

Chapter Three: Soaring Through The 1970s



The new administration of the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Citizens assumed their duties of office. Fred Ruffo, (seated), Mrs. Kathleen Crofoot, Mrs. Myron Hudson, Mrs. James Theiss and Mrs. Stanley Gaumer are installed by Dr. Edward James (right) past president. January 22, 1970.

Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries achieved many new programs and services for developmentally disabled people and their families during the 1970s. A hot lunch program provided nourishing meals, a fleet of 13 school buses transported students, and a summer camp programs provided them with new learning experiences during the summer.

Expanded nursing, speech therapy, and psychological services aided pupils and their families and infant stimulation classes helped the youngest pupils begin their journey through Happy Hearts. Home training services reached out to children and adults unable to attend the on-site Happy Hearts classes.

The Ohio Department of Education chartered Happy Hearts School as a validation of the quality and effectiveness of its programs and the dedication and hard work of its now nearly 100 employees.

In the 1970s, ARC spearheaded the development of a long-range commitment to establishing local residential facilities, and by 1975, it had raised and donated a total of \$5,000.00 towards establishing the first group home for men, Maples I in Kingsville.

In 1970, Scoutmaster Joe Urban's Boy Scouts received an award and citation for their booth at the Scout-A-Rama. The Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts were struggling to find volunteer leaders.

At the Ashtabula Council for Retarded Citizens meeting rooms, awards were given for the most parents present at ARC meetings.

On February 19, 1970, 92 Happy Hearts Students enjoyed hot lunches. Mrs. Louys was paid a salary of \$300 for leading a summer recreation program every Tuesday and Thursday for six

weeks, while counselors were paid \$15 per week. In July 1970, 13 children won 16 medals at Special Olympics in Cleveland.

In November, 102 people, 63 of them parents, attended Walk in Your Child's Shoes night.

Ashtabula County Teachers of the Trainable Retarded



Officers for the 1971-1972 school year for the Association of Ashtabula County Teachers of the Trainable Retarded are (from left) Miss Betty Hartley, treasurer; Mrs. Vincent Bishop, vice president, Russell Grippi, president and Miss Alyce R. Lange, secretary.



Officers for the 1972-1973 school year of the Association of Ashtabula County Teachers of the Trainable Retarded are (from left) Miss Denise Davis, Miss Betty Hartley, Mrs. Byron Johnson and Mrs. Vincent Bishop.

Mrs. Bishop is President

Officers for the 1972-1973 year of the Association for Ashtabula County Teachers of the Trainable Retarded are Mrs. Vincent Bishop, president;

Miss Betty Hartley, vice president; Mrs. Byron Johnson, secretary; and Miss Denise Davis, treasurer. The mission of the Association, now in its fifth year, is to enrich the program for the retarded and to increase the knowledge and understanding of the staff through in-service training.

Committees for the coming year include Miss Davis, Miss Aili Hokkanen and Mrs. Russell Bidwell, social activities; Mrs. Michael Howland; Robert McCartney; and Miss Rosemary Kennedy, ways and means.

Miss Alyce Lange; Russell Grippi; Carl Schwartz, and Mrs. Gene Triozzi, professional growth, Miss Hartley; Mrs. Peter Bennett and Mrs. Johnson, program development. Mrs. Joseph Seaman; Miss Judy Albert; and Miss Susan Kennedy, public relations and Mrs. Bennett and Miss Kennedy, work benefits.

The Program Development Committee is planning a series of meetings for the discussion of particular children and ways of satisfying their special needs.

Mrs. Inez Gaumer Heads Council

January 22, 1971

Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children convened Tuesday at Happy Hearts School for election and installation of officers. Mrs. Stanley Gaumer will act as council president, assisted by Mrs. Joseph Hunter, vice president; Mrs. James Theiss, secretary; Mrs. Bruno Kohowski, financial secretary and Mrs. Myron Hudson, treasurer.

Officers for 1970, Fred Ruffo; Mrs. Gaumer; Mrs. Theiss; and Mrs. Hudson gave yearly reports. Chairmen of standing committees Mrs. Hunter; Mrs. Stanley Giddings; Mrs. Gaumer; Mrs. Kohowski; Francis Barrett and Joseph Urban were named. A white elephant and bake sale will be conducted February 6 and 7 at the garage sale at St. Joseph School.

Ashtabula Countians Attend State Convention



May 18, 1971

(Seated right to left) Mrs. Nadine Moroski; Mrs., Stanley Gaumer, president of the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children; and Mrs. Joseph Hunter attended the state convention in Columbus. (Standing) Wayne Reese, Happy Hearts School Director and Dr. Edward James also attended.

Several members of the Ashtabula Council for Retarded Children attended the 19th Annual Ohio Association Retarded Children state convention last Thursday through Sunday in Columbus.

The program reflected issues of national, state and local scope and were geared to the parent volunteers as well as teachers, counselors and other professionals.

Dr. Edward James of Ashtabula, chairman of the nominating committee, submitted their selections to the members at a business meeting Sunday. Walter F. Schoenig, Cleveland, was reelected president.

Delegates and alternates respectively to the convention were Mrs. Stanley Gaumer, Ashtabula, and Mrs. Joseph Hunter, North Kingsville. Others attending from Ashtabula County were Wayne Reese, director of Happy Hearts School; Mr. Hunter, chairman of the Mental Retardation Board; Mrs. Paul Berg, Ashtabula; Mrs. Nadine Moroski, Kingsville; and Francis Barrett, Ashtabula.

Happy Hearts Adds to Staff



(Seated) Miss Diana Jones; Mrs. James Cusano; Mrs. John Watson; and (standing) Mrs. Shirley Mossford; Miss Faye Layman; Mrs. Wilbert Tormala all of Ashtabula; and Wayne G. Reese discuss the coming school year on September 29, 1971.

There are now nine buses covering the entire county and two new drivers. New this year are Mrs. John Watson, Conneaut; and Mrs. James Cusano, Ashtabula. School opened with 105 students in Happy Hearts classes and 56 clients in the adult program including Ash/Craft Sheltered workshop and the Adult Activity Center.

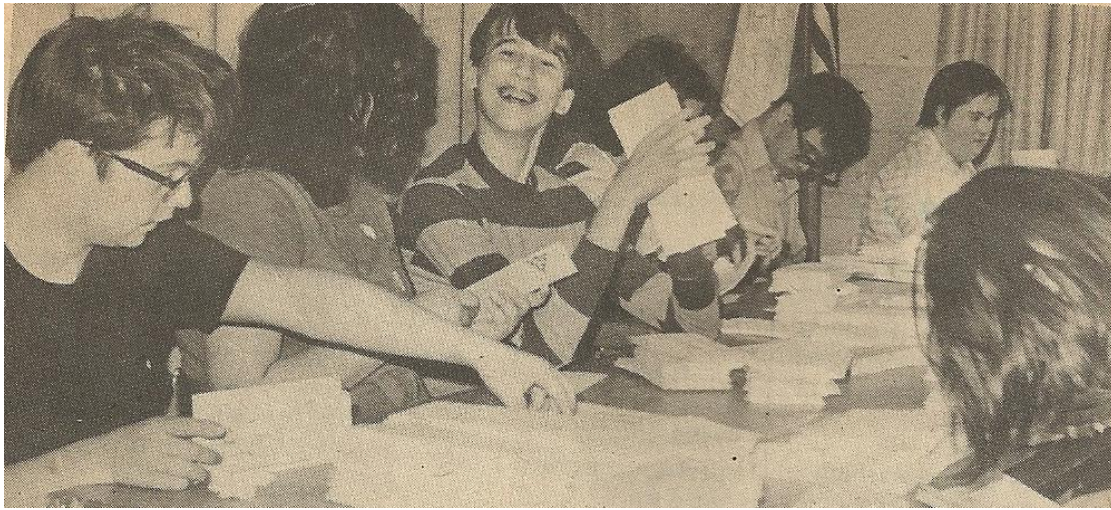
Home training services are extended to 35 additional families, according to Wayne G. Reese, administrator.

All students and clients are being tested and screened this month in the areas of speech, language and hearing by a professional team from the Montgomery Institute of Akron.

W.H. Searcy, county school superintendent, was welcomed as a new member of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation at the August board meeting.

Happy Hearts Students Stuff TB Yule Seals

October 1971



The pre-workshop class at Happy Hearts School places the Christmas Seals in the envelopes in the last step of preparation for mailing to 20,000 persons throughout the county. This sale of Christmas Seals is the means of financial support for the Ashtabula County Tuberculosis and Health Association.

Under the direction of Carl Schwartz, the class places three sheets of stamps, the return envelope and the letter in the envelope making certain that the address label is visible through the window.

This process is on an assembly line basis and it's going much faster than last year," Mr. Schwartz said. "This is the student's first chance to do something for someone else or some organization."

Sale Proceeds Will Benefit Happy Hearts School

October 29, 1971

Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children

Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children will sponsor a bazaar and bake sale November 11 and 12 at Happy Hearts School.

Mrs. Burt Smith, Ways and Means Chairman, announced plans for the event at a recent council meeting. She also reported on the proceeds from the fall dance which benefitted the school. Each member of the teaching staff and all bus drivers of Happy Hearts School received a check from the council. The checks are to be used for additional or special equipment or supplies needed in the classrooms or on the buses.

Mrs. Stanley Gaumer, president, announced that the council will host the North East Regional Conference of the state association on November 20 at the school. The all-day affair will be attended by delegates and members of other councils for the retarded in 16 counties in the area.

The Council sponsors monthly dances for the clients of Ash/Craft and students of the upper level classes. The Majestic furnished music for the costume dance held Thursday. Area junior and senior high school students interested in assisting at these dances and other functions can contact Mrs. Gaumer.

Basket Ball Uniforms and School Colors



Wining selections in the colors and name contest for the school basketball team were announced. The team name will be "Road Runners" selected by Dan Custead and team colors navy and light blue selected by Brian Lockett.



Savings account awards are presented by Warren Andrews (right) Ashtabula County Savings & Loan Co. executive vice president and secretary to Daniel Custead (center) and Brian Lockett, standing in front of his father, Purnell Howard. The two won a Happy Hearts School basketball team name and color contest. Mr. Custead chose the name "Roadrunners" and Brian selected team colors of navy and light blue. Uniforms are provided through the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children. A special game to which the public is invited, will be held at the school. November 15, 1971.

Members chosen to serve on the nominating committee were Fred Ruffo, chairman; Mrs. Nadine Moroski and Mrs. Harry Church. They are to report their nominations for 1972 officers at the next meeting, November 16 at 8 p.m. at the school.

Mrs. Henry Roux announced a need for volunteers for scoutmaster and den mothers for Cub Scouts. Anyone interested can contact Mrs. Roux of Jefferson or the school.

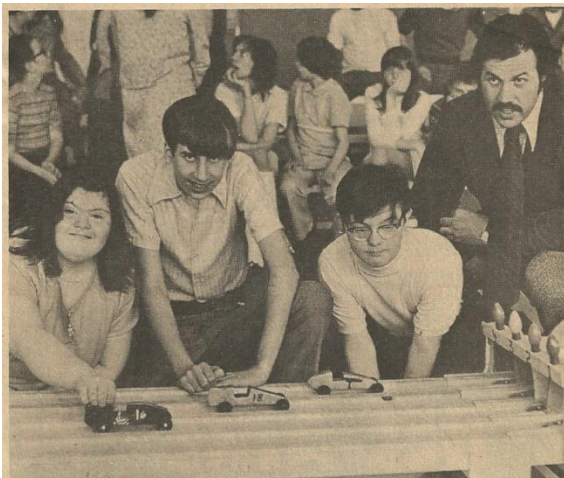
A film showing living conditions at state institutions for the mentally retarded was viewed by members. This 15-minute film, produced and narrated by Dave Patterson, a Cleveland newsman, is being purchased by the council and will be available for showing to any club or organization

In 1972, the Council purchased basketball uniforms for the "Roadrunners," the Happy Hearts basketball team. To address a need for seating during basketball games and other sports event, the Council purchased bleachers for the gym. In keeping with an ongoing commitment to a Special Olympics Program each year. Council sponsors students and purchases Olympics shirts for participants.

The February 1972 issue of *The Link*, published by the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children, features the report of President Inez Gaumer. In one section President Gaumer mentioned the projects that the Council funded for the year, which included deck and fencing for the swimming pool used for the summer recreation program. The council paid the registration for members attending the ARC Convention, and for the Scoutmaster and adult leaders attending camp Stigwandish as well as half of the fee for any student attending either Camp Herrick or Camp Stigwandish. The Council also purchased two table tennis tables for the Sunday afternoon family recreation and two sections of bleachers for the gymnasium.

President Gaumer also noted that in 1972 the 169 Board (Ashtabula County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board) took over the Summer Recreation Program. The Summer Recreation Program originated with the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Citizens in 1966 and the Council maintained it for six years. The availability of bus transportation made it possible for more students to attend last year. "It is my hope that this much needed and valuable program continues and improves each year," she added.

Students Build and Race Cars



A different Mari-Jo Wilson from the little girl on the front cover of the book races her car in the Pinewood Derby.

Twenty-one students at Happy Hearts School, ages 12 through 16, participated in a Pinewood Derby in the spring. Each student built a miniature car, following construction from basic sanding, cutting, and painting of the wood to gluing and wheel fitting.

Judges for the event were Wayne G. Reese, administrator; Howard Dunlavy; and James Conroy. Presenting prizes was Jim Kanicki, defensive tackle for the New York Giants. Mari-jo Wilson (left) is the little girl on the cover of the book.

Nadine Moroski Attends the Convention

The May 1973 edition of *The Link*, the newsletter of the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children, reported that thirteen Council members attended the twenty-first annual convention of the Ohio Association for Retarded Children. Several of them gave reports about the workshops they attended, including Membership Chairwoman Nadine Moroski. She attended the workshop on Accreditation Standards for Residential Facilities. Mrs. Joanne Sidles was chairperson and speakers were Ted Taylor of the Joint Commission on Accreditation; Dr. Roger Gove, Commissioner of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities of Columbus; and Susan Turner of the Office of Developmental Disabilities and Coordinator of Residential Facilities for the State of Ohio.

Nadine wrote in her meeting report that the gist of the remarks made at the meeting were that all these people were anxious to work toward meeting these standards. "I have had a copy of these standards for over a year, and you should read them to realize how we are being put on about what should or should not be done."

She wrote, "I recommend a generous amount of common sense and a reading of the Record in the Residential Newsletter as edited by Mrs. Eleanor Elkins. "I think she can bring us down to earth on what to do and what not to do. This accreditation Gobble de Gook is for a later date. How ridiculous can you get in regards to obtainable goals? If we can inject some improvement in our institution situation and communal living, maybe we can go on from there."

MR/DD Board Adopts 1976 Budget

In December 1975, the Ashtabula County Mental Retardation (169) Board adopted a budget for 1976 that was 20 per cent higher than the current budget, increasing from \$650,313 to \$782,558. The new budget included establishing an adult services director and three other staff members in that area, developing an infant stimulation program, and adding \$8,000 for four buses.

Another added cost in the new budget is school participation in a residential services program. The adult services director would be in charge of all adult programs. "We feel the adult program will expand fairly rapidly in the next few years. We want to achieve the hiring of a director in the near future," director Dr. William Hall said.

Patrick Martin, a field representative for the Ohio Association of Public School Employees, asked to be recognized as representing non-certified personnel at Happy Hearts School in upcoming labor negotiations. According to Dr. Hall, the people Martin wanted to represent were bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, workshop specialists and cooks. He said that the 169 Board

would have to consult its lawyers, the county prosecutor, and the county commissioners before it could rule on Mr. Martin's request. The County Commissioners must approve the 169 Board's new budget.

The Board received a request focused mainly on teacher and teacher aide salaries from the two groups, but Dr. Hall said that the Board hadn't yet received a package from the non-certified group. Board chairman Edward Lawler named a panel of three board members to analyze the teachers' proposal and meet with the teachers to see what could be worked out. According to Dr. Hall, the beginning salary for a certified teacher with a BA degree now at Happy Hearts School is \$8,100 a year. "We feel the salary schedule is competitive now," he said.

Celebrating the Bicentennial



Program Committee for the Happy Hearts School Bicentennial Open House has finalized arrangements for the event to be held in the school cafeteria. Participating in the organizing of the program were (from left) Mrs. Helen Millspaugh, Miss

Aili Hokkanen, Mrs. Vincent Bishop, Mrs. Orpha Smith, who designed bonnets for the children and Mrs. Walter S. Foy. Entertainment, refreshments, baked goods, craft items, plants and other features are planned

Mrs. Gertrude Smith, Happy Hearts Workshop Supervisor Retires

October 22, 1977

Mrs. Gertrude Smith



"Once you work with retarded persons you never forget it. It's part of your life," Mrs. Gertrude Smith said thoughtfully. Still recovering from a heart attack she had last spring, she cited health concerns as the reason for her retirement as Workshop Supervisor at Happy Hearts School.

During her eleven years as Workshop Supervisor, Mrs. Smith supervised about 60 "clients" who performed jobs which Happy Hearts subcontracted through area business, including EMCO; Wheaton, Inc.; Rockwell International; and Advanced Technology Corporation. According to Mrs. Smith, when she took over her job as Workshop Supervisor in 1967 the client payroll totaled \$562 dollars for 36 people.

When she retired, the payroll had grown to \$29,800 and her client list had almost doubled.

She credited donations from Larry Brunner; WEK Industries; Brunell Foam; Joe Kray; Conley's; and the Altrusa Club for helping her grow the Workshop clients and payroll as quickly as she did. She also credited her son, John Buchtinec, who recently retired after ten years as head of job procurement at Happy Hearts. "He really helped," she said. "I used to go and ask company managers for work, but when I mentioned Happy Hearts, they would say 'I already gave.' John had a different approach. He would walk through the plant with the managers and tell them what we could do for them."

The five workshop instructors bus Happy Hearts clients to their jobs from all corners of Ashtabula County and besides doing work for local industries they also do maintenance work at the North Kingsville Village Park and municipal building, maintain a greenhouse on Stevens Road, and make crafts to sell at the Ashtabula County Fair. Mrs. Smith has total responsibility for the greenhouse crews, the workers pushing mowers in North Kingsville, and those working at the Workshop. "I'm checking on them all of the time," she said.

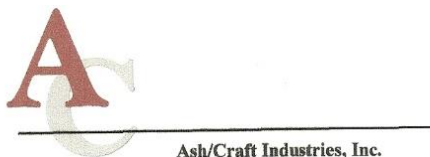
Commenting on the quality of her clients, Mrs. Smith firmly stated that once an employer hired a mentally retarded worker, they wouldn't want another person working for them. "They really put out hard," she explained.

Laughter and applause accompanied Mrs. Smith as she opened each gift and card from her 60 clients at her retirement party. Then everyone lined up and hugged and kissed her. Some cried as they wished her good luck and tried to say how much they would miss her.

Smiling and hugging them in return, Mrs. Smith assured each person she would miss them as much as they would miss her. When the last client left to catch the bus home, Mrs. Smith sat with her crushed corsage, crumbled from the many hugs and kisses her clients gave her. Wiping her red, tear-swollen eyes, she said, "They really got to me. You just can't explain how rewarding it is."

Mrs. Smith's retirement plans included keeping the books for her son who owned Fat Alberts Pizza and the J.D. Beauty Shop.

Ash/Craft Incorporates and Expands, 1978



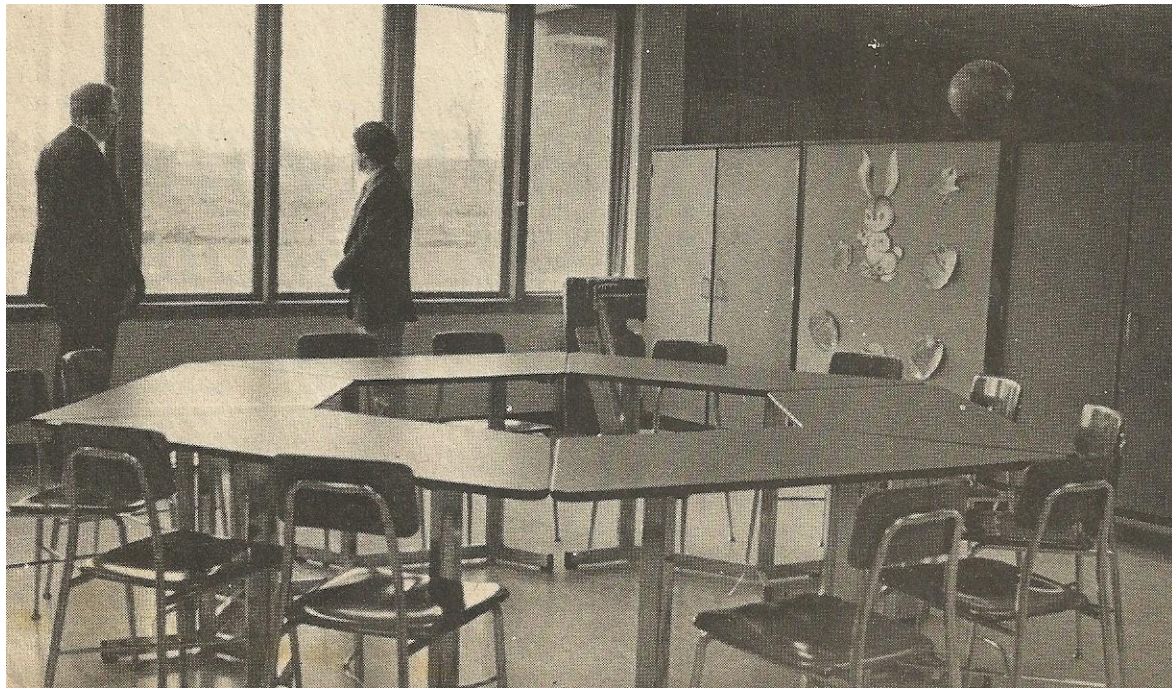
The Sheltered Workshop affiliated with Happy Hearts School eventually became Ash/Craft Industries and over the years continued to grow as the adult developmentally disabled population

grew and Happy Hearts School graduated more pupils ready for the next step in their careers and lives.

In 1975, the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation formulated plans for a new Ash/Craft building and construction on the new building began in the spring of 1977.

In March 1978, Ash/Craft Industries incorporated as a non-profit corporation with the mission of providing habitation services and sheltered employment to moderately or severely retarded or developmentally disabled adults 16 years of age and older from Ashtabula County. As part of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation, the Ash/Craft program worked to provide each adult the opportunity to reach his or her fullest physical, social, and vocational potential.

Ash/Craft Industries Incorporated and began operating in the 20,000 square foot facility designed to provide habitation services and sheltered employment to approximately 200 students. The building included a spacious work area, an auto bus garage, adult activity center, an area to practice daily living skills and hygiene, a multi-purpose room and cafeteria and a general office area. The professional staff evaluated each Ash/Craft person for individual abilities and needs and wrote and maintained individual plans with the goal of helping each person to live a more fulfilling, rewarding, and self-sufficient life.



On March 25, 1978, Dr. William Hall, (left) Superintendent of the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Larry Korland, Adult Services Director, look out of the new Ash/Craft building's activity room windows at the soon to be landscaped area of the new facility. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Barb Vancheri.

The Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation, the Ash/Craft /Board of Directors, and the Ohio Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities established guidelines for Ash/Craft operations. The Advisory Board, now called the Ash/Craft Board of Directors, was originally formed under the charter of the Local Parents Organization.

Richard Wehler, Springfield attorney and trustee of the National Association for Retarded Citizens, spoke at the September 10, 1978, dedication of Ash/Craft Industries, Inc. The brother of a mentally retarded citizen, Attorney Wehler was a past president of the board of trustees for the Ohio Association for Retarded Citizens and a former member of the Clark County Board of Mental Retardation and the Clark County Council for Retarded Citizens.

Dedication Program

Ash/Craft Industries, Inc.

September 10, 1978

1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introduction...Joseph Lovas, Jr., Chairman, Ash/Craft Board

Master of Ceremonies.... Joseph Lovas, Jr.

Invocation...Rev. Robert B. Breckenridge

Presentation of Flag...Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 943

Acceptance of Flag.... Joseph Lovas, Jr.

Pledge of Allegiance.... Happy Hearts Boy Scout Troop 24

Remarks.... Edward Lawler, Chairman, Ashtabula County Mental Retardation Board

Presentation of Keys.....County Commissioners

Acceptance of Keys...Dr. William T. Hall, Superintendent

Larry Korland, Director Adult Services

Introduction of Dedicatory Speaker.... Mrs. Stanley Gaumer

Dedication Address.... Richard H. Wehler

Benediction.... Rev. Paul Tobin

Ribbon Cutting.... County Commissioners

Open House,3:00-6:00 p.m.

Refreshments.... Cafeteria

In 1979, a year after the construction and dedication of the new Ash/Craft facility, noteworthy events continued to happen. Workers built a new greenhouse at Ash/Craft and eager clients began their planting duties. Art teacher Aili Hokkanen retired in May and Dr. James Hall retired in September.

Dr. Douglas Burkhardt accepted the job of superintendent of the Board of Mental Retardation and the Board named Inez Gaumer Mother of the Year and Governor James Rhodes presented her with a certificate of recognition for her distinguished services. The Kingsville Lions Club created a Leo Club for Ash/Craft workers and eleven buses transported 250 clients to their work stations at Ash/Craft Industries where 80 staff members assisted them.

Happy Hearts Employees to Vote on Union Representation

On April 20, 1979, the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation (169 Board) voted to have Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft employees decide whether or not have union representation through an election at a recent board meeting. The Board feels that an election is the most democratic way to poll employees, although those opposed have labeled the proposed election as “redundant” and a method for stalling contract negotiations. The Board also approved an across-the-board seven percent salary increase for employees.

Betty Hartley, President of the Ashtabula County Employee Association for the Mentally Handicapped, said that it is the salary increase that infuriates the Association members. “The Board is saying through the increase that ‘We don’t want to negotiate with you, but we’ll give you seven percent,’” said Miss Hartley.

The increase passed at Monday night’s meeting is retroactive to January 1st. Effective on September 1st, all employees will move up one increment on the salary schedule.

Since November 1978, the Association has contended it represents the majority of Happy Hearts Trainable Mentally Retarded School employees. The Employee Association subscribes to the Ohio Education Association (OEA) and OEA UniServ Consultant Becky Huddle would negotiate a contract on the employee’s behalf if the Board recognizes OEA.

Before Monday’s salary hike, employees worked under a January 1978 salary agreement between Happy Hearts School superintendent Dr. William Hall and employees.

Association for the Mentally Handicapped President Betty Hartley said that salary is not the prime concern of the employees. The Board also approved an across-the-board seven percent salary increase for employees. “We want closer communication between staff and Board,” she explained. The Association could certify that the majority of teachers, teacher’s aides, and Workshop Specialists have or will join UniServ. “An election seems a little redundant,” she added. “We don’t understand why the Board is so hesitant to let us represent these people right now.”

UniServ Consultant Becky Huddle, who has been monitoring the Board hedges on time needed for conducting an election because it is stalling, she added. “The people weren’t too happy with either move,” she said.

According to Association President Hartley, the pay increase could be the Board's attempt to show employees that a union is not needed. The location of the election is at the Board's discretion, and this could also work to the Association's disadvantage.

"I believe we would make every attempt to have the election held so it would be as convenient as possible for employees. The Board was in a difficult position prior to the salary increase," said Dr. Hall. "If no increase was granted, there would be unhappy employees. Those say that since the increase was granted the Board has ulterior motives. Certainly, no one is looking for any kind of confrontation. The Board is trying to do what is best for the program, employees and community."

President Hartley said she honestly believes the Board is doing what it feels is best for the school and children. "I have been here 15 years and I enjoy working here. People work here because they love the children and not for the money."

Looking at Levies

January 30, 1974

Ashtabula County voters will face a five-year operating levy for Happy Hearts School due to action taken today by County Commissioners. Meeting with Commissioners were Joseph Hunter, County Board of Mental Retardation; and Acting Happy Hearts Administrator, James J. Conroy.

Conroy said the Mental Retardation Board voted last week to place a five-year, 1.4 mill operating levy on the May ballot, based on a projected 90 per cent increase in expenses over the next five years. Half of the millage in effect would be a renewal of the seven tenths mill levy which expired in December, he said. The remaining half would help offset increasing costs.

Enrollment at Happy Hearts now is 193 in the facility built for 200 maximum. Conroy said the school actually is operating at full capacity because of an uneven breakdown of age and curriculum groups. He said national figures indicate enrollment could be as high as 400 for an area the size of Ashtabula County. Conroy said private homes in the area now are serving retarded individuals from other counties, placing additional burdens on the facility.

He emphasized that Ashtabula County receives full reimbursement for such persons, and the Mental Retardation Board has a policy of refusing to accept students from outside areas unless funding is available.

Commissioner Tom Nassief said he supports the operating levy, but he cautioned the Board against "asking the people of Ashtabula County to dig into their pockets to support the people of other counties." He said the county should not have to raise funds for new buildings at the facility because outsiders had created the need to expand. At the same time, though, he emphasized his support for the May operating levy.

Happy Hearts Levy Passes, 3 to 1

November 7, 1979

It was a landslide victory Tuesday for the only county-wide issue in the election.

The proposed 1.33 mill operating levy placed on the ballot by the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation passed by a 12,000-vote margin, with the final tally standing at 19,583 to 6,741.

The 1.33 continuing mill will be used to pay current expenses of Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Industries, Inc.

Happy Hearts on South Ridge East, is a public school, currently enrolling 125 exceptional students. Ash/Craft, 5959 Green Road, is an adult sheltered workshop for the physically and mentally handicapped. About 25 people are employed there.

As a renewal levy, the 1.33 mills will generate about two-thirds of the board's total expenditures for the year.

Happy Hearts Provides Hope

A May 4, 1974 letter to the editor summarized what Happy Hearts School meant to parents of special needs children and the children themselves.

Editor, Star-Beacon,

Thirteen years ago, we like the parents of every 33rd baby born in Ashtabula County, heard the heartbreaking words:

“I wish there was a way to soften this blow for you. Your child suffers from Down's-Syndrome, more commonly known as Mongolism. He will never be much more than a “vegetable.” My best advice is to put him in an institution and forget you ever had him.”

Those devastating words echoed and re-echoed. “Down's Syndrome, Mongolism, Institution, Hopeless. Such shocking, heart-breaking words. The baby is ours; there must be something we can do; there must be help available somewhere!

Later, at home; wondering if we were right in refusing to accept the hopeless prognosis, Mrs. Dorothy Shumake, the home visitation nurse, stopped by and explained the new concept, a training center for retarded children called Happy Hearts School.

Thanks to Happy Hearts School, Dave can read, print, count, socialize. He was a Cub Scout, and now is a Boy Scout. He has earned some skill awards and has a merit badge in fishing. Annually he attended one week of summer camping at Camp Stigwandish, with about 200 normal boys without any concessions for his handicap. He has camped outdoors in 20-degree snow at a Klondike Derby. We are proud and grateful for his progress and we feel certain that with continued schooling he will become more self-supporting.

Please support the Happy Hearts School 1.4 mill levy (Ashtabula County Mental Retardation Levy) so that the new parents of a special child will never again have to hear those heartbreaking words, but will be informed instead “your child is Mongoloid but he has a future. There is this Happy Hearts School- “

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Urban
March Road, Jefferson

1970s Scenes



Happy Hearts Art Show Set, April 1972

Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Shop will sponsor an art show of various art work created by students at the school at the Ashtabula Fine Arts Center on Lake Avenue in Ashtabula.

Mrs. Aili Hokkanen, Art Director at the school and Chairman for the show is assisted by teachers Miss Denise Davis; Tim Cunningham; Carl Schwartz; and Mrs. Margaret Brunnell. She said that items made in the Ash/Craft shop will be offered for sale. The general public is invited to the showings which will run through April 10, 1972. Opening day is expected to be the featured day, as art students and workers in the shop will be on hand, she said.

Refreshments will be available at the show.

The Eiffel Tower painted as a group project by Mrs. Hokkanen's students will adorn the entrance to the Fine Arts Center. Student Debbie Stillman works on weaving a beret like the one modeled by Otis McMillion. A student made tapestry is in the foreground.



Happy Hearts School children show some of the artwork they have been preparing for an upcoming art and gym show. Beginning at 2 p.m., Sunday, the show, in the form of a circus, will feature sideshows, a fortune teller, gym activities, and refreshments. April 20, 1972.

Art Work Viewed at Happy Hearts Open House



Miss Aili Hokkanen, Arts and Crafts teacher at Happy Hearts School, admires work created by her students. Rudolph was made of paper mache and the horse was created of macaroni. Mrs. Hokkanen was chairman of the recent open house.

Art committee for an open house held March 28 at the Fine Arts Center to display the art work of students and clients of the Happy Hearts School and Ash/Craft Work Shop. Committee members included Mrs. Vincent Bishop; Mrs. Wilbert Brunell; Tim Cunningham; Denise Davis; Carl Schwartz; and Betty Hartley.

Members of the committee and the students, teachers, and teacher's aids put forth a great deal of time and effort creating exhibits for the show.

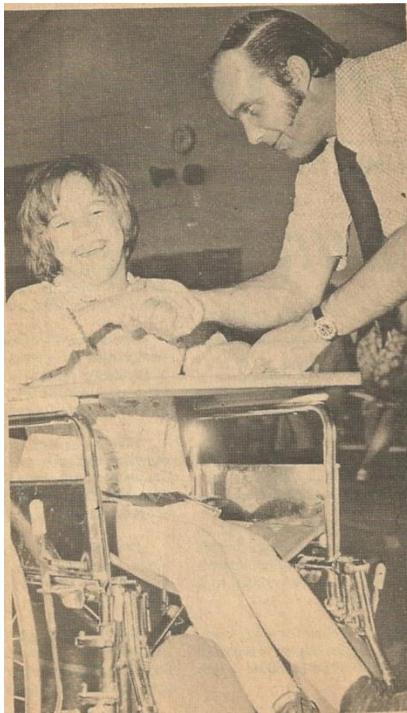
The show was further enhanced by the presence of Mrs. Vera Airoksinen who played the accordion and accompanied two of the girls from the school who sang several numbers.

Refreshments were served during the afternoon.

Happy Hearts Students Win Poster Prizes



Administrative Director Wayne Reese (right) and Arts and Craft teacher Aili Hokkanen (left) present Happy Hearts School students with certificates of achievement. The students selected as finalists in the National Safety Poster Contest include (left to right) Beth Fogle, Karen Benton, and Jane McCarthy. Not shown in the photo is Leslie Jusko who also received a certificate. The contest is sponsored by the United Commercial Travelers of America. July 13, 1972



Vicki Brown personifies the overall atmosphere, upon receiving her award for a poster contest. James Conway, program supervisor for the school, presented the awards. Other students receiving monetary poster awards were Tammy Hayes, Debbie Stillman, Amos Murray, Mari-jo Wilson; Eddie Cook; Nelson Morrison; Anthony Turner; and Elis Hairston. June 18, 1973.

Four students at Happy Hearts School have been selected as finalists in the National Safety Poster Contest sponsored by the United Commercial Travelers of America.

Local Travelers Chapter 330 sponsored the contest at Happy Hearts School. For the school competition, the winners were

Karen Benton, Beth Fogle, Jane McCarthy, Leslie Jusko, Myron Littler, Annette Bluhm and Michael Robison.

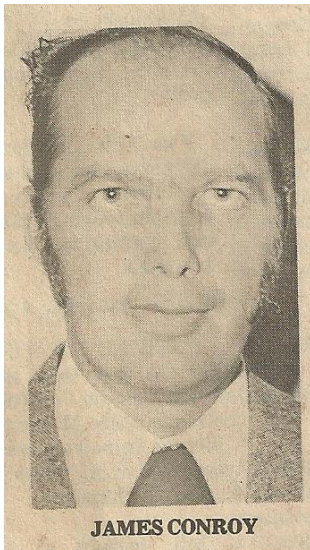
Of this group, four were selected on the state level to represent the grand council in national competition to be held in Texas. The statewide winners were Jane McCarthy, Karen Benton, Beth Fogle, and Leslie Jusko.

The United Commercial Travelers is a fraternal benefit society founded in Columbus. The organization has chosen as its civic project aid to retarded children.

In the past, the local chapter has given scholarships to the teachers at Happy Hearts School to further their training in the education of retarded children. The local organization has also provided money for Christmas gifts for the children at the school for several years.

With a total membership of more than 250,000 the organization has nearly 700 local councils in 47 states, the District of Columbia and all provinces of Canada.

James Conroy Appointed Acting Administrator at Happy Hearts School



James Conroy, program supervisor at Happy Hearts School, was appointed acting administrator of the school Thursday by the Ashtabula County Mental Retardation Board. He accepted the interim position, effective October 1, for a maximum period of 60 days while the board seeks a permanent replacement for former administrator Wayne Reese. Mr. Reese recently accepted a position with the Lake County Board of Mental Retardation.

Mr. Conroy, 37, has been program supervisor at Happy hearts since November 1972. Previously, he was a speech therapist in the Conneaut City School District. A native of Pittsburgh, Mr. Conroy graduated from California Pennsylvania State College in 1962 and completed graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh in 1967.

He is a past president and active member of the Conneaut-Lakeville Youth Organization.

Dr. William Hall is New Happy Hearts Administrator



Staff reception for Dr. William Hall (second from right) new administrator for Happy Hearts School was given by the school teachers' association.

Greeting Dr. Hall are program supervisor James Conroy (center) and

reception planning committee members (from left) Mrs., Ted Banner, Miss Alyce Lange and Mrs. Joseph Seaman.

Happy Hearts Administrator Is Honored

March 8, 1974

New Happy Hearts School Administrator Dr. William Hall, was welcomed at a reception of teachers and staff following his first day in his new position. The reception was given by the Happy Hearts Teachers Association. Mrs. Ted Banner, Mrs. Joseph Seaman, and Miss Alyce Lange were the planning committee for the reception. One of the major duties faced by Dr. Hall in his new job is to work with the levy planning committee to promote the passage of a 1.4 mill operating levy by the county voters in the May primary.

The reception also recognized James Conroy, program supervisor, who performed as interim administrator upon the departure of former administrator Wayne Reese.

The Day the Winds Blew Through School



July 10, 1974. School workers examine the strewn debris on the lower level roof of the Happy Hearts School. High winds last night twisted the school's antenna and blew portions of the upper level roof across the south parking lot and lawn. The school is suspending summer classes.

An Ashtabula Star Beacon story dated July 10, 1974, reported tornado-like winds in an early morning thunder storm smashed into Happy Hearts School. The winds ripped off the gymnasium roof, and some blocks from the wall of the building were torn out. The lower roof covering the remainder of the building is buckled and heavily damaged and the gymnasium and classrooms were flooded by the rain waters. Telephone and electric service to the building was disrupted. The storm caused at least \$250,000 in damages, according to the story.

A story published later in the month announced classes were to resume at Happy Hearts and that the school damage figure turned out to be much lower than the original estimated amount. Administrator William Hall said that summer classes at Happy Hearts school would resume because of the rapid progress of the work crews who were repairing storm damages. He estimated that at least 20 repairmen were working at the school.

The Beidler-Taylor Roofing Co. is working on roof repairs while Buckeye Masonry Co., the original contractor for the school, is repairing masonry along the edge of the gymnasium roof. "Both companies have really expedited the work," Dr. Hall said. "We expect to be very nearly, if not totally, completed with roof repair by Monday."

The administrator of the special education school said he believed the \$250,000 damage estimate made the morning after the storm struck would eventually be revised downward considerably.

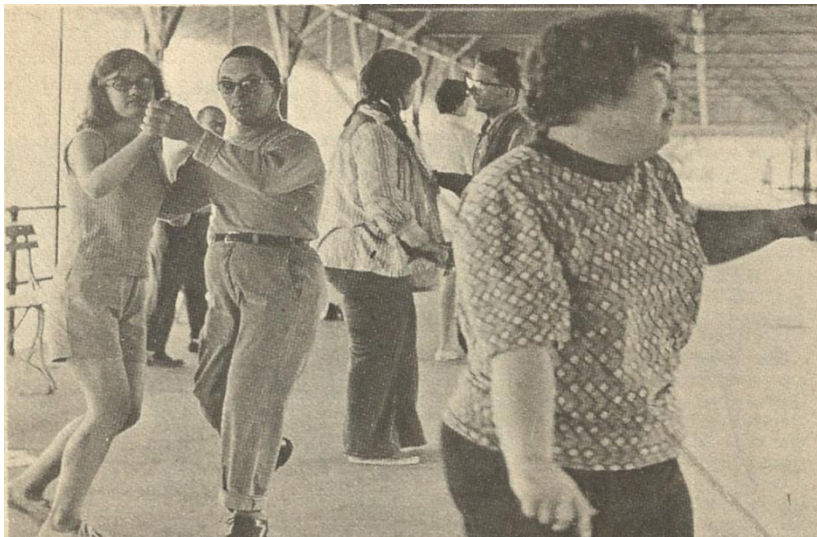
The building is fully covered for damages under public and institutional insurance, County Administrator Betty Cowles said Thursday.

Mrs. Cowles said the damages has been examined by an insurance adjustor, who is to meet with the building contractors today to approve a final damage estimate. The current rough estimate is about \$20,000 for roof repairs, plus a lesser amount for repairs inside the building, she said. The estimate will be much smaller than the original estimate because no structural damage had been done to the building, as was originally feared. The roof over the classroom section of the building had appeared to be buckled by the winds, but it has since settled.

Work crews expect to complete most of the roof repairs shortly. They will then move inside, where they will replace drop ceiling panels, do some painting, and perform other incidental repairs.

The Ashtabula Star Beacon reported that the storm that shook Happy Hearts School this week also shook the spirits of several Ashtabula Countians, at least for a time.

One mother said that her child cried when she heard about the damages to her school and many parents talked about how much the school had changed their lives and the lives of their children.



Dancing Through the 70s

Enjoying themselves at the Ash/Craft picnic on August 16, 1974, are (left) Susan Bradley and Andy Grecko and far right June Cichy. The picnic was organized by Mrs. Gertrude Smith, supervisor, with the help of workshop specialists.



Members of the girl dance group, Dance Children Dance, practice for their dance they will perform during the Happy Hearts Christmas program, Ring Out Christmas Bells. The dancers are (from left) Ann Lovas, Norene Ruffo, Martha Herman, Theresa Spang, Tammy Hayes, and music director Michael DeMarino. December 18, 1975.



Jewel's Dance Hall came alive with dancing April 21, 1978 for the clients of Ash/Craft Workshop and Happy Hearts School. Taking a spin around the floor are (from left) Mrs. Stanley Gaumer and Larry Moroski and Mrs. Nadine Flack and Claude Gaumer.

Timeline 1970s

1970

- Council spearheaded the development of a long-range commitment to the establishment of local residential facilities.
- Purchased fleet of eight new buses.
- Initiated a hot lunch program.
- Established position of Instructor Supervisor.
- Hosted the Region VI Spring conference.
- Participated in the Special Olympics in Cleveland.
- Established contract with Ash/Craft for custodial services to the building.
- Constructed portable walls to increase number of classrooms.
- Established: School age developmental class; adult activities center; music program.
- Caseload: Home services-92; Community class program-93; Adult services-48; Total: 233.

1971

- Established second preschool class.
- Provided speech and hearing screening for all enrollees.
- Established school colors and name. Ashtabula Road Runners. Navy and light blue.
- Added ninth bus to transportation fleet.
- Present caseload: Home services, 44; Community class program, 110; Adult services 55= 209. Payroll for 42 Ashcraft clients was \$1,039.00.

1972

- Council purchased basketball uniforms for the "Roadrunners."
- Council purchased bleachers for the school gymnasium.
- Added two buses to bring the fleet total to eleven.
- Conducted the first summer camp program, financed by the 169 Board. Sixty children attended.
- A speech therapy program was established for 12 students at the Crippled Children Clinic.
- Conducted the first in building swimming program.
- Established the position of Transportation Coordinator (Howard Dunlavy).

1973

- All buses were equipped with citizens band radios.
- Speech Therapy was now provided for 14 students in the building. Service was in conjunction with Edinboro State College and Crippled Children Clinic.
- Summer Camp enrollment was set at 117 students.
- The 169 Board entered an agreement with the 648 Board and Children's Service Board to provide funding for residential services for profoundly retarded children six years of age or below.
- The Board received a \$15,000 federal grant to establish a group home for retarded people. The program received \$37,000 under Title I.
- The Board agrees to accept high school students from the Buckeye School System for work study with our students.
- Caseload: Home services, 33; Community class program, 121; Adult services, 64=218..
- James Conroy is principal.

1974

- Health services were established with Alyce Lange, RN. becoming a full-time program nurse.
- A residential committee was established to plan for and initiate a program for residential services.
- Home Training Department enlarged to include a full-time training worker.
- Speech Therapy was established as a full-time program.
- Dr. William Hall became the Administrator for the program.
- Caseload: Home services, 44; Community class program, 118; Adult services, 66-228.

1975

- Physical Therapy services initiated.
- Greenhouse operation as part of Ash/Craft established.
- Proposal for a new workshop approved by Division of Mental Retardation.
- Present caseload: Home services, 36; Community class program, 125; Adult services, 74 = 235.
- Three Special Olympic Athletes attended national track meet in Michigan.

1976

- Mr. Larry Korland employed as Adult Services Director.
- Residential home purchased in North Kingsville by the Ashtabula County Residential Services Corporation.
- Infant Stimulation program established.
- Plans approved and bids taken for new workshop.
- Present caseload: Home Services, 13; Community class program, 129; Adult Services, 76; Infant Stimulation, 6; = 224.
- Inez Gaumer has now provided Religious Education Classes to all students for 15 years.

1977

- Construction of new workshop began.
- Approval of renovation project at Happy Hearts School received from Division of Mental Retardation.
- Happy Hearts School among the first such programs to be chartered by the State of Ohio Department of Education.
- Residential home renovation completed and occupied by house parents and young men.
- Present caseload: Home Services, 12; Infant Stimulation, 13; Community Classes, 114; Adult Services, 79 = 218.
- Open House at boy's residence (Maples I)
- Ash/Craft Board adopts constitution. A.R.C. to appoint 3 of 9 members.
- The Orff players performed for the Ohio State Music Educators Association in Columbus, Ohio.
- Special Olympics Eighth Annual Ohio Athletics Association at Ohio State University. 42 students participated.

1978

- New workshop completed and occupied.
- Renovation of Happy Hearts School begun.
- Mr. Melvin Daniel employed as the first psychologist.
- Mechanic employed to maintain bus fleet.
- Present caseload: Home Services 13; Infant Stimulation, 18; Community Classes, 113; Adult Services, 96 = 240.
- Mrs. Nadine Moroski Flack received Mother of the Year Award for mental retardation service in Ashtabula County by Governor James Rhodes.

1979

- Renovation of Happy Hearts School completed.
- New greenhouse at Ash/Craft constructed.
- Mr. Douglas Burkhardt employed as superintendent of the Board of Mental Retardation.
- Inez Gaumer named Mother of the Year and was presented a certificate in recognition for her distinguished services by Governor James Rhodes.
- Kingsville Lions Club formed a Leo Club for clients.
- Eleven buses transport 250 people with 80 staff members.
- Aili Hokkanen and Dr. Hall retire.

Special Story- From the Scrap Book of Wayne Reese

Memories from Mr. Reese's departure for Lake County, 1972

Mr. Reese is well known for his desire to help his teachers. In the early days of my teaching at Happy Hearts I had a problem with a particular child who cried all of the time. I had tried everything and finally, in desperation, I went to Mr. Reese in hope that he would solve my problem. He listened carefully and finally said: "Why do you ask me? An Italian never gives up."

Marta Triozzi

Dear Wayne,

In spite of pressing problems,

More than one would think,

You took precious moments,

To fix the Home-Ec sink!

Thanks a million. Dorothy (Bishop)

During choir one day we were discussing plans for the Christmas program. I explained that a Mary and Joseph would be chosen from those in the choir, but that Jesus would need to be someone small – someone from a primary class. One little student raised his hand and said, "Mrs. Krug, Mrs. Krug, I know who we can get to play Jesus – Mr. Reese cuz he's small!"

Mrs. Krug

Do you remember when one fine fall Friday afternoon around 4:15 I was driving bus on a northern county route. Your telephone rang and I enthusiastically informed you that the bus I was driving had just been hit by a flying duck. I expected sympathy.... you laughed. Well, anyway with a shattered windshield and shattered spirits, I drove the bus to a garage where a group of highly specialized mechanics decided that the feathers imbedded in the windshield and in my hair were actually from a pheasant and not a duck.

Russ (Grippi)

Do you remember when we were setting up for "Camp Fun in the Sun 1972? After many calls around town, we finally got five tons of sand donated. Three tons was hauled to a sand box and two tons was placed in the bottom of the pool. After all that work we got to thinking that the sand might not be the right kind, as it had small pebbles mixed in with it! Sure enough, a call to the store where the pool was purchased confirmed our thoughts. Needless to say, the next few

days were spent taking two tons of sand out of the pool-not by modern unloading methods., but by filling good old-fashioned Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets and emptying them back into what turned out to be an Olympic sized sand box.

Russ (Grippi)

Special Story: Russ Grippi's 1971 Perspective on Happy Hearts History

The story of Happy Hearts School had its beginning on a Sunday afternoon in March 1954. Five families met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Weintz in response to an ad placed in the classified section of a local newspaper by Mrs. Weintz, seeking people interested in starting a school for the mentally retarded. From the beginning, it was a dedicated group, held together by a common bond; each family had a retarded child and each wanted their child to be given the opportunity of understanding and training in a school atmosphere conducive to meeting the needs of the handicaps possessed by their children. The names of the parents who attended that meeting are: Mr. and Mrs. Paul Berg; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kapen; Mr. and Mrs. Gene Moroski; Mr. and Mrs. Steven Weintz; and Mr. and Mrs. John Wilkinson.

It can be said that Happy Hearts School had its birth with the culmination of that very first meeting. For before the meeting had ended, the Ashtabula County Council for Retarded Children (ACCRC) was formed and its objectives clearly spelled out. Mr. Gene Moroski was elected as the Council's first president. Later, three delegates were selected to attend the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Ohio Association for Retarded Children, which was held in Cleveland. The delegates returned with good news! It was learned that Ohio law provided that eight people could petition the Child Welfare Board to establish a community class program for the retarded. The good news was short lived, however, because the Child Welfare Board refused to take positive action on the Council's petition even though the establishment of a community class program would be absolutely no financial burden to them whatsoever. This setback proved to be only the first of many which were to follow in the ensuing years.

The next few months were spent in setting up a speaker's bureau. Its purpose: to go out into the county and meet with the people, stimulating interest and an awareness of the need for a program such as this. The Council met with overwhelming success from the people of Ashtabula County. Local county and city newspapers, along with social and church groups responded favorably to the ACCRC's plea. It was during this time that members of Council suggested and voted upon the selection of a name or their new school. Thus, and appropriately so, Happy Hearts emerged.

Fund raising projects and donations enabled the school to open its doors for the first time in September of 1955, with its one classroom located in the basement of the Methodist Church on Elm Avenue in Ashtabula, having an enrollment of seven children. The first teacher at Happy Hearts was Mrs. Esther Bennett, a compassionate woman who not only served as teacher but also as administrator, bus driver, and later, even did the cooking for the hot lunch program when the school moved to a new location. During this first year, many of the parents had to provide their own transportation or else pay someone to transport their child. Tuition, if you could afford to pay it, was six dollars a week.

In 1956, due to an increase of enrollment, the School was moved to a new Sunday School Classroom at the Harris Memorial Church in Ashtabula. The program now employed two teachers, Mrs. Charles Bennett of Conneaut and Mrs. William Barndt of Austinburg, one aid, and tuition remained at six-dollars a week. A highlight of the year, and one that helped to “keep the doors open,” was a contribution in the amount of \$950.00 from the United Appeal.

Academically, the school thrived from the very beginning. Children were developing both physically and mentally and obtaining new and varied skills. This development was evident amongst friends, family, and neighbors and community support continued to grow. In 1957, favorable public response led to a reluctant signing of the necessary papers by the Child Welfare Board, which gained State Recognition. Unfortunately, even with the signing of the petition, some Board members felt that a community-based program would have no value.

Upon signing of the petition by the Child Welfare Board, each parent faced a second hurdle—that of obtaining an E-1 exclusion from the public schools for their child. An E-1 Exclusion is a permit to exclude the children from attending public schools. The various school boards proved to be somewhat reluctant in issuing the E-1 Exclusion. One cannot help but wonder if this reluctance was due to actual ignorance of what an E-1 exclusion is or can it possibly be attributed to the fact that the school board would stand to lose state aid for each child excluded?

Although the School was granted some state aid in 1957, responsibility of financing most of the program remained with the Council. The enrollment continued to grow rapidly and the school year 1957-1958 brought the total children to 34, and the necessity to expand again, now having three teachers and three classrooms. With the help of state aid, tuition decreased to fifteen dollars a month. The year 1958 also meant another physical move of the school from Harris Memorial Church to an old brick school building in Kingsville.

The stay in Kingsville was short lived. On September 8, 1959, Happy Hearts School began its fourth year by moving to the old elementary school building in Austinburg. A verbal agreement between the Austinburg School Board and the ACCRC provided for rent free usage providing the Council would make all needed repairs—to include wiring, much new plumbing, rebuilding the heating plant, painting and cleaning. Enrollment increased to forty-four. The faculty was headed by Mrs. Ray Bolmeyer of Rock Creek as Superintendent. Other teachers were Miss Barbara White of Ashtabula, Mrs. Roger (Joan) Sisson of Madison-on-the-Lake, and Mrs. Vincent Bishop of Ashtabula. One of the greatest problems during the school year was transportation. Council purchased a bus and a station wagon to help solve the problem.

In February of 1960, it became apparent that because of inadequate finances, Happy Hearts School faced a one month early close. At this time, State Aid provided approximately 1/3 of the total operating expenses of \$27,000 annually. The people of the county again rallied however, contributing the needed monies. Some of the helping hands at this time were the Rock Creek Methodist Church, the American Legion Post of Kingsville; a one-thousand-dollar gift by an anonymous donor, and small amounts from various county social organizations, totaling \$2,600.00

Realizing the need for a stable income to Happy Hearts School, Ashtabula County Commissioners, in June 1960, approved a resolution to place a .2 mill operating levy for three years on the November ballot for the benefit of the school. Ashtabula County voters approved the levy by a conclusive two-to-one margin. This levy, which carried the support of practically

every civic and charitable organization as well as both political parties, won on an impressive vote of 25,620 to 12,488. The passing of this levy permitted the school to begin operating on the same basis as public schools –through direct tax support. Jurisdiction of the program, by law, was now under the Child Welfare Board.

As an economy move, the County Welfare Board decided to move Happy Hearts School once again to the Children's Home basement. Cost of renovation was estimated at from \$12,000 to \$14,000, and the move was completed by the beginning of the school year 1961. Enrollment, at this time, was 48 students, with 4 full-time teachers.

Effective with the school year 1962, a new director was hired –G. Thomas Graf—a fifth class was started, and Mrs. Dorothy Shumake, a registered nurse, was hired as a home training consultant. It was also during the year 1962 that Mr. Graf initiated a workshop program for the young adults. The program was initially instituted in the basement of the Children's Home, but soon moved to the Goodwill Industries Building in the Ashtabula Harbor area, where it remained until 1967, at which time the shop relocated in the former Manpower Training Center in Jefferson, Ohio.

1964 was a happy year for Happy Hearts—it saw the passage of a five-year renewal levy and formation of Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and Cub Scout troops. As usual, enrollment continued to grow with total enrollment at 72. A sixth class was started and sixth teacher hired.

Effective August 31, 1965, G. Thomas Graf resigned as director of the program. Mr. Graf accepted the post of executive director for the Atlanta, Georgia Association for Retarded Children. Mr. Wayne G. Reese of Columbus was hired as the new director, effective September 1, 1965.

During May of 1965, the Ashtabula County Child Welfare Board (Eleanor Jammal-Chairman) went to the County Commissioners with a tentative proposal for a 25,000 square foot school, citing possible loss of state aid unless larger facilities were built. Awaiting the arrival of Mr. Reese in Ashtabula, were the problems of where, when, and how the present school would be enlarged or a new school would be built. Many alternatives were offered. One was to remodel the present Children's Home building. This seemed at first to be the most economical path to follow as it would also make use of a county owned building. Upon submission of remodeling plans by an architect, it was determined that a remodeling program would not be feasible as each county office occupying the building still would not have enough room. After the completion of many meetings, the legislative processes finally started to take shape and it was decided by the County Commissioners to place a \$670,000 bond issue (or .133 mill for 22 years) on the November 1966 ballot.

Once it was decided that a new school was to be built, members of the Council immediately shifted into high gear to seek passage of the bond issue. Area captains were assigned with the responsibility for familiarizing the public with the need for the proposed school and also for answering any questions the public may have had concerning the program. Captains were: Mrs. Paula Gregory, 1219 Westshore Dr., Ashtabula; Mrs. Helen Millspaugh, RD2, Geneva; Mrs. Joseph Hunter, 1456 Lee Rd. Ext., North Kingsville; Mrs. Myron Hudson, RD1, Pierpont; Joseph Urban, RD4 Jefferson; and Mrs. Henry Roux, Linden Ave., Jefferson. Here again, it must be pointed out, that this movement had tremendous favorable coverage by the local press and county, social, political and church groups.

On Tuesday, November 8, 1966, the dreams of staff and Council members were realized when an overwhelming 72 per cent “yes” vote paved the way for a new Happy Hearts School. Four other bond issues were defeated—bonds for a new county home, a new county jail, and two issues for a juvenile training center.

With the passage of the levy, Matt Kujala, architect/engineer for the new school project, told Commissioners the new building should be placed on the parcel of land in front of the present Children’s Home on Rt. 20 just east of Ashtabula City. He noted a second choice as the property along Greene Road in Kingsville, next to the County Home. This property, however, would cost about \$25,000 more in site preparation for a facility. It was then announced on January 17, 1967, by the County Commissioners, that county-owned property at the intersection of Rt. 84 and Infirmary Rd., just west of the County Home, would be the site of the new Happy Hearts School.

Growth of the program did not stand still even while the new school building was in the making. During the summer of 1966, Council established a new summer recreation program for the children. Upon returning to school the following September, enrollment had increased (bus fleet was now seven) and it was necessary, in addition to classrooms at the Children’s Home, to open three classes at the Eastside Presbyterian Church basement.

In 1967, a new law (Amended Senate Bill 169) was passed which authorized the County Commissioners to create the present Mental Retardation Board, or, as commonly referred to, the 169 Board. The new law stated that each county should appoint members to the board to administer, operate, employ personnel, and provide facilities and equipment for training programs for mentally deficient persons. Enactment of this law eliminated the Child Welfare Board as the School’s governing body. The new board consisted of seven members, two to be appointed by Probate Judge (Calvin Hutchins) and the remaining five to be appointed by County Commissioners. Appointed to four-year terms by Commissioners were Dr. David Lusk, Mrs. Niles Koski, and Charles von Tesmar. Named to two-year terms were Gene Moroski and Joseph Hunter. Appointed to three-year terms were Judge Hutchins and Mrs. Robert Frederick.

As mentioned earlier, the Sheltered Workshop Program moved to the former Manpower Training Center in Jefferson during 1967. Also, certification for a sheltered workshop was issued by the Federal Labor Wage and Hour Department at the time of this move. The board of directors adopted the name “Ash/Craft” for its new shop program, and the program went on a year around basis.

With bids ranging approximately \$100,000 under estimated cost, the construction of Happy Hearts School started on July 15, 1967. Contracts were awarded to Precision Piping Co. (for mechanical constructions), Geneva Electric (electrical work), and Buckeye Masonry and Construction of Jefferson. Official groundbreaking ceremonies took place on July 20, 1967.

The new Happy Hearts School was completed on August 1, 1968 with dedication ceremonies taking place on Sunday, November 3, 1968. After 14 years of holding classes in church basements, abandoned schools and in the basement of the Child Welfare Boards Children’s Home, Happy Hearts School opened its doors to the children at its new location in September of 1968. Enrollment consisted of two primary classes, one intermediate class, two department classes, and 25 trainees in Ash/Craft.

As of 1971, the school for the once rejected human beings of our society had far surpassed the dreams of those few parents who back in 1954 acted to make their dreams a reality. From a school with no specific guidelines for teachers to follow except those developed by themselves, with primary emphasis on social graces, underpaid teachers without degrees (salaries for teachers in the beginning were in the \$200 a month range), the program has blossomed into one of professionalism. It is devoted to meeting all needs—from cradle to grave- of the mentally retarded in Ashtabula County.

Teachers are now required to have earned a degree (an exception is made for those with 100 semester hours or more, provided they earn at least 6 additional hours credit a year towards a degree), plus obtain additional certification in mental retardation by the state. Pay scales are now just slightly less than public school teachers. Most important of all, the program for the children, presently serving over 200, has definite direction. Children are guided from age three in the areas of social behavior, self care, communication, basic knowledge, practical skills and body usage. The people of Ashtabula County can truly be proud of the creation they helped to form—a living monument, dedicated to seeking human dignity.