



ACHIEVING HARMONY

End of an Era - *New Director Named*

**Alone we can
do so little;
together we can
do so much.**

-Helen Keller



Debra Hawkins

Leslie Vassilaros

In 2003, because of necessity, hope, and ambition to rise to any occasion...boom. Harmony House. Out of a closet sized work space located in The King's Daughters Child Care Center, Leslie Vassilaros would operate as a staff of one. With their support, as well as that of the Junior League of Wheeling, this driven woman would truly bring the Ohio Valley a service that the children of this community so desperately deserved. Eventually, location of "the House" would move to the current home at OVMC's South Tower. Within a very short time, Harmony House secured community support, grant funding, national accreditation, well sponsored fundraiser events and became well known for their no nonsense, no cost, all child focused approach on services. By 2011... boom. Harmony House would open doors to a second location in St. Clairsville (Belmont County), Ohio. This, her final year at the helm, has been her most successful to date, raising the most funds on record at each of the three fundraisers. Leslie is a proud parent, a sincere and thoughtful wife, a caring member of her family and our - each and every staff that is part of Harmony House - families. We are truly indebted to you for being our leader, our support, our mother, our best friend, - our hope. You have done it all. We offer our best wishes to you on your next grand chapter, thank you Leslie. Thank YOU most.

With the changing of seasons for Harmony House, this next chapter, we are proud to announce our newest addition. As of December 1, 2016 Debra Hawkins became the new Executive Director of Harmony House. With familiar energy that we have seen from her predecessor, Debra brings a much different background, having a wealth of governmental policy and procedure knowledge that will be invaluable with grant writing and reaccreditation. Additionally, Mrs. Hawkins' degree work and experience will lend to the future use of additional technology. Her desire to grow personally and professionally can only set all expectations in a positive direction.

What can you do to help
prevent child abuse?

REPORT ABUSE! >>>

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WEST VIRGINIA
1-800-352-6513

HARMONY HOUSE IS:

BOARD MEMBERS

President	Vice President
Kayleen Fitzsimmons	Adam Nicholoff
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WV Auxiliary

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Ohio Auxiliary

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Jill Jefferis Jack	Kahley Jeffers
Melissa Mansuetto	Patty Morgan
Patty Scaggs	John Shepherd
Alisha Steele	Ashley Wensyel
Becky Wilson	

Staff

Debra Hawkins - **Executive Director**
 Jay Jack - **Administrative Manager**
 Jessica Hartley - **Child & Family Advocate (OH)**
 Celeste McCloud - **Child & Family Advocate (WV)**
 Scott Steele - **Senior Forensic Interviewer & Therapist**
 Lisa Musilli - **Forensic Interviewer & Therapist**
 Chanda Paczewski - **Child & Family Therapist**

AND BELMONT COUNTY
740-633-5627

"hope has a home"



Are you ready for Harmony House's first run of fun in 2017?

Annual spring party announced at Camp Russell...



Spring has sprung! Well, not quite yet, it hasn't, but before you can grab a kite and butterfly net it will be April 22, 2017, and that means Camp Russell, and that means Spring Fling. And you know what else that means, **THAT MEANS FUN!** For just \$25 you get a catered meal, dj and dancing, 50/50 raffle, chance auction, and the first crack at welcoming the outdoor season within the woodland wildlife of Oglebay's scenic surroundings. It's BYOB for your adult social enjoyment and should be another enjoyable opening to our fundraising year. Each year hosts "Hope Soars," a yearly tribute to honor and memorialize those lives lost as a result of child abuse, and also commemorate awareness and prevention month. The West Virginia Auxiliary does an outstanding job each year to truly show that HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL. For ticket info contact Jay Jack at 304-230-2205.

2016: Harmony House Scores a Hat-trick!

For Hockey fans, the term hat-trick is common- three goals scored in one game by one player. Harmony House pulled one off by making this year's Spring Fling, Toast of the Vineyard, and Monster Mash Bash the most productive year for each event. It is no secret that at the beginning of the year, Leslie Vassilaros made it known to her staff that this would be her final year at the helm and efforts for the Toast of the Vineyard to "go big or



(L to R) Harmony House Staff Lisa Musilli, Chanda Paczewski, Scott Steele, Jay Jack, Jessica Hartley, and Leslie Vassilaros.

can lend knowledge, creativity, and networking ability. We would prefer Belmont County residents (current or former) with the desire to help and have fun for the right reasons- **FOR THE KIDS!** Ohio Auxiliary functions primarily during the months August through September. For more info, contact Scott Steele at 740-695-0812.



John Artimez displaying his winnings.

go home" were the plan. Perhaps this attitude was contagious early on, as it apparently caught fire within our West Virginia and Ohio Auxiliaries as well. Thank you to all those who **WENT BIG!**

Regarding future endeavors and volunteering, Harmony House would graciously accept any event assistance you are willing to provide at this time. Our Ohio Auxiliary is still young and willing to consider new applicants within the community that



2016, so far

Harmony House, between the two centers, has completed 356 forensic interviews. 176 were done in Ohio and the remaining 180 were done in West Virginia.

52% of the cases disclosed some form of abuse or neglect. (51% OH & 49% WV)
Harmony House has served 641 kids, 48 adults and 421 family members this year.

1,110 Served in 2016 so far: 641 Children.
909 Served in 2015 Total: 531 Children.



Wow... That's a lotta people

These guys are my heroes!





A message from the Executive Director - Leslie Vassilaros

Jay Jack, administrative manager



Leslie made the error in judgement in hiring someone with the same quirky sense of humor as she, (as she'll probably be the only one to laugh and not shudder at the crossed out name above her usual article here in the newsletter) but made an excellent decision as she did hire a "right hand" that would share the immediate emotional connection for Harmony House and our mission. Good job, boss! (smiley face) Some time ago, way before I was part of the Harmony House family, Leslie Vassilaros wrote a very touching short titled "A Fairy Tale About Hope" that was used in several different ways publicly. As Leslie is departing, and we are taking that opportunity to reflect on her accomplishments fully, I'd like to take a moment to make a slight, edit... a revision, if you will, to her work.

An Epilogue For Hope

Once upon a time there lived a little, but mighty, lady named Leslie. She tried so very hard to teach parents to love their children. No matter what Leslie did, she was met with struggles- mountains to climb, fires to douse and dragons to slay. Sometimes she was locked in her closet sized office with little more than hope. All was not in vain. It was in the closet that Leslie would envision a world where children could laugh and play and let their voices be heard. When their injuries were visible to others at her house, she would be able to help them. The days without comfort were over.

Leslie desperately needed help. How does someone reach out for help when they are locked away from the world? Leslie had an idea. Her idea was spreading hope with Harmony House. With her friends in the community, her closet burst open. The message spread, like a sky filled with bright yellow balloons, tickled by the wind, dancing on a breeze. Soaring across the dawns breaking, through the day and into the night skies, Harmony House would be there to answer the cries for help. For all the children who lost hope, Leslie returned it. If Harmony House was Leslie's hope, then truly, Leslie was hope's dream.

So... All this being said, Leslie, thank you. We have truly been, in your famous favorite phrase the "winner, winner, chicken dinner" having you as a champion against child abuse here in the Ohio Valley. And despite what you've been telling everyone lately- we, your former staff, your friends, will ALWAYS be "your circus, your monkeys."

Truly,

Jay Jack, Administrative Manager

OTHER NEW ITEMS: CELESTE, KAYLEEN, AND LADY GAGA



Celeste McCloud, Child Advocate

Celeste began working in the West Virginia office in October of this year as our new Child Advocate, being the endowment of our grant wish list. She is a veteran of the West Virginia DHHR Child Protective Services so she is quite aware of what we are facing on a daily basis and is able to offer caring comfort to the children and the families that we serve. She is a graduate of Waynesburg College both for her undergrad in Criminal Justice and her Graduate degree in Psychology and Counseling. She is a proud parent, a source of constant smiles for those around her, a part-time fashionista/full-time Michael Kors supporter.



Kayleen Fitzsimmons, Board President

Kayleen, our current Vice President, will start the new year as the new Board President, replacing the exiting Nat Goudy. Kayleen is very excited for this opportunity and has already been a strong fundraising force in her current position and a hard worker at helping make our biggest yearly event special. She is very energetic, intuitive, and is determined to see that Harmony House continues to serve the Valley for many years to come, growing to the fullest potential simultaneously. She and the incoming Debra Hawkins are ready to work out a strong, straight course for the future with some new approaches but fully maintaining the vision that has seen such remarkable success.



**Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation
(and her little monsters)**

With special thanks to our Board member Deb Miller for reaching out to the foundation, we were very fortunate to gain a very supportive ally this year during our winetasting sponsor search for donations. The Foundation, started by our Valley's very talented and unique daughter, Lady Gaga, are committed to supporting the wellness of young people and empowering them to create a kinder, braver world. The foundation was gracious enough to donate multiple items for our auction which generated approximately \$1500! Additionally, the center was gifted 100 "little monsters" of larger scale to give the children who visit our center. Many thanks to these wonderful individuals at the foundation, and of course a huge RAH RAH AH AH AH to the Lady herself.





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St. Clairsville, OH 43950
740-695-0812

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If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please email harmonyhousecac@aol.com or call 304-230-2205

Invest in the Lives of children by supporting Harmony House, Children's Advocacy Center

I commit to supporting abused children in my community with a donation of:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| * Friend of children | \$10 - \$49 | Individual |
| * Advocate of Children | \$50 - \$299 | Name: _____ |
| * Protector of Children | \$300 - \$499 | |
| * Guardian of Children | \$500 - \$999 | Business: _____ |
| * Patron of Children | \$1000 - \$2,999 | Address: _____ |
| * Benefactor of Children | \$3000 - \$4,999 | _____ |
| * Champion of Children | \$5,000 or more | _____ |

I would like to take advantage of NIP credits (contributions of \$500 or more) if they are still available. ☐

This donation is to honor: _____

This donation is in memory of: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send check to Harmony House, 2000 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003