

Martha Lloyd

Community Services: Where Family Matters

By Jennifer Graham

“Home” should be our safe haven where family nurtures us, encourages us to follow our dreams, and loves and respects us for who we are and can become. Finding that nurturing, safe home for adult children with developmental disabilities is one of the greatest challenges parents face. Martha Lloyd Community Services (MLCS) in Troy, Pennsylvania offers individuals a genuine home, complete with an extended, caring family and a welcoming, respectful community that nurtures the ability of the people who live there. At MLCS—family truly matters.

When Martha Lloyd embarked upon her mission to build a residential school with extensive community support and involvement in 1928, she chose the village of Troy, located in the Endless Mountains of north central Pennsylvania, for its natural beauty and its safety. She hoped that area residents would enhance the abilities of her students by including them in the life of their small town, believing the adage “it takes a village to raise a child.”

Over the past 75 years, Martha Lloyd Community Services has grown significantly. Currently, MLCS employs 350 staff members who create a home for more than 135 individuals whose primary diagnosis is mental retardation.

Vocational training day programs and the on-site senior center support students and adults from 12 surrounding counties and six other states. The roster of programs includes residential housing and day programs, education, vocational training and supports, recreation, medical monitoring, school to work transition supports, respite care, summer camp, employment, senior services and an on-going, inclusive relationship with the residents of Troy.



Bettye Booth, on her newspaper route, delivers one of her 200 copies of the weekly Penny Savers newspaper.

In short, the Martha Lloyd Community is home.

Finding and keeping appropriate housing, employment and recreational activities for adults with developmental delay is at crisis levels throughout the United States. Waiting lists run in the tens of thousands in many states, with placement done primarily on an emergency basis. While these adults wait for appropriate program placements, they are isolated at home, watching TV, dependent on family members to plan their day. Such a lifestyle results in high levels of frustration, boredom and anxiety for the entire family. This is exactly why families seek the extensive services of Martha Lloyd.

“When Jenny was in her teens and we realized how little support was actually available in our community, we began planning for her future,” says Laura Mattingly, of Virginia, Jenny’s mother. “Work programs are limited, there are few recreational and social opportunities available on a regular basis. And we wanted Jenny to have a complete life. At MLCS, she has a wonderful life—a better life than she would have here in Fairfax County.”

Individualized, blended programs

Days begin early at MLCS and are full of activity. Daily schedules are developed individually, reflecting the ability and the interests of the individual.

“We individualize programming,” says Richard MacIntire, President of MLCS, who he has spent 15 years of his 30-year career working with teenagers and adults with special needs at MLCS. “Because we know our residents so well, we can blend our vocational, recreational, and sensory integration programs into each person’s daily schedule.”

Bettye’s daily schedule keeps her

continued on page 70

continued from page 68

more than busy—it keeps her physically and mentally active and fit. Bettye, who has made MLCS home for 36 years, since the age of 15, lives with three other women in MLCS' Lent House, a beautiful Victorian home on Troy's Main Street, just around the corner from the CopperTree Gift Shop where she works.

"I bag the customer's things and answer the phone at CopperTree," Bettye says. But that's only part of what she does. An avid walker, Bettye delivers 200 Penny Savers, a weekly advertising tabloid, throughout Troy's neighborhoods. She has also participated in the Walk for Cystic Fibrosis, covering 6.2 miles to raise money for research. Bettye is an active member of the local Methodist church where she serves as an acolyte and helps with children attending their vacation Bible school.

"We have a lot of fun here (at MLCS)," Bettye says. "Sometimes after work I go downtown to Vinnie's (pizza shop) or I do latch hook. I go to Special Olympics on weekends and sometimes I go to the beauty shop on campus. My family visits me here. I go home for the holidays and I travel with my family on vacations."

Residents with more complex needs than Bettye also have busy days. MLCS has been Bethany Burg's home for 12 years. Born with microcephaly and profound retardation, Bethany requires round-the-clock assistance and close medical supervision.

Each morning, nurses give prescribed medicines and begin her peg-tube feeding. After breakfast, she attends activities of daily living classes. Later in the day, she visits the fitness center for sensory integration therapies. Prescribed exercises in the therapy pool help relieve the spasticity in her muscles. Bethany especially enjoys day trips into Troy or outings to the nearby state park.

"Bethany lives in a home environment at Martha Lloyd where she is very

Christina Morris and Jenny Mattingly soak up some sunrays and enjoy a good laugh on the porch steps of the Manor House



happy," says Bethany's father, Frederic Burg, MD, the Associate Dean of Medicine, University of Alabama at Huntsville. "Bethie goes from activity to activity, with swimming being the highlight of her day. Martha Lloyd's diverse programs are exceptional."

Medical monitoring program

All residents of MLCS receive personalized, continuous medical supervision. With an on-site staff of LPN's supervised by an RN, MLCS offers extensive preventive and pro-active health care. At the first sign of illness, the residential staff contacts the nurse. Nurses will either visit the resident in their home or schedule a sick appointment that day.

"Our goal is to keep everyone healthy," says Bonnie Bastion, RN. "Individual nurses are assigned to specific residents to ensure consistent care and better communication with the medical staff and the family. Assigning specific residents to each nurse also familiarizes the nurse with individual's communication skills and overall health. The nurses are then more likely to notice subtle

changes in health so we can catch the problem when it's still small."

A physician makes weekly calls to MLCS and a nurse practitioner visits three times a week, prescribing medicines and making referrals to specialists, as needed.

"The medical monitoring program is very important for individuals like Bethany who have multi-modal problems," says Dr. Burg. "As the former chair of the MLCS Medical Advisory Committee, I never walked away worrying about my daughter or the other residents."

When needed, residents are given hospice care. Whether they are able to remain in their home at MLCS or are hospitalized, individuals who are dying are surrounded by family members, from their biological families, as well as their extended family at Martha Lloyd, who truly have loved them throughout their lifetime.

CopperTree Shop

One of the busiest shops in Troy is the CopperTree. Frequenting by local shoppers, the CopperTree is known for its extensive line of fine gift items. In the workshop behind the store, residents and individuals from the community make many of the items sold in CopperTree, including a line of lotions and soaps called "Martha's Good Scents."

The workshop bustles with activity as workers assemble customized gift baskets, make dried flower arrangements (from flowers grown in their greenhouse and gardens), pour and paint concrete garden stepping stones, and make an extensive line of Civil War-replica items sold at the Centennial Gift Shop in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. With five floor managers supervising and encouraging their employees, the workshop can make as many as 300 custom gift baskets in one day! Last year, they made 250 baskets for the Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind

and Handicapped (PIBH) annual awards dinner and put together 3500 baskets for a state prison in Cantina.

With so much work to do, employees can choose their jobs.

"It's important for our workers to know the value of their work," says Gena Bond, program supervisor of CopperTree Work Center. "They know that their products are sold in our store, in the Gettysburg shop and at the Bradford County Manor nursing home. Each handmade product is labeled with the name of its maker. That gives them a real sense of pride."

That pride is reflected in the painting and sewing Carolyn does at CopperTree. Making prayer book and Bible covers, Carolyn, an MLCS resident for nine years, says, "I like working here because it's a friendly atmosphere and I have opportunities to work at different jobs." Carolyn's fine work was recognized by PIBH at their awards dinner last year.

Shelly Walcheski, manager of the CopperTree store, is very proud of Carolyn's and her co-workers' abilities. "Our workshop is not like a factory," she says. "It's our family business. The staff and the residents all really care about each other and we work together as a team."

To enhance her communication with a member of that team, Shelly has learned sign language. Now, she can talk to Miki, a resident who is profoundly hearing impaired, about which colors look best in Miki's beautiful dried flower arrangements. During individualized service plan meetings, Shelly and Miki now exchange ideas about Miki's activities. And it makes going out to dinner together a lot more fun.

Future Plans

Martha Lloyd Community Services has been home to hundreds of women for the past 75 years. Over the past fifteen years, MLCS has expanded its programs, reflecting its mission "to provide opportunities for persons with developmental

disabilities to be a part of the community in a manner consistent with the every day lives of other citizens. People will have choices in their living arrangements and developmental programs, which will build upon their strengths and meet their individual needs."

To help more adults develop their strengths, men will soon make MLCS their home, too. Anticipating dating and intimate relationships among the residents, the staff is prepared to educate and counsel them and their families to assure their emotional and physical well-being.

"Having men move into the Martha Lloyd community will create a more natural lifestyle," says Peter Morris, MLCS board member. His daughter Christina has lived at MLCS since 1987. "I'm very relaxed about this. Male resi-

new ones, they agree that their mission must not change. "We will remain true to our foundation of developing the full ability of our residents," says Mr. Morris, chair of the long-range strategic planning committee. "But there is tremendous potential to do even more."

Richard MacIntire, MLCS president, agrees. "We are diversifying to meet the needs of our families and their adult children. We have always pioneered services for adults with developmental disabilities, and we will continue to develop inclusive programs where love is the key ingredient."

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A busy day at the CopperTree store where store clerks are engaged in helping customers.

dents will have their own residences. This is another opportunity for MLCS to integrate more people with mental retardation into the community."

Supporting adults as they grow older requires MLCS to provide diverse programs for their aging residents. Future plans include consideration of several specialized programs.

As board members and families work together to maintain the quality of current programs and develop innovative

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