



# Cheryl Ann Programs News Review

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## CA Group Opens Community Connections

### Location Puts Individuals in the Heart of Community

Once a week, a merry band sets out in Coldwater to collect the donations that have been dropped into pink boots at businesses around town, and take the money to People's Bank, where it is counted and deposited. The boots are for a fundraiser, Give Breast Cancer the Boot, co-sponsored by Preferred Insurance and CA Group.

The collecting crew is from Community Connections. Beth Bruns, Dan Tobin and Dan Gross, accompanied by Morgan Triplett, make the weekly rounds. It's a way to get out and about in the community, and it's good for everybody, said Beth Butler, CEO of CA Group Inc., which recently moved part of its organization to what it's calling Community Connections at 110 N. Market St. in Coldwater.

The new location will give CA Group more accessibility to the sights and sounds of a friendly small town, Butler said. Its facilities at the Cheryl Ann Programs site on Mud Pike west of Celina worked well for some things, but the location didn't allow for many individualized services around the neighborhood, at least not without the use of a large van.

"In the country, everything we wanted to do required a van," Butler said. The location in Coldwater is within an easy walk of the library, bakery, park and other locations. People can spend more time pursuing their interests and less time in a vehicle.

Community Connections, which opened in Coldwater on October 1, provides both day services and services that support those looking for community employment or volunteer opportunities. One chilly day in early October, Christine Huston stopped in on her day off of work to bake bread with staff member Diane Bonifas; she cooks for herself and comes to Community Connection to learn new skills in the kitchen.



**Above, Beth Bruns, Dan Tobin and Dan Gross turn in donations for a breast cancer fundraiser. Below, Christine Huston with the bread she baked at Community Connections.**

Others were gathered around staff member Della Shively for a quiet conversation near the end of their day. Others, like Beth, Dan and Dan, had been out exploring and making connections in the community.

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### Provider Profiles • 2018

Throughout the year we've highlighted local providers and their services. This issue features the last of the series. We hope this series has helped our readers learn more about the network of care that's available for people with developmental disabilities.

## Evolution of Programs Has Helped Individuals

# Over the Years, Our System Has Changed

The more things change...the more things stay the same! The system of serving people with disabilities has taken many twists and turns over the years. We have gone from raising enough funds



**Cheryl Ann**  
**Superintendent**  
**Shawn Thieman**

to operate one classroom in Coldwater to the development of an entire school building with buses and lunch ladies.

And now...we no longer offer a segregated

school-aged program at all. The buses were sold years ago and the cafeteria has become an SSA conference room where we host family ISP meetings. Our system changed, and individuals with disabilities benefited.

When our first students were graduating from school back in the mid 1970s, many of them wanted more. They would not be satisfied going back to their family homes with no chance of having a life like everyone else. Therefore, the Board of DD began operating a workshop service that would teach the basics of work. Individuals learned the importance of being reliable and dependable. They also learned the skills that local businesses were interested in hiring for. Local businesses went from offering contract work to the workshop to offering jobs to the individuals. Today, more than 50 percent of the adults we serve are hired as employees of local businesses. Our system changed, and individuals with disabilities benefited.

Employment, coupled with disability income and Medicaid waivers, created a roadmap for individuals with disabilities to live independently. Families and parents would no longer have to feel the burden and stress of outliving their loved ones. The Board of DD became experts in writing "life plans" that included community residential options. A large percentage of the Board's levy funds goes toward residential services. Our system changed, and individuals with disabilities benefited.

Early intervention services for infants and toddlers were not something that was thought of when our system began. However, in the last 30 years we have learned an incredible amount about the

value of serving young children with disabilities. Identifying and treating individuals at a young age can significantly reduce the effects of their disabilities for the rest of their lives. Our system changed, and individuals with disabilities benefited.

Transportation services began as a county-wide program where everyone with a disability was picked up on a bus and transported to a centralized program. This service transitioned from Cheryl Ann yellow buses, to Petermann white buses, to the current offering of provider-agency vans and transit vehicles. Individuals with disabilities living on highways and city streets no longer have to walk to a vehicle that has stopped traffic in both directions. Individuals living in apartment complexes no longer have to walk out to the street because the bus can't turn around in their parking lot. Our system changed, and individuals with disabilities benefited.

The biggest change that our system has faced in recent years is privatization. For years, the Board of DD was the primary (if not only) service provider, and everyone with a disability in Mercer County was served in a way that fit into our program. Today, there are five Adult Dayhab agencies serving our Mercer County residents, and individuals can pick and choose from all five when considering what is best for them. Our system changed, and individuals with disabilities benefited.

I hope the newsletters this past year have been helpful. We have attempted to help our readers have a better understanding of the provider agencies that deliver essential services to the individuals we care about so much.

## CA Group

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Those who want to go farther can also take trips to nearby towns, including their own hometowns, where they are encouraged to explore that town's businesses, parks and other opportunities.

Often, those community explorations are ways to learn more about possible employment opportunities, Butler said. If someone expresses an interest in working in the bakery or other local business, for instance, the exploration might start by asking if a group can tour the location. Everybody has fun and learns a lot—but one individual may be paying closer attention than others, trying to picture himself or herself in that setting. It's then time for further exploration, further questions, Butler said, to see if it's the right fit.

"We ask, what skills might be needed to land and keep that job?" she said. "From there, we work with the individual—what skills  
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## Provider Profile

# Caregiver Homes Provides Support to Caregivers

It can be baffling and stressful at times to be a caregiver, whether you're a direct support professional (DSP) or a family member. That's why Caregiver Homes' Shared Living program provides support and coaching by its network of registered nurse care managers.

Caregiver Homes provides Shared Living services in four homes in Mercer County, and is prepared to grow its program, said Susan Gregg, Senior Director. "When individuals are living in a family setting, whether their caregivers are related or not, we support them with a care manager, who provides ongoing coaching, training, support and education so the caregiver can carry out the individual's service plan (ISP) with confidence," Gregg said.

Caregiver Homes' care managers are registered nurses who provide everything from medical information to more practical information like resources, tips and

social supports.

"Our care managers are able to help individuals or caregivers understand the medical condition of the people in their care," Gregg said. "As folks have changes in their health status due to age, or the progression of existing chronic issues or congenital conditions, it can be hard for caregivers. It is helpful for families to have another person to turn to. Caregivers can bounce ideas off our care managers, who can then give them resources, calm their fears and anxieties. The care managers can let the caregivers know how to watch out for changes and when to reach out to their healthcare professionals."

Caregiver Homes provides Shared Living to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, usually with one or two people being served by a live-in caregiver sharing a home. "We provide support that can make



**Caregiver Homes provides advice and support to caregivers.**

*(Photo courtesy of Caregiver Homes)*

remaining at home possible. It's a very person-centered approach, for both the caregiver and the individual receiving supports."

The care managers are available to individuals and their caregivers through home visits and the use of technology. "We offer daily communication through technology. We say we're combining technology with human touch," Gregg said. "We're not here to interfere in someone's life. The caregiver is always in the driver's seat, we see ourselves riding shotgun, ready to help, when needed."

While Caregiver Homes does not provide DSPs, it does help individuals and families find qualified individuals who can provide live-in care. "There are times when everyone agrees that Shared Living would be a good option, but there's no known caregiver. We then find out what is that individual's ideal situation, where they want to live, and who they want to live with. We then go out and recruit for that caregiver. It's important that we find the right person," Gregg said.

With the right caregiver, and a support system in place, Caregiver Homes can help individuals meet their own goals. To learn more about Caregiver Homes, call 866-797-2333.

## CA Group

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do you already have, and what do you need? Our goal is to find out what interests people, then go out and try to discover how they can be a part of the community.

"A lot of people want jobs in the community. But that can be just as much about making connections in the community as about the job itself. How do you find your place in the community? It can be about showing up on time, keeping busy at work, learning more about the work environment and what it requires," Butler said.

From 25-30 associates come to Community Connections each weekday. Once there, their own

goals and interests drive what happens next. "There are diverse things going on here every day," Butler said. "We're definitely not a one-size-fits-all organization."

CA Group continues to maintain a presence at the Mud Pike location, which is still home to Green Business Solutions (a recycling center) and other employment opportunities. CA Group also provides transportation to help its associates get to its facilities or to their jobs in the community.

"We try to help everyone learn the things they need to learn to get where they need to go," Butler said. "And we'll help them get there."

# Providers Add Opportunities to a Full Life



**Thanks to the providers who serve Mercer County folks!**

Some of our providers could use more helping hands. If you're a caring, competent person looking for fulfilling work, consider a career as a Direct Support Professional (DSP). Contact Cheryl Ann at 419-586-2369 for more information.



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