and act accordingly as events develop.

1987

Closing and Opening and a New Principal

On June 3, 1987, Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries had to close because voters turned down a levy at the polls. After being reintroduced, a levy passed in August and the school and workshop reopened. At this point in time, Ash/Craft served 220 mentally retarded adults and Happy Hearts 158 children from infants to age 21.

Happy Hearts Gains a New Principal

September 24, 1987

Last week, the Ashtabula Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities appointed Russell Grippi, who has been with the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Environmental Disabilities for more than 17 years, as principal.

The newly appointed principal has been serving as acting principal since January. Before assuming his principal duties, Russell had been Early Childhood Director at Happy Hearts. He has been with the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Environmental Disabilities for more than 17 years.

He was made principal as a cost saving measure to fit the budget of the newly passed 2-mill operating levy. Before merging the two positions, the principal's salary was \$34,000. Russ received a five percent pay increase and now earns \$38,200 after assuming the principal's job in addition to the previous Early Childhood director position.

His duties, as they have been for the past nine months, will be to oversee the entire children's program. He said that he used to be responsible for newborn children through age six, but that has now expanded to age 21. "I love my new position. It is a great opportunity to be able to help the children and effectively be a part of their educational planning."

Russ said he will also be overseeing referral intake, multi-disciplinary evaluations, curriculum coordination with local school districts and supervision of both the teaching and support staff.

Looking at Levies, 1987

Program Reopens with Levy Passage...Financial Crisis Ahead

by Richard J. Cozza, Jr. Superintendent

November 1987

With the passage of a replacement levy on August 4, the Ash/Craft sheltered workshop was able to reopen on August 17th and the school on August 31st. This reopening was only done through a reduction of 20 staff positions, the reduction being approved by the Board the week following levy passage. The program has been closed for two months due to lack of funds.

The staffing reductions increased class sizes to, in many cases, the maximum allowed by the Ohio Department of Education, reduced speech and physical therapy services, increased transportation times on several routes to near the state maximum of 90 minutes and decreased clerical/office maintenance support within the program.

The Board will be forced to use advances on the 1988 state subsidy to operate through the last part of 1987, leaving fewer available dollars for 1988. The first one to two years of the levy will be very difficult financially, and further reductions or additional unexpected revenue in the future, will be needed to balance the budget for 1989 and beyond. Further reductions, however, put the Board in danger of being below the level of compliance with State standards.

As a result of the passage of only a replacement levy, the Board, at its October meeting, authorized the Superintendent to begin the redevelopment of a long-range plan. Ohio law requires the Board to annually develop and submit a 3-year plan for its programs and services. The previous plan formed the basis of the increased levy request made in November 1986 and February 1987. The plan will have to be redeveloped on the basis of current information and community support.

At the same time that local funding is being held at replacement levels, State funding is static due to the State's biennium budget reductions, and federal funds are continuing to erode. This entire picture puts the program into a position where the future is very cautious, indeed.

Inez Gaumer Honored for Levy Efforts

November, 1987

After over a year of efforts to assist in the passage of local levy support, Inez Gaumer deserves the recognition of everyone involved with the Happy hearts and Ash/Craft programs. In September, the program staff held a reception in her honor to recognize her often tireless energy and stamina. In addition, the MR/DD Board officially recognized her efforts at its October 21st meeting, presenting her with a plaque from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MR/DD and a proclamation from the Ohio Senate.

The Board Chairman, Richard Bryant, acknowledged the years of service that Mrs. Gaumer has given to handicapped people in the Board's programs, the Association for Retarded Citizens, and in the community.

MR/DD Budget Approved: December 23, 1987

The Ashtabula County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board (169 Board) approved its 1988 budget of \$3,852,158.90 at its recent meeting. The new budget was financially identical to the 1986 budget said Board Superintendent Richard J. Cozza, He said that there will be a few changes, including the hiring of a night janitor.

Several additional people may be able to be hired through grant money for specific programs, Superintendent Cozza said.

Ash/Craft Work Benefits County

January 17, 1988

Ash/Craft Industries Inc. is more than a training facility for mentally handicapped individuals. It's an arm of the business community, according to its director of adult services, Larry Korland, who has been at Ash/Craft for 12 years. He said people fail to realize the contribution the industry makes to the community. Korland said business have stated that by subcontracting work with Ash/Craft Industries they have saved money and in turn, saved jobs in their own facilities.

"We can help the business community here," Korland said. "We are an arm of the business community."



Mari-jo Wilson sorts key tags at Ash/Craft Industries, Inc.



Jerry Manus custom cuts cardboard on the band saw and shapes it to fit customer specifications.

Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board Meets

The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities met in January 1988 and considered several items of business. The Board discussed a proposal to create an Ashtabula County Special Olympics Booster Club and said that it would provide equipment and transportation for the program.

In personnel matters, the Board announced that Jean Fields would be a new board member effective January 1, 1988, and that Russell Grippi had resigned his position as principal to become a community placement specialist at the Ash/Craft Adult Workshop. Over a period of 18 years, Russell Grippi served in various positions at Happy Hearts including teaching,

administrative work, early childhood directing, and as principal. Although he knew the move in positions would mean a cut in pay, he was unsure about exact salary figures. He said the new position, tentatively beginning on March 8, would involve working directly with students and their families for accurate job placements in the community.

“I felt I took over at a very good time and I tried to do a good job. I feel I did a good job. They were seeking an applicant and I wanted to be considered. I am moving to a non-administrative position that will enable me to continue to be effective in doing what I like to do. I want to work directly with the clients,” he said.

Happy Hearts School Superintendent Richard J. Cozza Jr. said he was notified about Russ Grippi’s desire to fill the vacant position at Ash/Craft about a week ago. He said he has placed advertisements in local publications in Cleveland, Erie, and Pittsburgh in hopes of filling the state funded principal’s vacancy by the Feb. 15 deadline.

According to Superintendent Cozza, there are 210 retarded adults in the Ash/Craft workshop and of those 210 adults, Russ Grippi will be placing 12 adults into jobs that are presently nearing community placement and 12 graduating seniors moving directly into the community instead of the sheltered workshop atmosphere.

“I think Grippe did a really good job here,” Superintendent Cozza said. He knows the community and numerous businesses and I think he will place the adults in very good jobs.”

The Ohio State Department of Education recently visited Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft and commended the program for operating without deficiencies.



Students from Betty Hartley’s intermediate class at Happy Hearts School prepare to bury a time capsule to be opened in the year 2,000. A variety of items were placed in the capsule including a videotape of the class, a Billy Ray Cyrus tape and a recent newspaper. (From left) Beth Harley, Ron

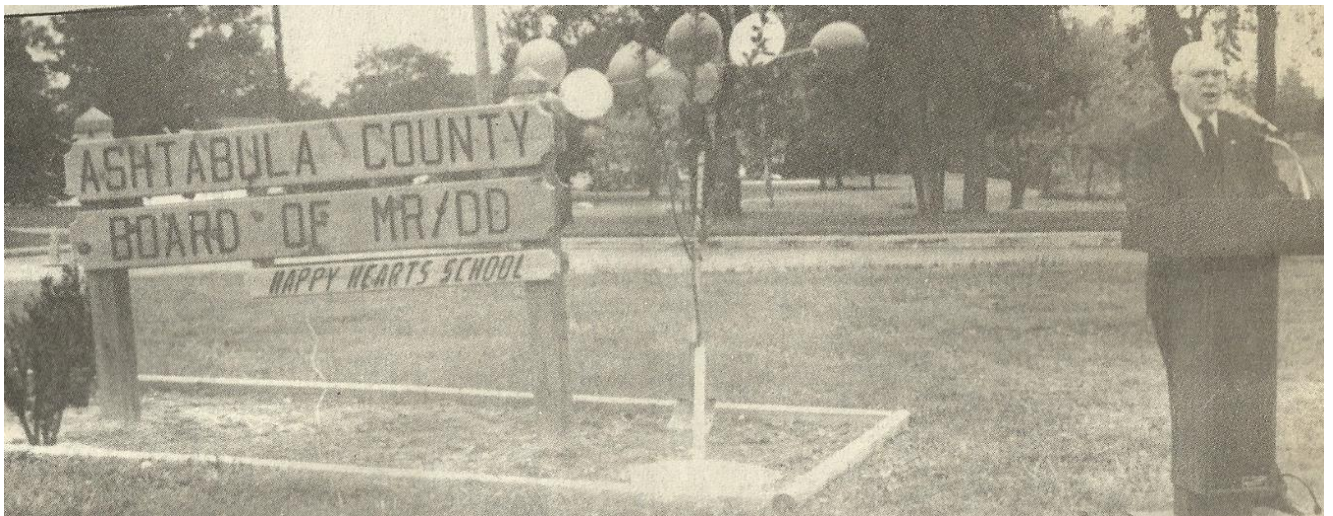
Turner, Tom Misch, Rob DeCaro, Matt Mucci and Betty Hartley. Not pictured but involved in the project are Renee Barnard, Nicole Spangler and assistant teacher Marian Flickinger. Star Beacon photograph by Warren Dillaway.



Teacher of the year. Betty Hartley was honored recently for her 25 years as a teacher at Happy Hearts School. She has been working with the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Also pictured are former 169 Board chairman Charles Jeffords, superintendent of Southington Local Schools, Trumbull

County (left) and board chairman Dr. Edward James. April 29, 1988. Photograph by John A. Childress.

Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft Rededicate After Twenty Years in their Building



Dr. Edward James, president of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, gives a brief history of the Happy Hearts School during the 20th

anniversary rededication ceremony on September 23, 1988. The ceremony took place in front of Happy Hearts School. The sign at left was donated by the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company. Workers at the Ashtabula plant donated time and erected the sign for the school. John A. Childress took the Ashtabula Star Beacon photograph.

September 23, 1988

On September 23, 1988, the Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries celebrated their 20th anniversary with a rededication and open house. The celebration begins at 10 a.m. with an open house including tours of both facilities at 2505 South Ridge Road East. Open house runs until 2 p.m. with the rededication at 1 p.m.

Ashtabula County Commissioner Jeanne Bento is expected to speak at the ceremony, as well as Edward James, president of the Ashtabula County (169) Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

“What we’re doing is honoring those parents and volunteers who 20 years ago spent a great deal of time and effort to get the legislation passed, to establish the program and build the school,” said Richard J. Cozza Jr., 169 Board Superintendent.

Happy Hearts School opened in September 1968. Programs took place since the late 1950s and early 1960s in church basements and other temporary headquarters. The building housed Ash/Craft Industries, a few years later when the 169 Board began to work with adults, Board Superintendent Richard Cozza said.

Later expansions included erection of a separate building to house the sheltered workshop in 1975. The building was expanded in 1985.

As part of the celebration, an anonymous business donor has given the board about \$200 for landscaping, he said. The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company also has given a new sign for the school to replace an aging one.

“We plan to plant some crabapple trees by the sign and put up a plaque on one of the outside pillars near the front door of the building to say that the trees were planted to honor all of those who worked to establish the school,” Superintendent Cozza said.

Winter, 1988

Long Range Planning Committee Completes Work

A Long-Range Planning Committee has been reviewing the three-year needs of the program for the past six months. The Committee is composed of staff, a parent and a Board member, and they have had the responsibility of recommending how the Board should move in the areas of program, finances and community involvement.

The Committee determined that 1989 will be the last year that the program can operate at even the reduced staffing level which has been in effect since re-opening in 1987. Without new sources of revenue by 1990, the Board may have to begin abandoning some of its school services

to local public schools. While this has already begun to occur naturally, such a forced situation for reasons of funding alone would be quite difficult for parents and local school districts in such a short time.

The Committee recommended a gradual movement of agency services into community settings, along with the continuation of cooperative programs with other community agencies. This would allow the Board to alleviate the substantial overcrowding at the school without additional construction, which is simply not possible due to cost.

Unfortunately, the nearly one-hundred adults currently on a waiting list for services will not be able to be served in the adult program through even a modest funding increase. These people will have to be served through temporary homebased services, insuring little real addressing of their needs. Services for a substantially growing group of young children with handicaps will also not be sufficient to meet the need.

The report is not optimistic, and additional funds are required to make even modest efforts at community movement and to keep services at current, though reduced levels. The Committee made specific funding recommendations which will be reviewed by the Board over the next few months.

We thank the Committee for their efforts and insight. The next few years will be very difficult, especially in light of the County's economics. Hopefully, the Committee's recommendations will assist in getting us through with a minimum of heartache and hardship.

1989

Partnerships in Job Training

Happy Hearts School and the Job Training & Partnership Act, a federal job training program, have negotiated a cooperative education agreement which allows eligible students to work in an entry level job during the 1988-1989 school year. The Program mission is to provide training and work experiences to help special needs students secure employment in the community.

The Ashtabula Board of MR/DD submitted an Exemplary Youth Proposal and the Ashtabula County Private Industry Council and the County Commissioners approved the proposal for Job Training & Partnership Act funding. Happy Hearts teachers are implementing the Proposal with students in the Advanced classes.

Six students presently work in the housekeeping and laundry departments of the Ashtabula County Nursing Home for two hours a day. A teacher from Happy Hearts School supervises the students and coordinates with the County Home staff in providing on the job training. Eleven other students are working at Happy Hearts School in the food service and maintenance areas. Four of the students have already completed the initial training period while the remaining seven students continue to develop the skills necessary to enter the program's employment phase.

Besides the program's on-the-job training and employment phases, students also receive lessons in language, math, socialization, and self-help skills.

Parents of the students involved in the program work with their teachers to help develop the independence and necessary skills to find appropriate employment in the Ashtabula community.

1980s Events



April 6, 1980. New members of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation, the Reverend Daniel Kulesa (left) and Mary Ellen Higley view a disassembling job being performed by Ash/Craft Workshop adults with adult services supervisor Larry Korland. Board members toured the workshop area that Korland says is in need of extra storage space.



At left, Brad Millspaugh and Lela Holcamp examine a bird's nest during a scavenger hunt on an overnight Happy Hearts School campout. Joe Dispenza, an instructor, and student Tammy

Hayes watch. About 25 teenagers participated in the program. They enjoyed a kickball game, sing-along, picnicking, and sleeping outside under tents. Photo by Sam Adamo. June 19, 1980.



Recognition. Several teachers, teachers' aides and staff members of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities were recently honored for their years of service by the United Commercial Travelers of America Lake Shore Council No. 330.

Those recognized include (from left – Martin Oicklider, 25 years; Cassie Smith, 16 years; Richard Stoner, 25 years; Linda Moroski, 16 years; Beverly Skarlinski, 17 years; Russell Grippi, 19 years; and Betty Hartley, 25 years. May, 10, 1989. Photo by Cliff Pinckard.



The happy winner that created the name of the day camp, Camp Sunshine, is Missy Feke, pictured with director Russell Grippe at the final day's awards

Timeline, 1980s

1980

- 25th Anniversary Open House
- Maples II for girls opens, A.R.C. donates \$6,000.
- Orff players perform at Deepwood Very Special Arts Festival.

1981

- Dorothy Bishop retires.
- Council purchases 9 sets of caps and gowns for upcoming graduation at a cost of \$112.50.
- 2 mill levy passes.

1982

- Revision of Council's constitution was begun, changing name to Ashtabula County Association for Retarded Citizens.
- June 2, 1982, First formal school graduation was held, a dream which became a reality due to the work of the A.R.C.

1983

- Orff players perform in Cleveland.
- Annual Benefit dance for the Association for Retarded Citizens of Ashtabula planned by Sheila Woode, Charles Thomas, Rodney Stevens, Audrey Thomas, and Ann Lovas. The dance will be held at Grotto Hall and Boss Music will provide music. Proceeds will go into a fund to be used for construction of a therapeutic play area for Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries.
- March 15, 1983. Sherri Baumgardner and Diane Dickson made silk flower arrangements at Ash-Craft greenhouse. The arrangements were available for weddings and other occasions. The greenhouse also sells fresh flowers wholesale and retail.
- Ash/Craft Greenhouses featured a full line of geraniums, annuals, vegetables, hanging baskets, porch box planters, and more.

1984

- \$2,000 raised to help pay for Orff band trip to Washington DC. as Ohio's representative to the Special Arts Festival. Orff Band performs at Kennedy Center and is on National Public Radio.
- Program begins saving Campbell's labels.
- First Winter Special Olympics games held at Swiss Haus in Madison.

1985

- According to Ash/Craft Industries Director Larry Korland, recent expansion of the production facilities at the workshop will provide 85 more jobs for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled persons over the next three years.

1986

- The 1986 Summer Day Camp, begins on June 17th, 1986 and ends on Thursday, July 24th. In 1986, it included infants and their parents as well as school age children in the summer program.
- In 1986, for the first time, Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft will have full time physical therapy services. Debbie Hills began working in October of 1985 as a licensed Physical Therapist, and she will be working full time hours this year.
- The newest additions to the educational programming at Happy Hearts School, Infant Stimulation and Early Childhood Classes, have made some major changes in the programming. The program formerly used only a school-based model with parents and family members bringing infants to school twice weekly. Now the infant stimulation teacher, physical therapist, speech therapist and psychologist meet with a baby once in the infant stimulation school setting and once in the home setting. Making home visits allows the teacher and parents to have some private time together to discuss personal needs of the family and how to enhance the home environment to better meet the stimulation needs of the baby.

1987

- Happy Hearts School closed in June 1987, after Ashtabula County voters turned down an operating levy. It reopened in August after a reintroduced levy passed.
- In 1987, Ash/Craft served 220 mentally retarded adults and Happy Hearts served 158 children from infants to age 21.
- Russell Grippi became Happy Hearts new principal in September.
- December 23, 1987. The Ashtabula County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board (169 Board) approved its 1988 budget of \$3,852,158.90 at its recent meeting. The new budget was financially identical to the 1986 budget said Board Superintendent Richard J. Cozza.
- The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities initiated a campaign to provide crossing signals at the Green Road railroad grade crossing.

1988

- 12 students participated in a Training Program at the County Nursing Home funded by J.T.P.A.
- The physical education teacher was now required to hold certification in the area of Adapted Physical Education.
- County Early-Intervention Collaborative initiated.
- Community Newsletter established.
- Cynthia Phillips was named school principal.
- Special Olympics Booster Club persuaded operating engineers to place equipment in field to begin work on the PARK.
- The Ashtabula County Board of MR/DD presents Inez Gaumer with a plaque from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MR/DD, as well as, a proclamation from the Ohio State Senate.
- September 1. Teacher's Union (A.C.E.M.H.) strike averted.

1989

- Lincoln satellite for preschoolers was established.
- 12 students participated in a training program at the County Nursing Home funded by J.T. P.A.
- Mary Ellen Higley was hired as the school principal.
- Ongoing residential providers meetings begin under Case Management.
- The field between the school and Ash/Craft is transformed into three workable levels and the PARK becomes a reality.
- The PARK was funded through not only local support, but also monies came from Texas, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Florida, and Japan.
- School Bus Safety Program Committee formed. "Hands Up For Bus Safety."
- Theresa Spang, Special Olympic athlete, is selected to act as the torch-bearer and will light the ceremonial torch at the State Games in Columbus.
- Amy Turner, Special Olympic Skater, competes in the National Olympics in Philadelphia.

Special Story: Edwina Payne, Mother of Many Hats

December 21, 1980

On December 21, 1980, a story by Lucille Donley, Ashtabula Sunday Paper Reporter, focused on the life of Edwina Payne of Andover, who had been selected as an “Outstanding Young Woman of America.”

Edwina Lossee Payne, 33, said that she doesn’t think she is any different than anyone else. In fact, she believes she is just doing her job. Edwina wears many hats while she is doing her job. She is a wife and mother, a homemaker and active in community activities. She works full time and meets the daily challenge of dealing physically and emotionally with a severely handicapped child, a husband, and two other children.

She is human enough to admit to hating to get up in the morning, but realistically stating that “once my feet hit the floor, I’m moving.” She attributes her ability to daily navigate through her demanding schedule to a super husband, being organized, “and praying her way through a lot of situations.”

According to Edwina, being organized is simply self-defense, because she gets frustrated when she is not organized.

Her friends say that once Edwina gets an idea, it’s half done.

Edwina’s husband Robert is a plant manager at Bernel Foam Products in Chardon. They have three boys: Robert Jr., and Christian who are students in Pymatuning Valley School District and Daniel, who is a student at Happy Hearts School in North Kingsville.

Ten-year-old Daniel has taught the rest of his family valuable life lessons. He is microcephalic and motor and mentally retarded as well as having cerebral palsy, myoclonic seizures and he has had his right eye removed. Edwina Payne accepts her sons handicaps and encourages him to live the best life he can, setting a daily example for the rest of her family.

Daniel is in the primary division at Happy Hearts School and Edwina says that deciding to allow him “to get on that big yellow bus and go 30 miles away to school” is the hardest decision she ever made. She felt no one else would be able to get through to him because he has such trouble communicating.

A friend told her that “you have to let him go away so you can have him come back.”

Edwina Payne discovered that her friend’s advice proved to be correct.