



Remembering Donald

Donald Little's long journey to independence ended suddenly on October 13, 2021. He is one of those who survived what some historians have referred to as 'Purgatory', having lived in the Columbus State Institute, beginning in 1958. Born in London, Ohio, he left the state institution to come back home in 1971 to live in the Mueller Residential Center in Springfield.

He became a valued member of our Choices' extended family in 1998. Along his journey he met Margie, the love of his life, whom he married in 1991. That happy time was followed by the two of them achieving their one big dream together – that great American dream – buying their own home, with Choices' staff by their side each step of the way. A man with wit and a great sense of humor, he survived the long-ago hard times and was enjoying a well-deserved retirement when an automobile accident in Springfield ended his journey. He was 72 years old.

Donald and Margie not only loved their home but their neighborhood and surrounding community as well. They enjoyed being active, which included frequently 'double-dating' with their longtime friends Ron and Jan Ewers. He took part in many community trips, he and Margie getting in a van with some of their Choices' friends and taking off on adventures to Kings Island, the zoo, aquarium, the county fair and the annual trip to enjoy dinner and theater at La Comedia.

A hard worker and loyal employee, he retired from TAC Industries in Springfield in 2016, where he worked making and repairing cargo nets. He worked ten years as a machine operator at RAWAC Plating Company as an assembly line worker, where he was known as friendly and dependable. Following retirement, he stayed active by taking part in Day Services at CRSI Strive and Downsize Farm.

He was a long-time participant in Special Olympics, including fast-walking competitions and bowling. His interests were diverse, from being a big Elvis fan to watching scary movies. Batman was his favorite superhero. His best buddy was his cat Greyson.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his cousins Linda Bowman and Jimmy Little and special friends, including Ron and Jan Ewers and Pam Kellis. He wanted his staff to be remembered as part of his family as well, because they were family to him, including Choices' Program Director Kesha Tuttle, SSA Judy Collier and home health care nurses Mark Cloud and Tracy Morgan.

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We are the Champions!

We are the champions – Choices Champions! It's official. Our new Adult Day Services program is open and busy. We have officially given our new program a name – Choices Champions. Choices Champions is the facility-based part of our Adult Day Services programs, with Fun-Fit continuing as our community-based program at recreation centers and other locations throughout the region. While Fun-Fit is all about exercising, promoting healthy lifestyles and independence in the community, our Choices Champions option is provided at our Martin Center (*formerly the George C. Martin Funeral Home.*)

While there is still the opportunity for exercising at the Center for Choices Champions participants, there is a variety of other activities available as well. Participants can choose painting, gardening, arts and crafts, computers, board games, hiking, bingo, karaoke and working on life skills. There is a television area to provide some relaxation time. Participants take an active role in the daily schedule of activities.

With ample space at the Center, plans are underway to add music therapy and cooking classes. One room at the Center is currently undergoing renovations to become a kitchen to provide space for the cooking classes. Individual donations and grants are helping with the kitchen renovation.

Like Fun-Fit, Choices Champions operates Monday-Friday and is open to individuals served by Choices and eligible individuals from the community.

For more information, contact Nancy Viets at nviets@cicloh.com.

We continue forward

by Trent Grooms, Chief Executive Officer

It is with tremendous respect and commitment to Choices In Community Living (CICL) and the clients we serve that I accept the position of Chief Executive Officer. With sixteen (16) years at Choices under the tutelage and mentorship of Tom Weaver who coached and guided me and our team, I am confident that CICL will continue on the right path.

In so many ways, 2021 has been a very difficult year, but it has been said that difficult times develop character. It has also been said that difficult times expose character. I think we can all agree that this year has done both. The dedication of our staff, the resilience of our clients, and the overwhelming support for each other has shown us all what can be accomplished when we are focused on the needs of others. This reflects our character.

As we look back at 2021, our hearts are heavy as we remember Donald and the others we have lost ... clients, family, friends and team members. Our condolences continue for all those still grieving.

As we look toward 2022, we are excited about the opening of our Martin Center and the Choices Champions Adult Day Services (*Day Hab*) program that now has its home at the Center. We are also excited about continuing our personal and organizational development as we work to rebound from the negative impact of COVID-19.

There are so many stories that illustrate our character as an organization. There are so many individuals who demonstrate the depth of their character daily as they continue to come to work and to serve. That commitment to serve is what we at CICL are all about. We have worked and will continue to work in union and partnership with organizations, like the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and with county boards to further develop relationships in support of those we serve, another measure of character.

There are those who have made us who we are and who we hope will continue to challenge us to grow in service and in character ... our families, friends, donors, grantors and volunteers. As I conclude my first message to you from my new role, I want to say from myself and from all of us who serve, thank you for all you have done ... the big and the small ... to get us to this point ... that got us through the challenges of 2021. Through it all, there were some tremendous successes. We are excited about the opportunities that await us in 2022 and confident, that with our CICL character and commitment, we will face the challenges that will surely come our way.

Happy holiday season and take care of each other!



Sam's dream

It's a big part of Choices' character, at the very heart of our mission in fact, to provide an environment where the people we serve are encouraged to share their dreams, for us to be there as the creative support that helps make dreams come true.

Sam's dream for more than 20 years has been to be a security guard.

During his annual ISP (*Individual Service Plan*) this year, he and his team decided it was time to do something about that long-held dream. Sam Klapheke is an honored and valued member of our Choices' extended family. Having spent part of his young life at the Orient State Institution, he lived in a group home after returning home and has successfully lived in his own apartment as part of Choices' Monitored Program for over 25 years. While not an 'official' position, Sam has served as our own 'security' at our Monitored Program, where he is considered our 'go to guy' when it comes to safety for the other six people served in the program. He has all the numbers for his staff and for the Choices' office and knows when and who to call if there are any concerns. "I just really enjoying do this," he shares, "I always love to help." He has a security shirt and cap that he wears that reminds him of his dream.

His team provided him support following his ISP meeting in completing an application to Merchant Security, who expressed their interest in giving him a try if he met their requirements. And then COVID came and disrupted everything all around us, including Sam's dream. While moving forward with Merchant Security was put on hold, staff are working with him to keep his dream alive. He has been given the role of securing the Choices' administrative offices, as well as the adjacent Martin Center. It's proving to be a great opportunity for him to develop some skills and become more aware of what is involved in security work. It's also given him some time for exercise walking up and down the steep hill between the two buildings.

He has become so confident in his role that he approached administrative staff, including Tom Weaver, Trent Grooms, David Roustio and Shawn Valentine to share with them what he has been doing and how well he has been doing it, sharing in his best happy and enthusiastic Sam way that perhaps he might deserve recognition, maybe a plaque. Sam was happily surprised when he opened his apartment door one day to find Tom Weaver and Program Director Marvin Lewis. They had come to visit to present him with a well-deserved plaque of appreciation for his important and responsible work in being a part of security for our buildings and for watching out for the security and well-being of his neighbors.

His face lit up as he gave Tom and Marvin a hug and thanked them for recognizing him for making part of his dream come true. He has dreamed and continues to dream of being a security guard. A part of that dream was to be recognized and appreciated for doing something important and for doing it with all your heart.

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It's more than snacks at this Café

Lunch is being served every Tuesday at the Relias Café, but this is a very different café, one with the specific purpose of adding to the quality of life and enhancing services for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. It is one of the innovative ways Choices In Community Living is using to address the workforce crisis impacting service providers across the nation. Committed to not only recruiting and hiring DSP(s) (*Direct Support Professionals*) and other staff to assure continuity and consistency of services, Choices is participating in the Relias training program to provide options for ongoing professional development and training to support current staff.

Relias is an online training platform that supports hospitals, health systems, schools, human services providers and others in providing better care for those they serve, lowering costs, reducing risks, and achieving better results. Choices is participating in the human services component of the training program, with all components of the training based on best practices. Relias training is held each Tuesday through November at the Martin Center, meeting one of the goals when the Center was purchased to serve as a training center for professional staff development. Up to ten staff come together each week to volunteer to do this vital supplemental training online in a quiet, training-focused environment, with sessions led by Dan Cochran and Tamis Maniago, under the leadership of David Roustio.

Six to eight modules are taught each Tuesday, for a total of 60 hours of coursework. To enhance the learning experience, David makes sure lunch is also provided and that there are even some door prizes. Upon completion of the coursework and meeting other required criteria, staff become eligible for a \$1.00 hour pay increase, while also having new skills and knowledge to work more effectively with clients. New skills sets and knowledge, along with enhancing the professional status of direct care providers, has been shown in national studies to reduce turnover among staff and lead to higher rates of retention over time. For Choices, this effort is a win all the way around – better services for clients – better working environment for staff – and more cost-effective services for Choices as we improve the way we recruit, hire, train and support the staff who are key to meeting our mission.

Sam's dream ... continued

With his plaque recognizing and honoring him for what he does, Sam believes that dreams can come true ... perhaps not all at once (*sometimes things like pandemics put them on hold*) ... perhaps not always just as we dreamed perhaps in small steps along the way, but if there is a safe, encouraging, supportive place around you, you can always dream. That place for Sam is with us, with his Choices' family.

Honoring those who serve

Choices is one of the organizations across the nation that is struggling with the workforce crisis related to having enough direct care professionals to provide continuity of services for our most vulnerable citizens. Low wages related to the amount of responsibility required of direct care professionals is one of the leading factors in the ongoing crisis.

As Choices continues to work with statewide organizations like the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) to advocate for wages and other benefits for direct care professionals, we take time as the end of 2021 approaches to recognize and celebrate our direct care, management and administrative staff who are critical to providing quality of life services for the people we serve.

We honor the following staff for their years of service:

35 Years – Danette Addison

25 Years – Teresa Moody

**20 Years – Tonya Brown; Chasity Cook;
Alex Moreland; David Roustio**

**15 Years – Tim Henderson; Danielle Jones;
Patricia Medley; Robin Newsome**

**10 Years – Daniel DeAtley; Diane Hayslip;
Marless Thompson; Nancy Viets**

**5 Years – Rhonda Blair; Bradley Bourquin;
Xavier Bridges; Daniel Cochran; Shawn Ferryman;
Asia Gilbert; Sha'Toy Gray; Oriel Head; Brianna
Hernandez; Maurice Hollingsworth; Lis'e Johnson;
Alexandria King; Tamis Amor Maniago; Erin Nichols;
Shawana Price-Mackey; Tracey Ramey; Samantha
Runyon; Katrena Smith**

You can have a great time while you do great work! No one proved that more than our Fun-Fit management team when they dressed up as M&Ms and attended the Trunk or Treat event held by the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities in October.

Not only did they have a great time, but they also distributed 300 Choices Champions (*Adult Day Services*) brochures to families and individuals so that they would know about our various activities, which are open to those served by Choices, as well as individuals from the community. They also shared their support for Issue I (*Human Services Levy*) that was on the November ballot by distributing literature. Our M&Ms are (*l-r*) Fun-Fit Program Managers Amy Fansher and Danielle Jones and Program Director Nancy Viets.





Partners For Community Living

enhancing the quality of life for people served by
Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association

Pumpkins in fields ... corn mazes ... hayrides ... all sure signs that Fall is in the air! And just the perfect time for some Fun-Fit participants and staff (Choices Adult Day Services) to enjoy a day of shared activities at Fulton Farms in Troy. The hayride brought smiles all around, as did meeting the farm animals and going through the corn maze. And we're happy to report that not one person was lost in the maze!

"Our October adventure at Fulton Farms is just one of the many community activities that are so important to our Fun-Fit participants. Participants from all our Fun-Fit locations came together this summer for our traditional annual All-Inclusive Rec Day held at the Vandalia Recreation Center, and a pool party at Melody Pool in Clay Township. These activities and all the others that bring happiness, friendship and community access to our participants throughout the year could not take place if we did not have our Choices' vans to provide transportation." – Nancy Viets, Fun-Fit Director

Note: A part of the community and not apart from it is one of Choices key values. More than 60 Fun-Fit participants are a part of the community because there are five dedicated vans that provide them accessible, safe and reliable transportation.



GIVINGTUESDAY

Scan this code on Giving Tuesday, November 30. Your donation will be designated to our Adopt-A-Van project. Donate online at <https://bit.ly/2021GT>. Your donations will be used for the maintenance, repair and purchase of vans

Scan this
code on
Giving
Tuesday



They are filled with Thanksgiving every day of the year for the van that makes it possible to participate in the community, including attending Senior Day activities at Resident Home. Pictured are (l-r) Dennis Sullivan, Nathan Stevens (staff), Louis Lowe and James Allen.

Our year of gratitude

*By Vel Hux, Director of Development
Partners For Community Living*



Your generous giving this year has had so much impact!

Eleven (11) whole-home generators have been installed at Choices and Resident Home homes.

An accessible kitchen in the Martin Center will support Choices Champions participants by providing them cooking classes, life skills and options for healthy lifestyles. And now at the end of 2021, we've launched our biggest project ever! And we need your help.

Did you know you can Adopt-A-Van for as little as \$12.50? The daily cost to keep one van on the go is \$12.50 a day; \$87 weekly; \$375 monthly! Your donation will go to maintenance, repairs, fuel, fees, insurance, as well as the purchase of new vans. Your gift today means the people we serve will continue to be on the go all year round because they have access to safe and reliable transportation.

Please give by December 31, 2021. Mail your donations to Partners For Community Living at 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, 45414, donate online at <https://bit.ly/AdoptAVan2021>, or scan the QR code.

Your end of the year donation will support Adopt-A-Van unless otherwise designated.





“Transportation is a significant part of the services we provide to our Choices clients. We rely so much on our vans to get everyone to outings in the community, like our annual trip to LaComedia (pictured) or our weekly trips to Special Olympics. Some of our larger vans accommodate up to 12 clients at a time!

In addition to our outings, having reliable transportation is also extremely important for errands like trips to the grocery store, the bank or even attending doctor appointments. Without those vans, the clients would miss out on so many opportunities.” – *Kesha Tuttle, Program Director, Clark/Madison counties*



SCAN ME

Proceeds from **Jingle Bucks '21** are designated to our Adopt-A-Van project.

Scan this code to purchase your Jingle Bucks tickets now. Remember, only 500 tickets available. The deadline is December 16, with one winner drawn on December 17.

To purchase your tickets online, please go to <https://bit.ly/JingleBucks2021>.



Attention Art & Soul Artists

Art & Soul, our annual juried art exhibit for Ohio artists with developmental disabilities, is now accepting entries for our 2022 Exhibit. Our 15th annual Exhibit will be both in-person and digital. New and returning artists may submit up to two pieces of work for judging by our professional artists. Forty-five pieces will be selected from those submitted, with those pieces professionally matted and framed by Sketches Frame Shop. **The deadline to submit entries is December 20.** To submit work for judging, send a photo of entries to info@artandsoul ohio.com or text photos to 937-818-1136.

Art & Soul is coordinated by Partners For Community Living and Toward Independence, with funding support from sponsors, including cash awards for the top ten entries. Be watching for more information about our 2022 Exhibit at the Dayton Metro Library and our opening reception honoring our artists.



Thank you, donors (August 30 – October 22, 2021 *(All donations are designated to our funding priority, Adopt-A-Van, unless otherwise designated by the donor.)*)

Choices In Community Living

Danette Addison	Mary Panstingel,
Dan Cochran	<i>in honor of Lisa Panstingel;</i>
Amy Fansher	<i>in memory of</i>
Richard & Mary Sue Federle	<i>Thomas S. Panstingel</i>
George & Linda Ford	Myrna Reese
Vanessa Guenther	Rob & Elizabeth Schaefer
Diane Hayslip	Rebecca Toomey
Erin Nichols	Kesha Tuttle

Resident Home Association

John & Debbie Caporal,	Casey Marchal
<i>in memory of</i>	Susan Meyer
<i>Tommy Harmuth</i>	Melodye Pennington
Rhonda Chandler	Charnel Posey
Karen Gabbard	David & Rhonda Rich
Jennifer Hamblin	Ryne & Megan Rich
David Henkaline	Amanda Rivard, <i>in memory</i>
Lynette Hooper	<i>of Brenda Whitney</i>
Debra Horseman	Pete & Polly Roll
Nafeesa Huff	Annie Shaver
Montgomery County	Lori Singer
Board of DD, <i>in-kind</i>	John & Carol Stinson
David & Bobbie Murphy	Christopher Traylor
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The following donations were made to RHA in memory of Sarah Seagraves, an advocate, mother and former member of the RHA Board of Trustees. We are filled with gratitude to her family for sharing her with us during her time of advocacy and service, and for celebrating her life in support of those, like her son, who are members of the RHA extended family.

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Remembering Donald

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Mourning his loss are his friends and Choices staff who were part of his extended family, including Gretchen and Chris Zinkhon, Patty and Bryan Medley, Doug and Roxann Zinkhon, Derek Zinkhon, Lauren Linn, David and Kelly Grisso, Sr., David Grisso, Jr., Miranda Grisso, and his direct care staff Susan Buell, Raven Brown, Marless Thompson, Stephanie Keiffer, Diane Hayslip, Beth McDermott, Courtney Alexander, Megan Ackley and Ginny Gaval.

We can imagine Donald thinking of each person who touched his life, as he touched theirs, and that he might comfort them with words from his musical hero Elvis, who would say to his fans and friends, "until we meet again, may God bless you as he has blessed me."



We are filled with gratitude to those who serve and for those who are served, including Maurice Hollingsworth, who is both a member of our Choices extended family and a valued team member. Responsible for cleaning our administrative offices, he recently celebrated five years as an employee.

To Maurice and all who serve, to our families and friends, we send you our message for this holiday season in this quote from American author William Arthur Ward. *"Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings."* For all the thanksgivings, joys and blessings that have come our way because of you and with you, we are filled with gratitude.

