

Echoing Hills



Connection

2024 2nd Edition

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This year has been one that has required me to reflect on being still in His presence. Through the easy and challenging times, I can say He has remained faithful. I see this faithfulness in many things happening across the Echoing Hills ministry.

Those we serve are actively pursuing what interests them. Individuals are enjoying person-centered experiences. Over the last several months, they have visited local fairs, a prom, and places like Put-In-Bay. For some, the community came to them through events like a bubble party in Dayton!

This summer, we welcomed close to 300 campers to camp. It was amazing to see the joy and fun, week after week. And to witness the spiritual growth within counselors and campers alike was inspiring. All these things are possible because of the goodness of God. It is also because of your kind and giving heart. You remain faithful to the ministry, just as He does for all of us. No matter how you show your support, thank you!

God Bless,

Timothy D. Neville

Tim Neville
President/CEO



Friends, Flying, and Food!

Put-In-Bay is a beautiful village on South Bass Island in Lake Erie. We had the privilege of joining sixteen individuals and twelve team members on an outing to explore Put-In-Bay. Echoing Hills of Northern Ohio is participating in the one hundred hours program designed by staff, an adaptation of the one thousand hours program, so they enjoyed the outdoors on the island. The program's goal is to encourage people to spend time outside with the mission of reclaiming childhood and reconnecting families.

Team members and individuals from the Starbuck, Brown, Engram, and Emerson homes came together to spend a day adventuring around the island. Echoing Hills used five vans to transport staff and individuals onto Miller's Ferry to reach Put-In-Bay.

Upon arrival, we stopped at a golf cart rental and hopped onto carts to begin the journey around the island. Individuals were able to ride in an airplane for a tour of Put-In-Bay. Each ride lasted approximately five minutes with four individuals and one staff member per ride. It was a bright and clear morning, with a view of the sparkling blue water seen from above. This activity was the highlight of the day as individuals who had been to the island previously shared the fun memories they had made.

After the airplane tours, we stopped for lunch at the boardwalk, a collection of restaurants. This allowed individuals to have a few lunch options to choose from. Seafood is a popular dish on the bay but there are other options for those looking for simple foods. When everyone finished lunch - it was time for dessert! We drove to a local ice cream parlor to finish the busy day.



Fair Delivers New Experience to Some, Fun for All

This summer wasn't the first year for the Athens County Fair. It was, however, the first year for one of our team members to attend and for a new event.

"We first went to the fair on Wednesday night," says Netta, LPN for Echoing Hills of Southeast Ohio. "There was a school bus derby, a first for the Athens County Fair. It was an incredible experience, and those we served enjoyed it."

The school bus derby is like a typical demolition derby. The only difference is that buses, instead of cars, crash into one another until only one remains. This bus is then named the winner and receives a traveling trophy.

"I love the fair, and I loved the bus derby," shares individual served, Kristen. "My school won the derby – go Federal Hocking Lancers!"

Having so much fun that first night, the crew returned Thursday for demolition derby night.

"It was exciting as one of our employee's spouses was in the derby," Netta says. "We team members and those we serve enjoyed supporting them both."

Lead DSP Lacey states, "I loved seeing the bus derby for the first time. And I appreciated my coworkers and the people served coming to support my family in the demolition derby."

Although the school bus and demolition derbies were big draws to the fair, everyone from Echoing Hills enjoyed other activities, too. There were rides and of course the food!

"Ophelia, our QIDP, experienced the fair and a ride for the first time. She was grinning from ear to ear," Netta says. "We were all smiling. Some of that was because of the great food we enjoyed!"

Experiences like this are meaningful to both those we support and the team members who are there to assist. There are laughs and fun times that lead to great memories.

"The fair is special to me because I remember going when I was young," shares Netta. After having kids, I would take them, and now I get to enjoy it with those we serve. It never gets old!"



Director by Day, Buyer by Night

For one team member at Echoing Hills, going to the fair isn't just about having fun. It's also about representing the organization. Rachel Ulbrich, Director of Adult Services for Echoing Hills of Southeast Ohio, attends the festivities as a buyer.

“When I became the Program Director in 2015, I started attending the fair as a buyer alongside our Regional Director, Mark Hutchinson,” shares Rachel. “After a few years, I began going with my husband.”

Each year, Rachel looks to bid on animals that have Echoing Hills team members, family members, or volunteers involved. The animals being considered for purchase change from year to year.

In the past, she has purchased cows, goats, pigs, chickens, and rabbits. For larger animals, the meat has been kept and shared with team members within the region and used in our ICF homes.

The smaller animals are generally returned to the exhibitor.

When she was younger, Rachel was involved in 4-H. She didn't participate with market animals, though. Instead, Rachel focused on projects and working with small animals like cats and hamsters.

She even ended her 4-H years showing and training dogs.

Rachel continues to go to the fair today for the impact buyers have on so many people.

“I really enjoy seeing the community come together to support our youth,” Rachel says. “On the night I was there, I attended for about five hours. When I left, there was over \$400,000 in sales through the livestock auction, and they still had over 100 animals to auction off!”



A Night Dancing on the Farm

In August, students and team members from EchoingU of Northeast Ohio had a great time at the Jesus Prom. The dance is hosted each year by The Chapel in Green, a church in Uniontown, Ohio, as part of their special needs ministry for the community.

“I am so grateful for our relationship with The Chapel in Green. They are amazing in every way,” says Cori Kraft, Habilitation Coordinator for EchoingU. “The Jesus Prom is one example of all they do for us.”

This year, the theme of the prom was Down on the Farm. Students and team members stayed after class to prepare for the dance as a group. They enjoyed pizza, socializing, and getting ready together.

“I stayed after school, and the EU staff helped me with my hair and makeup,” shares Sarah, an individual served at EchoingU. “I liked spending time with my friends and the staff outside of school and loved having our group picture taken.”

After getting ready, it was time for their grand entrance. Each person attending walked the **red carpet**, where cheerleaders and volunteers cheered for everyone. At the same time, the “paparazzi” were busy snapping pictures. Once inside, individuals from EchoingU enjoyed playing games, visiting the petting zoo, watching a magician, getting pictures in the photo booth, and dancing!





It was an event that meant a lot to both the students and team members of EchoingU.

“It was a night of fun for those we serve and their peers,” says Krystle Kraus, EchoingU Classroom Coordinator. “The prom meant a lot to everyone, with many never having that experience before. It was great to see everyone get dressed up, dance, and have a great night!”

Heather, an individual served at EchoingU says, “I had a blast! I loved the theme and how everyone dressed. I liked socializing with everyone and meeting new people.”

EchoingU of Northeast Ohio is located inside The Chapel in Green. Cori is grateful for their location and partnership.

“I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else! In addition to the prom, they host a summer picnic and Christmas sing-along for us. They “see” us and include us as part of their church family.”



Every day ordinary things matter most at Camp Echoing Hill



Smiling faces and the sound of laughter are possible because of the generosity of our faithful friends at Camp Echoing Hill. Your support – time, talent, or treasure, your ‘gift’ creates lifelong memories. May God Bless YOU and your family.

Us! Together - we are inspiring HOPE and CELEBRATING Life!



Camp Echoing Hills. Summer Camp 2024 was a huge success! Thank you for being our partner! No matter our faithfulness to the ministry!

Inspired Giving Makes an Impact!

Over five decades ago, a young lady graduated from college. She embarked on her professional journey with a promising career as a physical therapist. Four short years later, she suffered a skiing accident in Switzerland, which ultimately left her paralyzed. Two decades later, she visited Camp Echoing Hills and was inspired by the work of the ministry – serving people much like herself.

Over the next several years, she was faithful to the ministry. She donated to camperships, knowing that this would support the opportunity for others to experience the fun and excitement that comes with summer camp. And that it would give parents the much-needed respite they needed from caring for their loved ones year-round.

This friend of Echoing Hills, although never to return to Camp again, stayed engaged with the ministry through newsletters, mailings, and the website. Her unwavering belief in our mission was evident in her continued support. She wanted to ensure that others would have the opportunity to benefit from Echoing Hills' programs and services and, most importantly, that all people could live their lives to the fullest potential with dignity and respect.





Recently, Echoing Hills was blessed with a sizable gift from her estate. Little did she know, including Echoing Hills in her Estate Plan would be such a blessing to the ministry. As many of you have read over the last few years, we have been working on a significant project. The Northeast Ohio Community Integration Project. This project involved renovating two six-person homes and constructing three new six-person homes to move those we serve from the larger home settings into the smaller homes. A home just like ours. These homes are so important as they create opportunities for personal choice and community involvement.

The project – over a \$6 million investment – is one that Echoing Hills believes in because we know it is the right thing to do for those we serve! With rising costs all around us, the project has come in much higher than anticipated. This gift – inspired so many years ago – will cover the additional unanticipated costs. We are deeply grateful for this generous contribution. God is good and faithful to the ministry, and we can be assured our friend is looking down from Heaven with a smile knowing her gift is making such an impact.



Interested in learning more about 'Inspired Giving' to make a lasting impact for generations to come? Call Angie Jordan, Director of Community Relations & Development. 740.327.2311 ext. 1139 or ajordan@ehvi.org.



ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources) Hill Day 2024

brought together hundreds of providers – including Tim Neville, President and CEO of Echoing Hills – advocating to amplify awareness for those we serve and our team members. Tim and fellow ANCOR members are seeking support in the passage of the Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act (H.R. 2941) to create a standard occupational classification for direct support professionals, to ensure comprehensive data collection of the workforce, and to help policymakers address the direct support workforce crisis. This is critical as we look to the future for those we serve and our team members.

ANCOR Policy Summit & Hill Day is an annual gathering that brings together leading advocates to bring awareness about what's new now, and next, for disability services, especially at this pivotal time. The general election, ever-evolving regulations in our field, and an unprecedented set of challenges confronting the service delivery system make this an important moment.

For many decades, there has been a direct support workforce crisis due to inadequate reimbursement rates set at the state level, which are too low to provide competitive wages and are often not updated to keep pace with rising inflation or the cost of living. As a result, providers such as Echoing Hills cannot offer competitive wages with other entry-level positions, such as fast-food, retail, and convenience stores. The effect can be seen in DSPS' (Direct Support Professionals) high turnover rates. Without measures to strengthen the retention and recruitment of DSPs, millions of people will be left without access to critical community-based support.

We have seen victory already in S.1332 with support from the Senate, and during Hill Day, leaders met with the House to encourage support of the Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act (H.R. 2941). The day was strategically planned, and each leader had an agenda with set meetings – either with Senators or Representatives. Tim Neville met with four Senator/Representatives' offices to bring awareness to the situation, and why support is vital.

Why is this so important? DSPs support millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live full lives. They provide supports that are primarily funded by Medicaid and cover a wide range of rehabilitation services including support, and skill-building for activities of daily employment, transportation, and other supports that promote independence and community inclusion. Currently, Direct Support Professional is not recognized at the federal level because it does not have a unique Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code for data collection.

Why do we want support from the House of Representatives? SOCs are used to collect data and help all levels of government (local, state, and federal) identify employment trends. DSPs are often inaccurately and inconsistently incorporated into various SOCs, which do not capture their full spectrum of work activities. A SOC for DSPs will enable state and federal agencies to collect data on the high turnover rate of DSPs and inform policies to address the workforce shortage.



(Left to Right in the group photo from the meeting): Tim Neville, Echoing Hills President/CEO; Debbie Jenkins, Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA); Representative / Congressman Troy Balderson, OH-12 (R); Rachel Hayes, Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA); and, Jake Dowling, Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACBDD)

A Message from the Echoing Hills Chairperson of the Board

To our residents, families, and friends we serve, I hope this message finds you well.

As I step into the role of Chairperson of the Board at Echoing Hills, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to our outgoing Chairperson, Mark Alder, for his exceptional leadership and dedication. His guidance has been instrumental in steering our organization toward success, and we are all deeply appreciative of his contributions.



As we move forward, I am committed to upholding our Christ-centered mission and vision that defines our organization. Our dedication to serving you with integrity, compassion, and excellence grounded in the fruit of the Spirit will continue to be the cornerstone of our efforts. We are here to support you and ensure that your needs are met with the highest level of care and professionalism.

I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and confident that, with the collective expertise and passion of our exceptional leadership team, we will continue to make a positive impact in your lives. I look forward to working closely with the leadership team to build on our successes and navigate the challenges ahead.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Prayerfully,

Jaclyn Collins, Chairperson

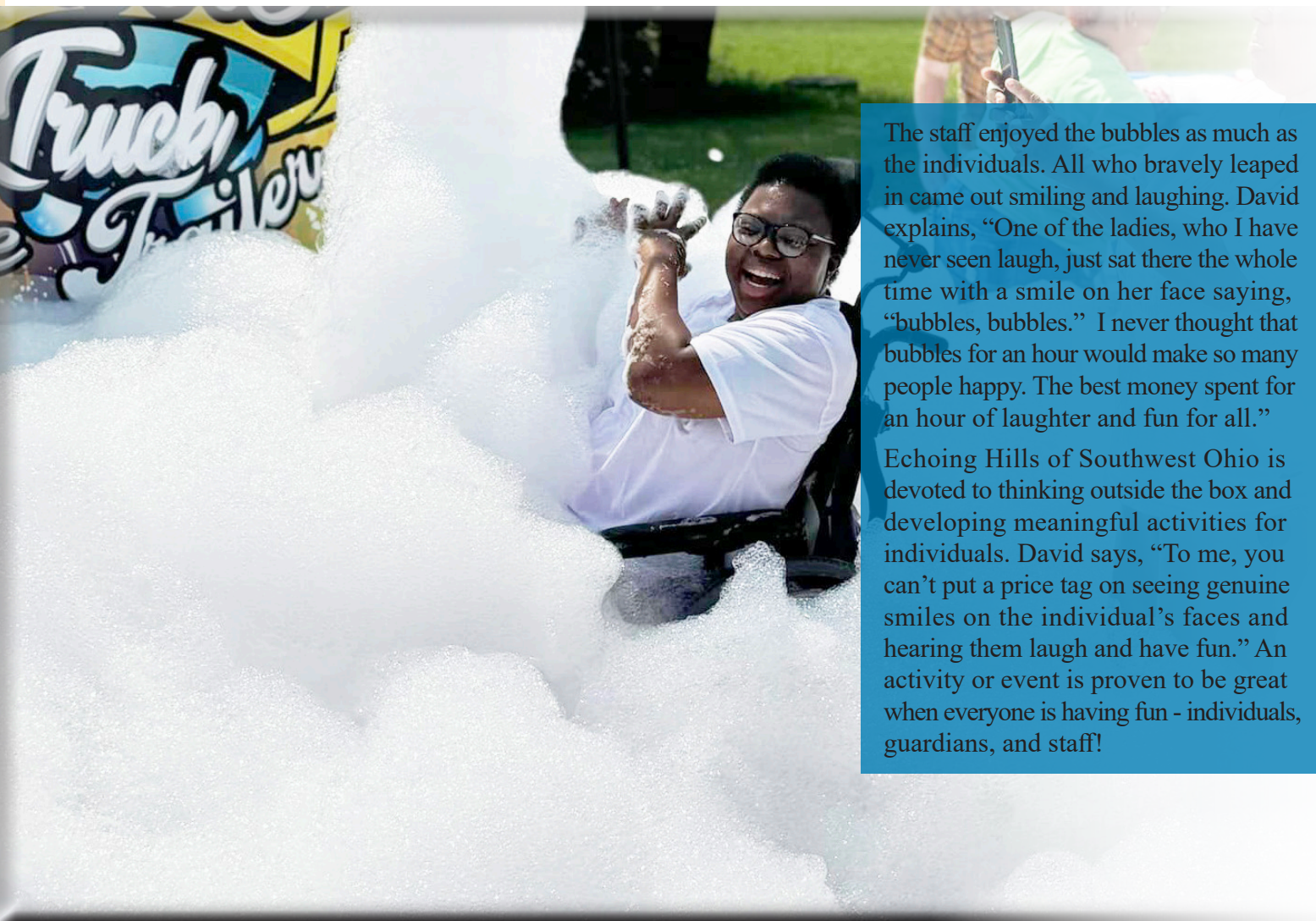
On behalf of the Board of Echoing Hills

Foam Party

Echoing Hills of Southwest Ohio has been working with activity coordinators to develop different ways of doing activities. Regional Director David King explains, “I have been challenging them to think outside the box and try different things that individuals might enjoy.” He continues, “Program Director Melissa Villani had heard of the bubble truck and looked up some information. The cost was manageable, so we decided for Echoing Woods to try it out.”

Within five minutes of the bubble truck arriving, staff and those we serve came out to participate as the truck began producing bubbles. David says, “We had 15-20 of our individuals come to join the fun or just sit on the fringe and watch everyone else get wet. We also had one guardian who participated in the fun, as well as our CEO Tim Neville and Executive Vice President Ray Schmidt.”

Individuals were excited when they saw the bubbles and jumped right into the middle of the fun. David states, “One young lady walked into the middle of the mound of bubbles and sat down. We pushed back the bubbles to ensure she would be ok, and that nobody stepped on her. We had individuals in wheelchairs who wanted to be pushed through the bubbles or have the bubbles piled up on them.”



The staff enjoyed the bubbles as much as the individuals. All who bravely leaped in came out smiling and laughing. David explains, “One of the ladies, who I have never seen laugh, just sat there the whole time with a smile on her face saying, “bubbles, bubbles.” I never thought that bubbles for an hour would make so many people happy. The best money spent for an hour of laughter and fun for all.”

Echoing Hills of Southwest Ohio is devoted to thinking outside the box and developing meaningful activities for individuals. David says, “To me, you can’t put a price tag on seeing genuine smiles on the individual’s faces and hearing them laugh and have fun.” An activity or event is proven to be great when everyone is having fun - individuals, guardians, and staff!

David states, “The bubble truck is the beginning of providing meaningful, fun, and exciting activities that individuals can enjoy. Additionally, it brings new experiences for some of our individuals.” He continues, “As we build our activity program in the region, it needs to be built around meaningful activities at their homes or programs and fun events within their local communities. The foam party was a starting point for planning fun activities where we could bring the community to their homes.”

Echoing Hills is committed to revolutionizing the lives of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities where they live, learn, connect, play, and worship. Individuals and staff expressed their inner child through play - one bubble at a time.

Where Will We Go Today?

At Echoing Hills, we believe in the right of choice. Individuals at Echoing Hills of Central Ohio can decide where to go when going into the local community. While someone goes somewhere every day, everyone goes on an outing at least twice monthly. Individuals enjoy shopping, eating at restaurants, the zoo, concerts, vacations, picnics, fishing, and fairs.

The activities assistant joins them when going on outings. When larger groups travel to the same place, DSPs and QIDPs have a chance to go as well. For example, individuals and the activities assistant went to an OSU game, and some of the DSPs were invited to go. This helps retain staff and leads to stronger relationships between staff and those they serve.

Some favorite activities include shopping and eating at fast food restaurants. Jackie, the Program Director, shared a time she went with a woman on vacation to the beach, and the individual got to see the ocean for the first time. Along with the beach trip, she shared when she went with another individual to see their favorite artist, Bruno Mars, live in concert.

Jackie has worked at Echoing Hills for eleven years, and her favorite part of her role is working with staff, especially new staff discovering the joy of working at the ministry. She states, "It's like giving someone your favorite book you just want to share it with everyone - it's a cool job."

She continues: "It's very humbling - you learn to be grateful and appreciate the little things." Jackie explains the importance of community outings for individuals to experience new things and have fun. In addition to outings, individuals can participate in crafts and board games. When the weather permits, they take walks outside. Every Thursday, a volunteer comes after dinner to lead bible study.



Residential



Adult



Education



Recreation

