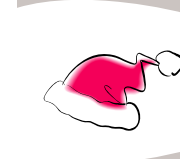




Independence of Portage County, Inc.



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○ March | ○ 2008

# Independence Post

PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES TO ENHANCE THE LIVES OF THOSE WE SERVE

## Staff Recognition and Holiday Party



Mary Wilson, Michelle Seabolt and Sherry Komlo

*At Independence of Portage County, we believe that each developmentally disabled person is entitled to the rights and dignity afforded to all persons, and to be served in the least restrictive manner. With this philosophical base in mind, the Agency's mission is to:*

- Recognize individual needs and goals, while providing services and support in an enriched environment which fosters independence. This environment of teaching and growth focuses on quality of life, decision-making, development of friendships, interests and activities, and the modeling of behaviors which promote community inclusion.
- Advocate for those we serve, acknowledge the role of family, friends and community supports and coordinate services between providers.
- Provide residential services in a safe, comfortable and family-like atmosphere.
- Increase awareness and involve the community in the lives of those with special challenges.

Independence hosted the annual Staff Recognition and Holiday Party at The Gathering Rooms at PEACE. The occasion expresses our appreciation to all of our employees for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Tradition accompanied the event through distribution of nominated employee and longevity awards.

The recipients of the employee awards were as follows: Ole Reliable Award, Cheryl Stout; Sunshine Award, Holly Taylor; Picture Perfect Award, Nicole Ekcho; Lean on Me Award, Camille Garrett; Busy Bee Award, Greg Golden; The Miracle Worker Award, Cindy Erickson; and All for One Award, John Lewis. Congratulations to all of the recipients.

Longevity awards were also presented. Staff receiving longevity awards for the 5 year category were as follows: Shawn Dean, Jessica Johnson, Nancy Thompson, Kristen Tomeko, Melissa Wheatcroft, Sue Williams and Ethan Williams. The following were the recipients of 10 year awards: Sherry Komlo, Lillian Pyles, Michelle Seabolt and Mary Wilson. Judy Janosik was the recipient of the 20 year award.



Nicole Ekcho and Lori Coller



John Lewis, Janalyn Ayers and Pris Fox



Sue Williams, Melissa Wheatcroft and Nancy Thompson

# Ravenna Community Playground

A Program of Smart Community Development Group



The Friends of the Parks is a non-profit organization with a mission to preserve, protect, improve and promote the use of Ravenna parks, forest preserves and recreational areas for the benefit of all neighborhoods and citizens.

The Friends of the Parks initiated the building of a new playground. The playground will be located at Chestnut Hills Park on North Chestnut Street in Ravenna. It will feature a toddler section, a sandlot, a castle and will be accessible to those with disabilities. The project is comprised of 100% volunteers who share a common goal of creating a better place for our local children to learn and play.

“ **IMAGINE**  
A playground designed and built from our children's ideas  
**UNITE**  
With members of our community to make our children's ideas a reality  
**BUILD**  
A one of a kind playground that's safe, educational, and accessible to all...  
**COMMUNITY**  
The sum of it's parts...and what we can achieve by coming together for a common goal ”

In cooperation with Ravenna Parks and Recreation and Leathers and Associates, the construction of the playground is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2008. Over 1,000 volunteers will unite at the playground site to turn masses of materials into an exciting play area!

Independence, Inc. looks forward to volunteering their time to assist in creating this one of a kind playground!

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Independence @ (330) 296-2851.

## Santa Claus is Coming to Town

Santa Claus began his travels early this year by paying a visit to the PEACE Day Habilitation Program and Washington Group Home.



Mrs. Claus, Rick and Santa

Santa surprised the participants of the PEACE Day Program by showing up bearing gifts on Christmas Eve.

In anticipation of Santa's arrival to Washington Group Home, the residents made homemade cookies. Santa was accompanied by Mrs. Claus and also came bearing gifts for all of the residents.

Throughout the organization, holiday cheer and spirit was present and all had a joyous holiday season!



Mrs. Claus and Cecelia



Santa and Sandy

“You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why...”

## Memorials

*We treasure and share the memories of those we loved and lost.  
Our hearts go out to all of those who have been touched.*

Connie J. Pospichel, 59, of Ravenna Ohio passed away on January 18, 2008 at her home. She was born on March 16, 1948 in Ravenna. Connie moved into Washington Group Home in November of 1994 where she resided for 12 years. She then moved into Lincoln Group Home.

Connie was filled with a lovable, caring spirit. She enjoyed singing Happy Birthday, Santa Claus, looking through books and papers and hugs!

Her life touched all of those who had the pleasure of knowing her, she will remain in our hearts.



*A special thanks to the Tallmadge Police Department for a monetary contribution on Connie Pospichel's behalf*

Richard Allen Curry, 56, passed away on January 23, 2008 at Robinson Memorial Hospital in Ravenna. He was born on August 20, 1951 in Punxsutawney, PA. Richard began receiving services through Independence, Inc. in January of 1978 when he moved into Vine Street Group Home in Kent. Richard

moved from Vine into our Community Living Program where he received services for many years. In the Spring of 2001 Richard moved into Journey supported living site where he developed close and lasting relationships with his room-mates and his staff. In May of 2007, Richard moved into Lincoln Group Home.

Richard was best known for his incredible "HUGS". So much love to share, so many hugs given. He was truly an angel on Earth. Teaching us to love one another, no matter how different we are. He will be truly missed.



Cecelia Scherer, 80, of Ravenna passed away on February 20, 2008. She was born on May 16, 1927 in Defiance, Ohio. Cecelia lived at Washington Group Home for the past 22 years, where she will be fondly remembered by her housemates and staff.

Cecelia was known for her corny jokes, holding hands, snuggling and caring for her cat "George" and socializing with people. Cecelia was a fun and loving person that had a peaceful end to her struggles. She will now be reunited with her family and others who loved her while they were here. She will remain in our hearts.

