



Heartstrings

The Official Newsletter of Heart Havens

Fall 2015



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**Heart Havens empowers adults with
 intellectual disabilities
 to live and thrive in a safe
 and nurturing environment.**

From our CEO:

Dear Friend of Heart Havens,

The days are getting cooler, the nights are getting longer, and there's beginning to be magnificent color on the trees. Fall is certainly upon us! We hope you had a wonderful summer doing all the things you love to do, whether that's lounging by the pool, taking a fun trip, or attending a community festival. Residents of Heart Havens homes also had a pretty awesome summer! They explored community attractions, planted gardens, played sports, and so much more. A full, active summer is just part of the full, active life that adults with intellectual disabilities have here at Heart Havens. Your support makes this possible. Thank you!

As you may know, February is Heart Havens Month! This year, the theme is "A Place at the Table." We're so excited to take this month to celebrate our mission and full inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities with you! For our United Methodist friends, we will have some new worship resources available this year, including extra prayers, calls to worship, and Communion liturgy. Pastors will receive an e-mail in November with many of the resources, and churches will still receive hard copy packets in January with brochures and other materials. I hope you and your congregation or group will consider celebrating Heart Havens Month by donating, holding a paper drive, or hosting a speaker! If you are not in the United Methodist Church but would still like to celebrate Heart Havens Month with us, please contact Sarah Wilkinson using her e-mail address to the left.

Thank you again for your support of Heart Havens! As always, if you would like to schedule a Heart Havens speaker to visit your group or church, or if you'd like to visit a home, please call toll-free (877) 442-8368.



Lee and Jennifer visit together at our Morrison Home in Newport News.

Warm regards,

Jennifer Boyden

Jennifer Boyden, MA, QIDP
 Chief Executive Officer
 Heart Havens, Inc.



Empowered to Say Goodbye



Polly, Kellie, and Cindy get their balloons ready for the big balloon release.

Our Bonnie home in Stuarts Draft experienced a traumatic loss earlier in the summer when Sandra Martin, a full-time staff member at the Bonnie home, was killed with her daughter in a car accident caused by a driver under the influence of alcohol. After the initial shock had passed, the residents of the Bonnie home knew they wanted to memorialize Sandra in some way at their home. Working with staff, they came up with the idea of planting a tree in her memory.

Lowe's in Waynesboro agreed to donate a small tree or shrub of the residents' choosing, and Cindy selected a Japanese camellia. The residents and staff then gathered at the Bonnie home with friends, volunteers, and members of Sandra's family to plant the tree and share memories. As part of the ceremony, they also released balloons on which they had written messages of love and remembrance.

The tree planting and balloon release ceremony was a wonderful closure experience for everyone at the Bonnie home.

"I just know Sandra's in heaven looking down," said Cindy.



Sowing Seeds of Independence

Around Virginia, many people enjoy gardening as a fun summer time activity. Ray, who lives in our Colonial Beach home, is no different. He loves to have his hands in the dirt, nurturing plants.

"I grew up on a farm. I love John Deere," he said.

Staff at the home originally had the idea for a raised garden bed because everyone at the Colonial Beach home loves salads and fresh vegetables. When they floated the idea to the residents of the house, Ray was excited about the project.

"I knew he had done horticulture at another community program, and had enjoyed helping out with the plants there," said one staff member. "He just dove right in to the garden

here at the house."

For the summer planting, Ray planted yellow squash, zucchini, sweet peas, and tomatoes. He also planted herbs: oregano, basil, and cilantro.

"The tomatoes and peas were my favorite," said Ray.

Ray spent as much time as he could over the summer outside tending to his vegetables, and the raised garden bed was positioned in the yard so that he could see it from his bedroom window.

"He always checked the soil to see if it was dry, so he could water it. Then he'd always tell me or show me when the plants had grown and changed," said another staff member.

**"I like to watch things grow...
The tomatoes and peas
were my favorite."**

In September, Ray changed his plantings to more cold-tolerant plants, including several varieties of lettuce and cabbage. He beamed with joy as he turned the soil over in his hands to prepare to place a cabbage seedling.

"We're very proud of Ray and his garden," said Heart Havens Chief Executive Officer Jennifer Boyden. "Watching Ray nurture these plants has been very inspiring, and seeing how empowered he feels growing food and having his hands on plants is just wonderful. His excitement at watching the plants grow and switching from summer to fall plants is exactly what Heart Havens is about: empowering people to find what they're passionate about, and then pursue it."

"I'm really excited that Ray has the opportunity to do what he really enjoys doing, and that he was provided with the resources to really dive into this. Heart Havens is all about person-centered supports, and that's exactly what this is," said Chief Operations Officer Brenda Sasser. "It's even better

that this hobby he's enjoyed all year has also provided the benefit of fresh vegetables to the other residents at the Colonial Beach home. It just goes to show you that when people are truly empowered, everyone benefits."

For Ray, empowerment is walking outside after he gets home in the evening and studying the plants to see which one has a new leaf or a bigger stem. It's putting his hands on the soil to see if it could use some water. It's watching a tomato on his plants go from being a small green ball to being a red, ripe, and juicy tomato that he can share with his friends and housemates. It's cutting a few sprigs off his cilantro plant so that his friends and housemates can enjoy its aroma.

While still tending his fall vegetables, Ray is already getting excited for next year's garden.

"I like to watch things grow," he said, with a huge smile.



Falling Into Volunteering

We love volunteers! Over the summer and into this fall, we've had a number of groups come to volunteer with us. While we're only highlighting a few of them here, we are so thankful for all our volunteers all year round!

Members of the youth group of **Hillcrest United Methodist Church** recently visited our Tate home in Ashland. They helped the residents there pot chrysanthemums to brighten up the front porch of the home for fall. Everyone loved potting the plants, especially Kathleen, who giggled and beamed as she put soil into her bucket. The youth also raked some leaves and then shared lunch— everyone enjoyed the wonderful fellowship!



Youth from Hillcrest United Methodist Church came to our Tate home in Ashland to pot chrysanthemums and share lunch.



Volunteers participating in HandsOn Day pose with Lyvette, Jasmine, Sandra, and Wanda after painting at our Garber Morris home in Richmond.

Meanwhile, at our Bonnie home in Stuarts Draft, a wonderful group of volunteers from **St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Ivy** power washed the outside of the home and painted the entryway, staircase, and upstairs hall inside. They then shared lunch with the residents and staff at the home, and enjoyed a time of fellowship as resident Elizabeth played her keyboard.

Volunteering at a Heart Havens home is a great way to learn about our mission! Our volunteers sometimes do maintenance work, and sometimes they just come for a pizza party and fellowship. If you or your group would like to learn more about how to get involved, just call our office.



Members of St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Ivy painted and powerwashed at our Bonnie home in Stuarts Draft.

Heart Havens was proud to once again participate in **HandsOn Day**, a large day of service organized by HandsOn Greater Richmond that mobilizes over one thousand volunteers to projects around the city. This year, we had volunteers paint two rooms and a hallway at our Garber Morris home. Many of the volunteers were part of the University of Richmond Alumni Association. Their work really brightened up the space, and Lyvette, Jasmine, and Sandra love their freshly painted areas!



The Amazing Raise was Awesome!

Heart Havens participated in the 36-hour Amazing Raise online fundraiser again this year and thanks to our great supporters, we raised \$1,725! That is enough money to provide nearly two months of utilities for the people living in a Heart Havens home including gas, electricity and water. We had 34 generous donors and also welcomed seven new donors through the online event. Thank you to all our donors for being amazing and giving to Heart Havens!

Did you miss the Amazing Raise? Don't worry; there are other unique ways you can give to Heart Havens. Be on the lookout for more information soon on a recurring gift program which will allow you to give a monthly gift automatically. Heart Havens will also be introducing a planned giving program which allows you to explore options of giving through a bequest, trust, or other estate planning tool. Any gift makes a big difference in the lives of the people we support!

A New Brochure is Coming!



We are so excited to announce that the Heart Havens brochure is getting a fresh new look! Churches will receive copies of the new brochure in their January Heart Havens Month packets. We will begin distributing the brochure to groups we speak at and other places that hold our brochure after the first of the year. Please contact us if you would like to have some extra brochures!

Get Social With Us!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for photos and videos of all the wonderful things going on in our homes!



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Heart Havens Month 2016



Celebrate our mission with us by observing Heart Havens Month in February! The theme this year is "A Place at the Table."

Pastors of United Methodist churches will receive resources electronically in November and in hard copy in January. If you would like to schedule a Heart Havens speaker to visit your congregation or small group during February, please call our office as soon as possible.

If you are not a United Methodist pastor but would still like to be part of our Heart Havens Month mailing list, please contact Sarah Wilkinson at (877) 442-8368.