

The Safe Haven Way

*A Parent Publication of Safe Haven Farms
Butler County, Ohio*



**A Community of
Choice for Adults
with Autism**

Bittersweet Farms Comes to Safe Haven

Spring blew into Safe Haven Farms this year with high winds and the hiring on March 1, 2013 of Bittersweet Farms as our residential provider. Bittersweet Farms in Whitehouse OH was established in the early 80's as a farm for adults with autism and serves as a worldwide benchmark for good practices in its field.

Vicki Obee, Executive Director, has played a large role in strategic planning for the transition. Dustin Watkins, Assistant Executive Director, is responsible for overseeing program services at Safe Haven. Dustin comments, "We are in the process of establishing a fixed leadership team, but have assembled a team of intermediate leaders from our other programs for the initial transition as we move forward." Dustin is joined by Tom Oster,

Staffing Manager, Stacy Roberts, Program Manager, Natalie Reynolds, Program Leader, and Janice Tinch, Quality Assurance Coordinator.



Dustin Watkins, Stacy Roberts

Asked about Bittersweet's goals for Safe Haven Dustin answers, "To imbued our philosophy of MAPS (Meaning & Motivation, Aerobic Activity, Partnership, and Structured Supports). This allows us to meet the individual needs of the Safe Haven participants and to teach them the necessary skills to build

towards greater independence, self-worth, and overall health."

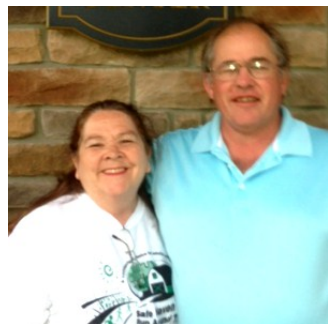
The MAPS model focuses on individualized program goals, continuous data collection by direct care staff and weekly monitoring of individual progress by the support team.

"Change can be difficult," Dustin says, "and I think the best surprise has been how well everyone has responded to changes and challenges so far. The staff, families, and participants have been extremely flexible and patient through the transition and receptive to new ideas and approaches.

Bittersweet will take over Day Services as well on June 1, 2013.

The residents, families, and supporters of Safe Haven Farms look forward to a fruitful collaboration with Bittersweet Farms. Welcome!

Meet Our 'New' Farm Managers



Abby and Bill Ison may have a new title, but Safe Haven's farm managers are more like old friends who have been a constant and supportive presence since the core founding parents began their meet-and-greet introductions with area neighbors. Abby and Bill were energetic and enthusiastic from the start about the total farm concept and eager to participate in making it a success. "Safe Haven Farms captured my imagination and heart," said Abby, taking a break from her many new responsibilities at the farm. "We knew we wanted to be a part of it all."

Continued on page 3

Spring 2013

Special points of interest:

- *Bittersweet Farms—New Service Provider*
- *Farm Managers—the Isons*
- *Alpaca Shearing*
- *Donor Recognition*
- *Golf Tourney Coming Up*
- *Annual Safe Haven Garage Sale*

Newsletter Contributors

*Suzanne O'Brien
Kathy Bolduc
Lisa Eccles*

Readers of this newsletter agree to hold harmless all volunteers and contributors for anything contained in this newsletter.

Donate to Safe Haven

Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law and will be acknowledged promptly.

Mail your check to:
Safe Haven Farms
PO Box 633
Monroe, OH 45050

Our redesigned website will soon be operational for online donations.
www.safehavenfarms.org



Day activities around the farm include work in the barn and on the property to care for the animals, support the horticulture programs, and use the beautiful space for outdoor recreation.

In the Hatton Center farmers acquire cooking skills, develop competencies in the learning center, explore arts and crafts, enjoy music therapy, and relax in the sensory room.



Coats Shorn; Beautiful Knitwear Worn

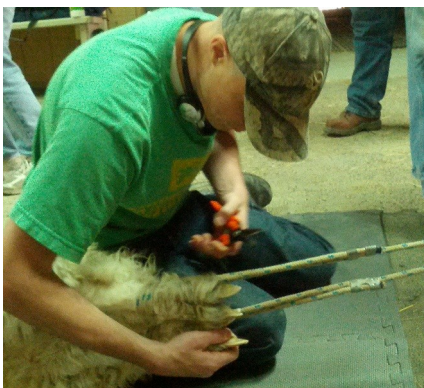
Safe Haven Farms is home to six alpacas donated by sisters Julie Bodette and Kimberly Buechner Fouse. Julie's farm, Sunny Meade Alpacas, Ltd. is located in Swanton, Ohio just down the road from Bittersweet Farms in Whitehouse, Ohio. Kimberly owns Alpacas of the Covenant, Inc., an alpaca breeding business in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

While their breeding businesses are separate, the sisters own a third business together, All Things Alpaca, LLC, originator and distributor of the Alpaca Fleece-Filled Bird Nesting Ball (patent pending).

The sisters share two passions: alpacas, and giving back to their communities. Julie became interested in autism when a neighbor on the autism spectrum came to visit her farm. She saw, firsthand, the intuitive spark between the alpacas and this young man. She began looking for ways to use her herd to make a difference in the lives of those with autism.



Starbuck, Ray, Otis and Lucado joined the Safe Haven family in June 2010. In the fall of 2012, Julie donated two more alpacas to Safe Haven, Dexter and G.



Farmer Jim performs an alpaca "pedicure"

Safe Haven's alpacas were sheared in April of 2013. Farmer Jim was a big help, and several other farmers came to the barn to observe. The best quality fiber was gathered for product use, and the "seconds" were saved for Nesting Ball material.

Alpaca Nesting Balls provide an all-natural nesting material for backyard birds. The 4" nesting ball offers birds a soft, insulating material with which to line their nests. Even when exposed to the elements, the fleece dries back to its natural, soft state.

Nesting Balls can be purchased online at www.allthingsalpaca.com and other authorized retailers and soon from Safe Haven.



Several of the Safe Haven farmers have been involved in making the Nesting Balls. This activity provides a concrete end result, increases focus, helps develop motor skills, and serves as a creative outlet for people on the autism spectrum. This perfectly matches Safe Haven's mission of providing meaningful work for its farmers.

It is hoped that enough of the Alpaca Fleece-filled Bird Nesting Balls will be generated so the farmers of Safe Haven can sell them during the summer at area farmers' markets, a venture that can increase the farmers' confidence in the public arena and further introduce Safe Haven to the larger community.



Farmer Audrey puts the finishing touches on a Nesting Ball

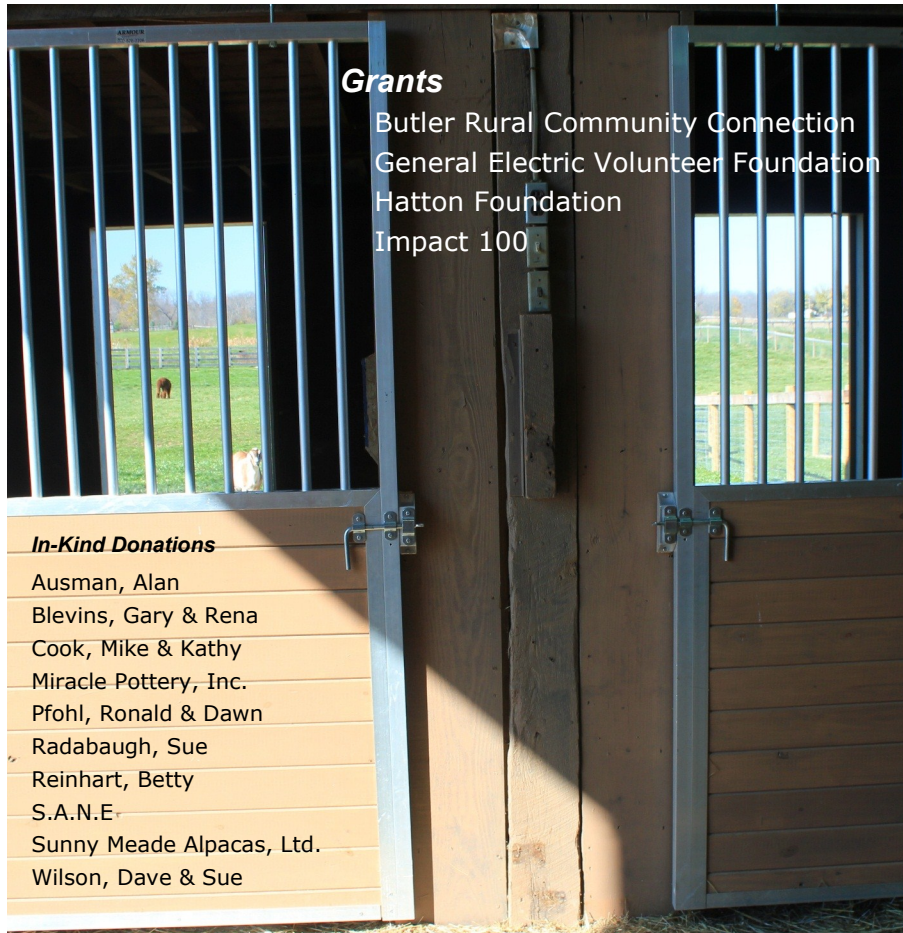
Abby and Bill Ison *Continued from page 1*

Abby currently performs the bulk of the duties; Bill still works full time but helps out during evenings and on weekends.

Abby credits farmer Jim Wilson for being her solid right-hand man. "He is my official farm manager assistant and he is just wonderful," she said. "He loves doing repairs, is strong and so loving and gentle with the animals. He takes his job very seriously."

Animal care and farming skills are being taught to the farmers so they can take over many of the farm responsibilities. Abby is actively training staff members to instruct and assist the farmers. "Even something as simple as the correct way to pick up a wheelbarrow needs to be taught," she stressed.

Thank You for What You Make Possible Around the Farm



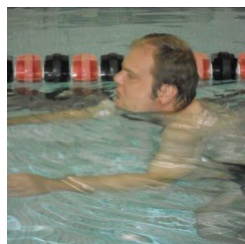
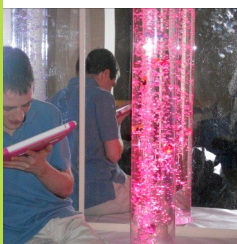
2013 Development Focus

People on the autism spectrum love the sensory input of the great outdoors. Animals, birds, plants, and water help to create a calming environment.

We are continually looking for ways to make Safe Haven a beautiful, home-like setting that brings our farmers outdoors to enjoy nature. This year's planned improvements for the farm include:

- Add a new chicken coop with run to house a dozen chickens (fresh eggs for breakfast!)
- Build a duck shelter on the small pond for 6-8 ducks
- Install a fountain and deck for the small pond near the houses
- Create a park-like setting around the picnic shelter in front of the houses, with walkway, benches, and plants
- Build a gazebo behind the Hatton Center, with seating for the farmers and staff
- Create a new patio setting around the gazebo, including a grill for cookouts

Farmers Enjoy 'Chill Out' Time



Donations—2012

Safe Haven Farms appreciates your donations and contributions over the past year. Without your strong support, we could not continue to grow and mature. Your generosity helps provide the resources for us to significantly impact the lives of individuals with autism.

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Continued on page 7

Join Us! Annual Safe Haven Golf Tourney in June

Mark your calendars. Monday, June 24, registration starting at 11:30, tee-off at 1:00.

Wildwood Golf Course
601 Aberdeen Dr.
Middletown, OH 45042

Contact person: Sherry Fishbaugh
2780 Arbor Pointe Drive
Middletown, OH 45042
513-424-0384(H); 513-594-6774(C)
sherryfishbaugh@yahoo.com

Four-person scramble, shotgun start.

Per golfer: \$125 includes 18 holes of golf with cart, box lunch, dinner, prizes. Refreshments and snacks throughout the course.

Hole in One. WOW! Great cash prizes and gifts on certain Par 3 holes.

Corporate Sponsors. We need your generosity.

Benefit Safe Haven Farms and get some publicity for your organization at one of the premium levels.

See www.safehavenfarms.org for available levels of support and register your foursomes, or contact Sherry Fishbaugh.



When's the last time you fed a goat?



Tee-Hee. In 2012 guys could "rent a dress" and tee off from the women's tee on the longest Par 5.

Be a Hole or Tee Sponsor. Honor a Safe Haven resident, your organization, or a person of your choosing.

Tee Sponsor \$100
Hole Sponsor \$50

See our website for complete information about the tourney including the brochure, the registration form, and how to submit either mail or online payment
www.safehavenfarms.org.

Questions:
sherryfishbaugh@yahoo.com



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Tourney co-chair Don O'Brien shows hand crafted wood plaque awarded to 2012 winners

Thank You !

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*Denotes new member 2013

New Pole Barn. . . a Canine Condo

In 2012 we saw the construction of a useful and exciting addition to the farm landscape—the new pole barn. It contains needed storage space for farm equipment and hay, but it seems to have gone to the dogs, literally.

Safe Haven canines-in-residence Bo and Mattie call the barn their home and love the convenient doggy-door access.

Bo, the 10-year-old beagle, wandered onto the property at Christmas time in 2011 and started to make a bed out of hay in the main barn and eat out of the



trash. The dog hung around for a few days, so the farmers, with the help of staff members Kari and Mike Rogers, made *Lost Dog* fliers and posted them locally.

“We went door to door and no one knew him,” said Mike. “So he ended up living with Kari and me until March 2013 when the dog room and doggy door were completed. Now that Bo has moved back to the farm, he is reported to be much happier in his outdoor environment with his companion Mattie.

Mattie is a playful 3-year-old black lab that seems to fit right in with both four-legged and two-legged friends at the farm. She was a gift from Penny Dixon, a relative of one of the day farmers.

Mike said that the two dogs were instant “best buds” from the first day and that they go everywhere together.



The pampered pups are fun for the farmers to have around and they serve a practical purpose as well. The farmers must walk, feed, groom and bathe them and also clean the beds and towels in their doggie “digs” on a weekly basis. Now that’s Four Star service!

It was through the generosity of the Hatton Foundation that Safe Haven was able to construct and equip the new pole barn. We are deeply grateful.



Safe Haven Farms

Butler County, Ohio

*A Community of Choice for Adults
with Autism*

PO Box 633
Monroe, Ohio 45050

513.422.1880

Information: rogersdw@aol.com

www.safehavenfarms.org

Safe Haven Annual Garage Sale

Don't miss our HUGE garage sale held in the Hatton Center at Safe Haven Farm.

Friday, June 14 and Saturday June 15,
10:00-4:00 both days.

5970 No Mans Road
Middletown, OH in Madison Twp.

Household items, kitchen equipment, decorations, art, tabletop items, children's and baby clothes, toys, furniture, teen and adult clothing, Christmas, camping equipment and so much more were available at our 2012 sale. Come see what we have for you this year!

Proceeds from the sale help staff accompany our farmers to outings in the community, such as movies, restaurants, concerts, or whatever is of interest to the individual farmer. Residents pay their own way and staff costs are defrayed with funds from the garage sale proceeds.

Do you have items that you want to donate for our sale? Please contact Rena Blevins for information.

Contact Rena at 513-863-8355 or
garyb2128@fuse.net

Parents and Safe Haven supporters: We could use you to help set up, to work the tables during the sale hours, and to clean up. Let Rena know when you can be available.



June 14-15

A great chance to see our farm and score some terrific bargains!