



The Safe Haven Way

www.safehavenfarms.org

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

Spring 2015

A Common Voice Supporting Choice—We Made Progress!

In our fall newsletter we told you about some disturbing guidelines published by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which is attempting to limit housing options and services for people with disabilities.

Safe Haven residents receive Medicaid waiver funding, which is support for disabled individuals living in “home and community based settings (HCBS).” CMS, while reviewing its existing guidelines, gave farm settings a second look and declared that farms are isolating, offering residents “little ability to access the broader community outside the farm” and should therefore be ineligible for HCBS waiver funding. They also are calling into question “intentional” communities such as Safe Haven, which are specifically designed to support those with challenging and unique needs, like some on the autism spectrum.

CMS would prefer that persons with disabilities live in homes widely scattered across the community and hold paid jobs alongside non-disabled peers rather than working on a farm or campus worksite where they live. These new definitions are to be applied nationally and each state is charged with creating a transition plan, mapping out how it will make necessary changes so all programs are in CMS compliance.



factor for our community—a blessing. The majority of the community out here has opened their arms to the farm. The overall program of the farm is amazing. We are well pleased.”

Alan Daniel, Vice President, Madison Township Board of Trustees

Earlier this year, a group of dedicated parents engaged in a massive effort to provide input to Ohio’s transition plan, hoping the language that labels farms as isolating and not community-based might be set aside. Parents Mike Odioso and Dan Norris combined their legal talents with advocates from Safe Haven and Bittersweet Farms and others from around the state to outline the serious flaws in the CMS plan and offer substitute language for the state’s transition plan. They met with countless State Representatives, and Senators, government officials and U.S. Congressional Representatives and Senators or their staff to ensure that our voice was heard. Parents and advocates from around the state wrote letters, signed petitions, attended meetings and generally did what most parents of children with autism have learned to do over the years—advocate for their children.

Safe Haven Farms is a feather in the Township’s cap. “Go to the township’s webpage and you’ll see that the insignia for Madison Township is a red feather. Safe Haven is definitely a plus-

We were heartened by the outpouring of support for our concerns from so many of our elected officials. They understand the spirit of the CMS guidelines, which is to prevent disabled persons from being warehoused or isolated from the larger community without being offered choices for other places to live and work. But they also understood that residents and participants at Safe Haven are there by choice, after years of careful planning by parents and professionals to design an autism-friendly setting with the services crucial to the success of their son or daughter.

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A Common Voice *Continued from page 1*

As a result of the efforts of many advocates, a letter was sent to the Secretary of Health and Human Services in Washington (the parent, cabinet-level organization for CMS), signed by fourteen of the sixteen members of the US Congressional delegation from Ohio, including House Speaker John Boehner and Senator Rob Portman, in support of farm communities!

We were relieved to see that the transition plan the state submitted to CMS included revised language which has largely removed the statement that farms are isolating and not appropriate community-based settings. Ohio believes farms can continue to be a viable choice for those who desire such a setting.

An autism-friendly rural living environment is in no way mutually exclusive to the concept of community access, as readers of this newsletter know. Residents of Safe Haven go into the community, and the community comes to Safe Haven. We are refining ways to document our community interactions but believe we will be able to demonstrate, if asked, that we are proud members of the local Madison Twp. and Middletown communities.



"I see Safe Haven as a very viable life choice in our area for people with autism who want to live in a rural setting.

The farm is constantly improving options and choices for everyone who lives there, with a whole blend of activities,

including gardening and animal care. And then it is being taken to the next level as you bring people in from the community and take folks out into the community for activities. Safe Haven's Board of Directors of the farm, and their provider (Bittersweet), are doing a beautiful job of weaving community into Safe Haven's life to enhance options."

Lisa Guliano, Superintendent of the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities

recently testified at the state budget hearing asking to preserve the aspects of the system which have worked well for many people and to not rush into dismantling the current process.

We believe federal/state efforts to redefine appropriate living and work settings will continue for several years. The Safe Haven motto adopted some time ago, "A Community of Choice for Adults with Autism," rings as true as when we first envisioned Safe Haven: We are committed to advocating for the rights of our sons and

daughters to live and work in safe, meaningful environments centered around their unique needs. We appreciate all the support we have received in the past months and hope you will continue to advocate for choice and the rights of individuals with disabilities.

—Dr. Pam Lockwood, Safe Haven Board VP



A favorite activity—the weekly bowling outing

But the struggle is not yet over. The daily work program system in Ohio is the next target for community integration. The Employment First initiative in Ohio states that everyone with a disability can work and should be integrated into jobs in the community next



The Odioso family enjoying the Valentine's Dance at the farm

HUGS for Safe Haven. . . A Boost to our Garden Program

Safe Haven Farms and Bittersweet-Middletown have joined forces with Hamilton Urban Garden Systems—**HUGS**—a non-profit organization dedicated to urban agriculture, community gardening, health and nutritional education, and non-traditional gardening methods. Alfred Hall, founder and president of HUGS, is an expert on Certified Square Foot Gardening (SFG) and he has agreed to mentor staffer Mike Rogers in a new initiative to make our gardening program at Safe Haven more productive. Alfred Hall introduced Mike to a computer garden-planning program that will enhance our planting timetables and produce larger yields.



Preparations are underway for planting the farm's gardens. In March volunteers from Wright State University constructed raised beds and irrigation systems for the outdoor gardens, which will provide the farmers easier access to the plants and watering system. Safe Haven farmers have been planting seeds and watering the plants in the hoop house to ready them for spring.

HUGS staff will offer a series of training opportunities for the Bittersweet-Middletown staff in the enhanced gardening methods, so that the horticulture program will be understood and supported. We hope, in the future, to have a larger bounty of naturally grown plants, herbs and vegetables for our own use as well as enough to sell.



Volunteers from Wright State University worked Saturdays in March building raised beds for the outdoor garden

To further support their mission, HUGS is working with the City of Hamilton on a project that will provide the downtown population with access to fresh meats and produce for the first time in decades. An abandoned department store downtown may become the home of an organic grocery and deli. HUGS, which has been the primary catalyst behind urban community gardens taking

root throughout the city, will supply some of the store's locally grown produce, providing a natural outlet for Safe Haven grown products.

Plans to increase commerce on-site at the farm are underway as well. We have submitted a grant proposal for funds to construct a building that will house a plant and herb processing area where our farmers will wash, dry, and package herbs for sale. Attached, there will be a small farm store where



The Mission of HUGS

To assure that every man, woman and child in Hamilton, Ohio and the surrounding communities, will have access to nutritional and gardening information, fresh produce, and their associated services; and the opportunity to grow their own food in a private or community garden plot.

The raised beds will be placed in the garden and filled with a special mixture of soil as recommended by Alfred Hall of HUGS

*Thank you donors
and volunteers !*

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dreams alive !*

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Volunteers from the Oxford Presbyterian Church once again decorated the Hatton Center for Christmas

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 Walther, Ginger
 Ward, Dan
 Weber, John & Kathy
 Welter, Jim & Helen
 Wernicke, Eugene & Judith
 Wespiser, Joseph & Kate
 Whitlatch, Steve & Amy
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 Williams, William Jr.
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 Wollmershauser, Charles Sr.

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 Wollmershauser, Richard & Barbara
 Wossum, Morgan & Carol
 Wurst, Tim
 Yanosik, Ed & Ann
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 Zody Orthodontics, LLC
 Zody, Chuck & Pauline
 Zollars, Delora

2014 In-Kind Donations

Blevins, Gary & Rena
 Harshbarger, Al & Rita
 McKenzie, Donna
 Nichols, Jonathon & Joyce
 Wilson, Dave & Sue

THANKS Middletown Foundation!

The Middletown Foundation is once again helping Safe Haven Farm. In 2011 they funded the purchase of iPads and other equipment for our Learning Center in the Hatton Center. This spring they are helping us purchase a commercial grade zero-turn lawn mower. A zero-turn riding lawn mower is a standard riding mower with a turning radius that is effectively zero. The zero-turn maneuverability and the wider deck of the new mower will be a great help to our mowing team—Abby Ison and Jim Wilson—who do a great job mowing the grass around the residential houses, the Welcome House, the Hatton Center and the barns.



Families, friends, & supporters gather on major holidays to show their support and enjoy what they have created— Safe Haven, an amazing place

Kroger Community Rewards Program

We can earn some money for Safe Haven the easy way by shopping at Kroger. The Kroger Community Rewards Program lets you link your Kroger Plus card to the Kroger Community Rewards program so that every time you shop at Kroger, Kroger will be make a donation to Safe Haven Farms. SHF receives quarterly checks from Kroger, and the amount varies depending on how much we spend at Kroger compared to other participating organizations and how many of us are signed up. Since Kroger is a national company, spread the word to your friends and relatives and ask them to sign up in their area, if this option is available.



There are really only three steps to signing up:

1. You must have a Kroger Plus card (the card that's swiped at the register).
2. You must create an on-line digital account with a valid email address.
3. You must associate your Plus card number and Safe Haven Farms with your on-line account.

Where do I get a Kroger Plus card?

At the customer service desk at any Kroger. When your application is processed, the system assigns you a Plus Card number. The number is printed on the back of the Plus Card under the barcode. The Plus Card gives you discounts on everyday purchases and provides donations to Safe Haven Farms at no additional cost—a real “win-win.”

How do I register for an on-line digital account?

Visit www.kroger.com or download the Kroger Mobile App from the App Store or Google Play and do the following:

1. Select “Register”
2. Enter your information
3. Select “Create Account”

Be sure to enter your Plus Card number from the back of your card. This is how your shopping transactions benefit Safe Haven.

How do I select Safe Haven as a recipient of the Community Rewards program?

You will sign in to your on-line digital account and update the Community Rewards section on the account screen:

1. Sign in to your digital account.
2. Select “My Account” or notice “Welcome Back, Your Name” at the top of the welcome screen. Click your name to display your account.
3. Scroll down to the “Community Rewards” section of your account page.
4. Select “Enroll Now” or “Edit.”
5. In the Search field enter saf (the 1st 3 letters of Safe) or our NPO number 34324.
6. Select Safe Haven Farms from the list and click “Save.”

Safe Haven Farms will now display in the Community Rewards section of your account. Moving forward any shopping you do using the Plus card associated with your digital account will accrue benefits for Safe Haven. It takes about 10 days for the note, “You requested Kroger to donate to Safe Haven Farms” to appear at the bottom of your grocery shopping receipt.

Do I need to renew my selected organization?

Even though you have added Safe Haven to your account, which can be done at any time of the year, you need to update your account once a year. Check your receipt, which will tell you when to renew, as the time approaches, or look at your digital account information under “Community Rewards.”

We don't know how long Kroger will be doing this, so let's get as many people as possible to sign up right away and take advantage of it while we can. “Free” money!

For questions or help call Kroger 1-800-576-4377 or contact Mei Carpenter at meicarpenter@roadrunner.com



We the Grand Finale

Over 150 of our relatives and friends with a heart for autism braved the snow and frigid temps to *Share the Love with Safe Haven Farms* at the Grand Finale in Glendale on Feb. 17th. Rated one of Cincinnati's "Most Romantic" places to dine, the historic restaurant's warm and cozy interior was the perfect setting for Safe Haven Farm's first annual Valentine-themed fundraiser. Thanks to the Grand Finale and the efforts of many, the festive evening was a resounding success.



Safe Haven day program participant Alex Williamson (lower left) surrounded by the love of family members



Lisa Guliano, Superintendent Butler Co. DD, & John Guliano

The food was wonderful and the prizes were outstanding. Congratulations to the evening's Raffle Winners:

Hilton Head Beach Vacation: Pamela Lockwood

Lovebirds Weekend Resort Getaway in Tennessee: Cheryl Ferrell

Tickets to The Lion King and dinner at Crave: David and Karen Harrison

Do you have a timeshare or vacation home you would like to donate as a prize for next year's event (02/16/16)? Give our supporters a chance to win a fabulous vacation! You can specify dates of availability. Contact us.



Abby & Bill Ison, Safe Haven co-farm managers (front), Janice Tinch, Program Coordinator & Scott Tinch (back)



A BIG thank you to our EVENT SPONSOR, **First Financial Bank!** Above, Bruce Crutcher, Senior Vice President, & Celia Crutcher

Thanks also to our sponsors, contributors, event coordinators, and volunteers.

- ◆ Supporting Sponsors: Truepoint Wealth Counsel, State Auto Insurance Companies, and Crane-Tec
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- ◆ Event coordinators: Theresa Ciampone, Wally Bolduc and Virginia Chambers and event volunteers Suzanne O'Brien, Denny Rogers, and Sarah Adams



Theresa Ciampone, event coordinator and Safe Haven board member, and Wally Bolduc, Safe Haven board member

Equestrian Update

After a long, cold winter, the spring season of Safe Haven's Equestrian Program is finally here. "The farmers are excited, and the horses are healthy and ready to go," says Equestrian Coordinator, Donna Farler. When asked if she has seen any therapeutic outcomes among the riders, Donna begins to tell stories.

"One of our guys has a hard time focusing, and he flaps his hands, a common autistic trait. But when he gets up on that horse, his hands quiet, and he is able to focus through several steps of a game we play, where he rides across the arena to get a ring out of a mailbox and put it on Rudolph's antlers (this was around Christmas). It's wonderful to see that kind of focus!"

"We have another rider whose mood is up and down from week to week. One week he got up on the horse and started singing. The rest of us were very quiet and just walked with the horse. The entire atmosphere in



Volunteer as a horse leader or side walker.

the barn became very calm and relaxed. It was beautiful—therapeutic for all of us!

"Another one of our farmers isn't very verbal. When we got to the part of the lesson where the horse breaks into a trot, he said, in a loud voice, 'Don't do that! Don't do that!' And so we slowed the horse back to a walk. So, yes, we do see the outcomes the research talks about. With weekly riding, we see a change in our students very quickly. I love being here. I really love all of these kids!"

Safe Haven's Equestrian Program is now open to people with autism, age 4 and up, from the surrounding community. Our facility is located at **5970 No Mans Rd., Middletown, OH**. Lessons take place from 4-7 pm on Tuesday evenings. The cost is \$30.00 per one-hour lesson, which includes 20-30 minutes riding time, as well as time forming relationships with the horses before and after riding. Lauren Warm is our PATH certified Riding Instructor. Contact Donna Farler at equestrian@safehavenfarms.org, or at 513-340-0688 (leave a message) if you are interested in lessons, or if you would like to volunteer. Prospective riders will be asked to make an initial visit to the farm for a visit with Donna. Paperwork and medical forms will be provided at that time.

How Sweet the Sound

Joel Bolduc, resident farmer at Safe Haven, could sing before he could talk. While growing up, songs helped him learn important tasks, calmed his anxiety, and provided fun family time. His mom always dreamed of Joel singing in a choir, where his love of music could find full expression.

While Joel was settling into his new home at Safe Haven Farms, a music loving high school student, Tanner McClellan, was forming a choir for students with developmental disabilities as her senior capstone project. After graduation, settling in at Miami University, she felt something was missing. She began dreaming about forming a similar choir for adults with intellectual disabilities through the Best Buddies organization at Miami.

Her dream came to life (with a lot of hard work!) when the first Best Buddies Friends Choir rehearsal was held on

Miami's Hamilton campus in 2013. Two dreams intersected when Joel joined the choir in 2014.

The choir practices most Saturdays, and has an intense performance schedule. The choir has performed the Star-Spangled Banner at several Miami sporting events, and was chosen out of 300 auditions to sing the national anthem at a Dayton Dragon's Baseball game. They've sung for Miami's Diversity Affairs Global Council, Relay for Life, the MU THON. They performed this spring in The A Cappella Awareness concert, with all of Miami's A Cappella groups.

Tanner says, "Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy music the same way



Joel, far left, performing with the Best Buddies Friends Choir

that I have always been able to." Twenty adults with various disabilities "sing, laugh, and make memories" every week. Joel's confidence has sky-rocketed. His mom says, "to see him out there in the public arena, singing with a big grin on his face, is such a confirmation of his gifts. His dad and I are thrilled."

Fall FUNdraisers

VOA Family Walk/Run

Saturday morning, October 3rd.

Run or walk around the beautiful lake at the Voice of America park in West Chester to benefit Safe Haven Farms. Watch our web site for more details as we get closer to the event.

Walkers and runners, individuals of all abilities and all ages are welcome. Form a corporate team, sponsor a walker, walk yourself with your family and friends, bring your dog! We have it on good authority that it will be a beautiful fall day and we guarantee you will have FUN and support a great cause.

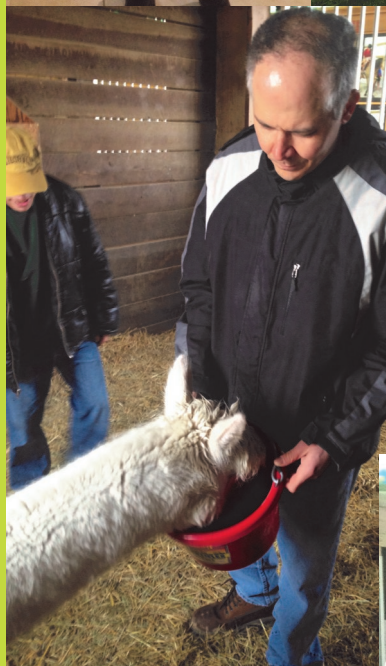
Annual Open House and Arts & Crafts Sale

Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 17-18.

Come visit Safe Haven Farms and spend a leisurely time touring our facilities, visiting our animals and shopping our Crafts and Christmas Boutique Sale. Find unique items from many artists and crafters to delight yourself and those on your Christmas shopping list.



Two great events for the whole family.



Egg-stra Cute—Our New Ducklings and Chicks

Donna Farler, Equestrian Coordinator and animal care enthusiast, reports on our spring “babies”: 10 mallard and 15 Rouen ducks and 25 Golden Comet chickens. The ducklings and chicks have passed through their critical brooding period and will soon move to their new digs (the Duck House and the Chicken Palace), where the farmers will assist with their care and collect their eggs.

“I had not raised ducklings before and had no idea how much FUN they could be,” laughs Donna. They are loud, full of personality and love to eat. They must have water available when eating. They take a bite of food and then waddle over to the water tube in the brooder and make the most interesting noises you have ever heard during a meal. If you bring them a tub of water to play in, it resembles teenagers on Spring break; they love to have a party.”



Interesting fact: Care must be taken when placing baby ducks in water because they are not born with a functional oil gland and don't develop one until several weeks later. Ducklings raised with their mother benefit from her spreading her own oil on her ducklings so they can safely swim right away without getting waterlogged and possibly drowning. Without the mother, they must be watched carefully when in water and gently warmed and dried after a dip in the pool. Even a shallow dish of water can be fatal to a baby duck.

Protecting the lives of the chicks during the first few weeks in the brooder requires a fair amount of work by the caretakers. The temperature the first week must stay at 95 degrees, the second week 90, the third week 85, and the fourth 80. They need a constant supply of medicated feed and fresh water. When they move to the Chicken Palace, a heat lamp will be required to keep them warm for a few more weeks.



Riley, I need some alone time, Dog!

Support us—so many ways! We are always grateful for cash gifts, but there are other ways you can support Safe Haven:

- ◆ Stock transfer
- ◆ Donating goods
- ◆ Providing services
- ◆ Planned gifts
- ◆ Volunteering
- ◆ Supporting events

We would be happy to discuss any of these options with you!

Please email us at
donations@safehavenfarms.org
 To volunteer contact us at
volunteer@safehavenfarms.org

The pullets (young hens) will mature at five to six pounds. Even though their body is small in size, the eggs will be large and brown. Interesting fact: It may be that the color of a chicken's earlobe is related to the color of the egg. If the earlobe is white, then the egg will most likely be white. If it's red, the egg will most likely be brown. The hens will begin to lay eggs in approximately six months and will produce about twenty-five large to extra large eggs per day. There will be enough for the farm to use and plenty for the farmers to sell.



Donors! Monthly Credit Card Contributions Welcomed



Did you know that in addition to making a one-time donation via check or on-line you can sign up for an easy monthly credit card donation? This can suit the needs of those who want to spread their contribution across the year. Just go to the “Support Us” tab on our web site, select “Donations” and click the on-line “Donate” button. After entering your monthly amount, click the “Make this Recurring (Monthly)” box, enter your credit card or

PayPal information, and you're all set. Your designated amount will automatically be sent to Safe Haven monthly with no further action on your part.



Safe Haven Farms

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P.O. Box 633
Monroe, Ohio 45050

Street Address:

5970 No Mans Rd.
Middletown, OH 45042

513.422.1880

www.safehavenfarms.org



Safe Haven Farms

A Community of Choice for Adults with Autism

The *Safe Haven Way* is published twice a year—spring and fall

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- ◆ Mei Carpenter
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**Thank you
for your support!**