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Ohio Valley Residential Services

www.ovrs.org

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Imagine…The Good Life

By: Barb Sweeney

Nathan Johnson, aka Borovichi, lives in one of OVRS’s foster homes. He came to this country from Russia when he was four years old.

Nathan lived in other living situations prior to coming to OVRS. At one point he lived with another foster family along with his 7 sisters and 4 brothers.

Mr. Johnson has grown as a man and as an artist. In the past he would often get upset and would overeat. Now he has learned about portion control and being healthy. He has also learned some techniques that help him to stay calm.

One of his strategies for staying calm is music. He calls himself a “music mastermind”. He has participated in the music therapy program Melodic Connections. While in this program he learned to express himself as both a DJ and vocalist.

He also loves his XM satellite radio. Nathan says that music makes him happy and if he has his morning music, then he has a good day.

Currently Nathan attends the art therapy program through Visionaries and Voices. Among his art, is a journal of hundreds of songs he catalogued by artist and title. His favorites are Selena Gomez (watch out Justin Bieber!) and the Beatles. Nathan is currently creating a second music book.

Nathan has even fashioned his “Nate Dogg” customized jewelry. All items in the Nate Dogg collection are currently for sale.

From that little boy from Russia, having to go through several placements, Nathan now has a life that he enjoys. He loves where he is living and says he is “improving” everyday. He likes his housemates and he even wants to change his last name to the last name of his Foster Provider, "because they are my family".

Soon Nathan is going to work with artist Gary Gaffney (formerly of the Art Academy) on a year long project.

He also continues to expand his repertoire of musical interests.

Additionally, Nathan writes his goals down...
each day, because goals and dreams are what he most desires. Everyone in Nathan’s life encourages him everyday to imagine, dream, and create. OVRS’s focus on outcomes is a perfect fit for a guy who didn’t have much to look forward to not so long ago. Good Luck, Nathan! We can't wait to see your next show!

**About the "New Guy"**

New Executive Director, Jamie Steele, enjoys singing and acting in his non-work time. He's fronted several bands and has acted/directed in numerous community productions. He also has four talented children.

**Did you know that OVRS is only 1 out of 5 residential organizations in Ohio picked to pilot a new waiver project?** The pilot project will test new efficiency approaches to waiver billing, remote monitoring, and costing outcomes-based goals.

**Spring has sprung!**

Spring is colored beautiful at Carmel Terrace. Our staff, Ms. Myrtle Miller, has the green thumb and the loving touches. Thanks Myrtle for the extras you do for the men and women at Carmel Terrace!

**Cooking with Yolanda**

One aspect of a home is everyone gathered around the dining room table eating all the comfort foods prepared with love. At the Strifler home, staff told their manager, Yolanda Hill, that they did not know how to cook. Ms. Hill started cooking classes and taught them to make a beautiful beef stew and delicious chicken and dumplings. We are proud of staff and their teacher for trying something new. Staff were so proud they called their mothers to tell them they had learned a new skill! You are never too old or too young to learn.

**OVRS Board of Directors**

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**Community,**

is published four times a year by Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc. (OVRS). It is designed for OVRS families, consumers, staff and friends. The newsletter includes articles, training opportunities and personal stories.

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Roseanne Dickerson began her journey with OVRS as a young woman just graduated from college with a degree in Social Work. Yes, it is true. At first, she used a typewriter for her duties at her new job. It was 1982 after all! Roseanne also points out that jobs for women at that time were mostly social work, nursing, teaching or secretarial work. We are glad that the young Ms. Dickerson chose social work and our agency as her lifelong passion. No one could remember her name when she first started but did remember the blue and white linen dress with the green belt she wore to the interview. For the first 6 months, she was called “Green Belt.”

During the past thirty years, Roseanne held several positions at our agency. Her resume (all with OVRS) includes being a social worker, Live-In staff at Parkview, Parkview Manager, Program Coordinator and Personnel/Client benefits coordinator. During those years, she also married her husband, Norman (celebrating 26 years this month) and had 2 children; Lee (20) and Gina (16).

Roseanne started building a relationship with everyone. She made a comfortable home. One of the residents would come to her apartment every evening to visit at 7 pm sharp. They would look at the night sky every night and every night he would say to her; “Moon and Stars are out tonight- going to be a pretty day tomorrow.” One gentlemen stuck flags in a tree stump for her as a memorial day present. Another became an “uncle” to her children and visited the family once a week until he died a few years ago. Another fond memory was the sing a longs that Roseanne had at her place as a live-in staff. She would make a big breakfast and then everyone would gather around the piano to belt out some songs.

Another fond memory was taking people to visit Orient when they picked up their state government ration of cheese.

**Life as a Live-In Manager:** “I loved the day to day interactions with the people that lived at Parkview. “They moved there from the institution, Orient. I sometimes wondered why they had been in an institution? They were capable and learned new skills. They were eager to learn. Thinking about their move from Orient to Parkview, I realized how difficult the change may have been. One man would lay down on the ground tearing the grass out. Was that from being pulled away from the only home he had known?”
Thoughts on working with Michael D.....Roseanne has been with OVRS 9 years shy of our former Executive Director. One of the things she witnessed was seeing the growth of our agency as they searched for and added homes over the years. Michael D. always cared deeply for the men and women that lived in those homes. His interactions were genuine. Roseanne says she was nervous when Michael retired after forty years. But she thinks the board did a great job finding his replacement, Jamie Steele.

Contributed by Barb Sweeney

Fiscal Talk with Chris Alexander - OVRS provides nearly all individuals supported in our program a bank account to access their personal funds. In addition, OVRS serves as the Representative Payee of Social Security benefits for nearly 150 individuals. Strict guidelines by the Social Security Administration and the licensure requirements of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (ODODD) must be adhered to, in order to protect individuals personal funds from theft, commingling, and mismanagement.

Please consider donating to OVRS's Client Needs Fund. This fund will help purchase desired items for client's who do not have the resources to purchase themselves

Individuals may access their account through a debit card for ordinary day to day purchases and recreational activities. Daily spending limits are placed on their debit card to provide an additional layer of security. This daily limit is usually determined by the individual’s ISP team, as an amount that the individual is capable of spending independently. Receipts are required to be retained for all purchases and any purchase over $50 must be accompanied by an original receipt signed by the individual.

- Daily activity for each account is downloaded into an software program (similar to Quicken) that serves as a checkbook register for each account. At the end of each month, the Home Coordinator prints an Account Register from this program and attaches all receipts for purchases throughout the month, and signs and dates the account register. The account register and receipts are reviewed first by the Program Coordinator of the individual for appropriateness based on their knowledge of the individuals that they support. For any purchase over $250 the Program Coordinator is to physically verify that the item is in the individual’s possession in the home and sign the back of the receipt for verification purposes. Random audits of individuals account registers and receipts may occur, in which vehicle mileage logs are compared against account registers and receipts to verify if the individual was in the vehicle at the time a purchase was made. If not present, additional verification is performed. Reconciled account registers, receipts, bank statements, and individuals' pay check stubs are retained for 10 years before they are destroyed.
As if on cue, Michael DeFrancesco retires and one week later the elevator has major problems and needs to be shut down for repairs:). Below are some insightful reflections from OVRS employees over the prolonged loss of elevator privileges.

“It’s quieter up here and I don’t like it. I miss the activity.” - Karen Burr

“I didn’t know what I had until it was gone….miss you elevator.”- Pam Rezentes

“God took a day off …And it didn’t take him as long to make the whole world as it is for this elevator to get fixed.” – Ann Edwards

"Second floor?” - New Guy

“Not having the elevator showed me how lazy I was being. The steps are not that bad. And it makes me feel good after I’ve gone up and down them a couple of times.” Kenya Dubose

Anonymous had a lot to say……

“We have stairs?? Who Knew?”

“I have to remember to bring my &***#@ keys each time I go downstairs.”

For Information about houseing opportunities, contact Karen Burr at 281-6800 ext. 112

For Information about job opportunities, contact Toni, HR at 281-6800 ext. 107

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Please consider making a donation to our Client Needs Fund