

A Message From Executive Director Mark Schlater

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Mark Schlater,
TI Executive Director

Dear Friends of Toward Independence:

The holiday season is a time in which we pause to reflect on not only all that we have been blessed with, but also how we can use those blessings to pour into the lives of those in need. One of Toward Independence's (TI) greatest gifts is your involvement in and support of our programs, which positively impact the lives of men and women with developmental disabilities (DD) who TI cares for on a daily basis. Our hope is that you will choose to utilize a portion of the blessings that you have received this year to help lift spirits and address mobility challenges via our annual holiday campaign.

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Don't Miss Xenia's Hometown Christmas

Saturday, December 12

4 pm - 8 pm

Don't miss an oppotunity to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus as they return to TI's main office, located at 81 E. Main St., for Xenia's 2015 Hometown Christmas.

The One Bistro food truck will also be parked in front of Toward Independence with seating available inside the TI office.

Annual Recognition Event Celebrates TI Employees

The Toward Independence board of directors and management team took time to celebrate the hard work and dedication of the TI staff at the annual employee recognition banquet held November 10 at the Mandalay Banquet Center in Moraine, Ohio.

"Where the magic happens … everyday" was the theme of this year's banquet. Employees enjoyed lunch and a magic show presented by retired special education teacher Tom Bemmes. Tom wrapped up his performance with a touching story about his experience working in the field of developmental disabilities.

"It is important for us as an organization to take time to recognize the hard work of our employees. Without our DSPs, nursing and supervisory staff, there would be no Toward Independence," said Executive Director Mark Schlater.

Following lunch Schlater and TI board members presented six peer-nominated awards and one board-selected award to employees who are respected by their coworkers and TI management for their exemplary work ethic.

The celebration ended with a raffle for cash, gift cards and Fitbits, and every employee was presented with a $25 Kroger gift card and 40th anniversary glass mug.

"The banquet is our opportunity to say thank you to the men and women who make the magic happen at TI every day," said Schlater.





2016 Employee Recognition Award Recipients

- **Billy Caldwell** – The Rising Star Award
- **Stephanie Sims** – The Advocate
- **Lemuel Hunter** – The Vision Award
- **Amanda Sweigard** –The Mission Award
- **Kim Lawson** – The Spirit Award
- **Phyllis Sanders** – The Cornerstone Award
- **Polly Angel** –The Foundation Award



See more photos on page 7

Executive Director Message (*continued from page 1)*

At the core of everything we do is the belief that each person we assist has a fundamental right to make choices, be a part of the community, and learn daily living and vocational skills and develop hobbies and interests.

Unfortunately, some of our clients lack the financial resources to pay for life's basic necessities, much less pursue activities that enhance the quality of their lives. However, through the generosity of our donors we are able to ensure every TI client has the opportunity to live life to the fullest.

Through the generosity of our donors, in 2015 TI was able to provide:

- Basic clothing and household items for individuals who had been living in emergency shelters prior to coming to Toward Independence
- Financial assistance for clients who have nowhere else to turn
- Specialty shoes and diabetic socks not covered by Medicaid for an individual who could not otherwise afford these items
- 2 mechanical chair scales for individuals who are unable to stand on a traditional scale, but require daily weigh-ins because of health concerns
- Bikes, televisions, sofas and chairs for individuals who would not otherwise be able to afford these items
- A brand new handicap accessible van

Please consider making an investment in the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities by making a donation to the Toward Independence Development Fund. Simply click here to access a donation form. Return your completed forms and donations to the TI offices at 81 E. Main St., Xenia, OH 45385. We appreciate your generosity and wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Schlater
Executive Director

Make Plans to Attend the CCC Holiday Concert

You won't want to miss the Creative Community Connections (CCC) Holiday Concert on Saturday, December 19. Individuals have practiced countless hours over the last four months to prepare for this annual event.

The concert is free and open to the public and will be held at the Faith Community United Methodist Church located at 100 Country Club Dr. in Xenia.



Non Extensive Renovation Project Continues

As we reported in the last issue of the *Insight*, TI has been awarded $574,181.39 to make much needed renovations to five TI-operated homes. Work on these homes continues and is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2015. Below are some before and after photographs from the renovations at the Jamestown home.



Ramp before renovations



Ramp after renovations



Kitchen (before)



Kitchen after remodel



Nurse's station (before)



Updated nurse's station

TI Benefits from Clark County Board of DD Garage Sale



The Clark County Board of DD (CCBDD) held a "garage sale" on November 21, 2015 at their CCBDD Adult Day Center (Quest) in Springfield, and Toward Independence was able to use development funds to purchase needed items for its Clark and Montgomery County clients.

Quest will soon be closing and the Clark County Board of DD decided to have an open garage sale, which gave residential and day hab providers the opportunity to purchase items for their operations at greatly discounted prices.

"A big thank you to the Clark County Board of DD for making this opportunity available to us," said Executive Director Mark Schlater.

In addition to Christmas decorations and an artificial Christmas tree, TI was able to purchase two Hoyer lifts and a shower chair at a fraction of the retail price.

"These items will make the lives of the individuals we serve more enjoyable," said Schlater.

Art & Soul Exhibit

Art & Soul Exhibit 2016

Seeking Entries from Artists with Developmental Disabilities



Deadline:
Friday, February 12, 2016

Exhibit:
April 8 - 29 with Artist Awards Reception on April 8



Location:
Art & Soul will be held at the Toward Independence main office at 81 E. Main St., Xenia, OH. For entry materials and more information, visit www.ti-inc.org under the Events menu.

Need more information? Call Beth Esterkamp, Toward Independence Marketing and Development Coordinator at (937) 376-3996.

TI Announces Expansion to Darke County

TI is excited to announce that the agency has been selected to begin providing services to a home near Greenville, Ohio beginning in February 2016.

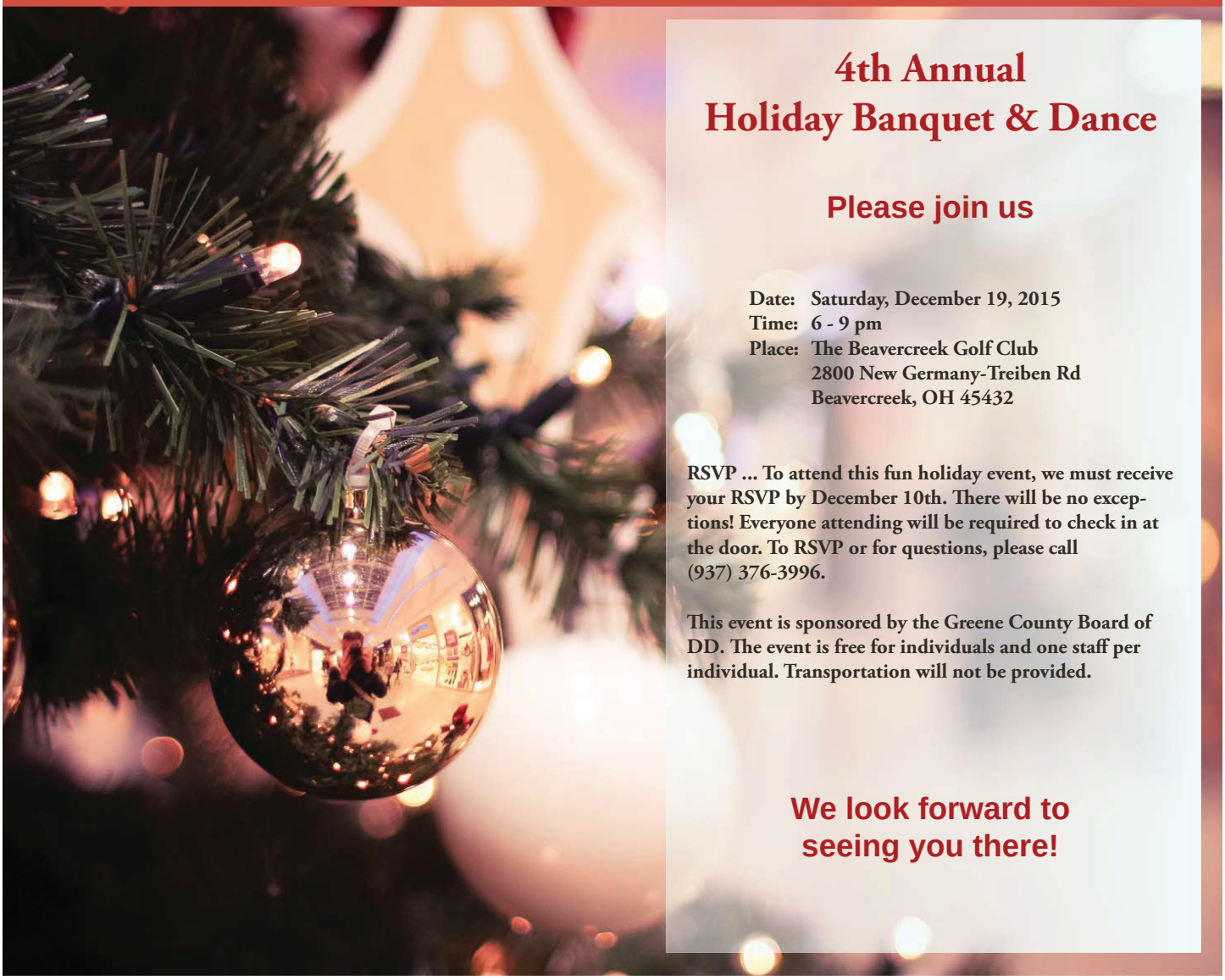
This fall the Darke County Board of DD contacted Executive Director Mark Schlater and invited Toward Independence to take part in the interview process to provide services for a new home.

"We are pleased that based on TI's reputation as a quality provider of services, we were asked to interview and ultimately selected to be the service provider for this new home, " said Schlater.

Save the Date

It's not too early to mark your calendar for TI's annual Walk for Independence. The 2016 Walk will be held on Saturday, June 25.

Greene County Board of DD Holiday Banquet and Dance



Employee Banquet Photos

















Toward Independence

enriching the lives of people with developmental disabilites

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Find us on

Mission Statement

To empower people with
developmental disabilities
to experience the fullest life possible
by providing person-centered supports
which enable them to integrate into a
variety of settings within their community.