

2018-2019

# Chardon

magazine

Presented by the Chardon Chamber of Commerce, The Geauga Times Courier and The Good News



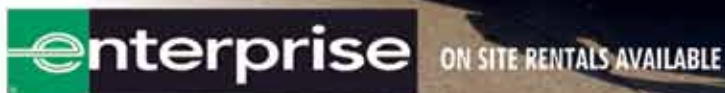


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# 2018 CALENDAR of EVENTS

## March

**31st:** Easter Egg Hunt on the Square

## April



**26th – 29th:** Geauga Maple Festival (Square)

## June

**1st - September 14th:** (Fridays)  
Chardon Square Assoc. Farmer's Market (Square)

**2nd:** Chardon Square Assoc. Flea Market (Square)

**8th:** Chardon Chamber Golf Outing (Wicked Woods)

**8th:** Free Day at Chardon Municipal Pool (Chardon Pool)

**8th - August 17th** (Fridays)  
Concerts in the Park (Square)

**9th:** All Creatures Great & Small Adoption Event (Chardon Library)

**10th:** Caveman Crawl 5K Run (The West Woods)

**16th:** Movies on the Square: "Thor: Ragnarok"

**22nd:** Libraries Rock! (Chardon Library)

**23rd:** Movie Night at Observatory Park – "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle"

**27th:** Celebration of Animation (Chardon Library)

## July

**3rd:** Chardon Area Fireworks (Chardon High School)

**4th:** Old Glory Day (Square)

**7th:** Love Fest

**8th:** (Rain date 15th) Chardon Chamber Classic Car & Bike Show (Square)

**14th:** Dog Days of Summer (Square)

**14th:** Movie Night at Observatory Park – "Peter Rabbit"

**21st:** Movies on the Square: "Coco"

**25th:** The Great Fire of Chardon 1868 Event (Chardon Library)

**28th:** Zucchini Festival (Square)

## August



**2nd:** Chardon Square Assoc. KidsFest & Kid's Flea Market (Square)

**3rd:** Movies on the Square – "Top Gun"

**5th:** Chardon Square Assoc. Arts Festival (Square)

**5th:** Nature Arts Festival (Big Creek Park)

**6th or 13th:** Library Night at Mayfield Drive-In

**7th:** National Night Out (Square)

**11th:** Movie Night at Observatory Park – Fan's Choice

**11th:** Chardon Tomorrow BrewFest & 5K Run for Suds (Square)

**12th:** Chardon Community Action Team Classic Car Show (Square)

**18th:** Movies on the Square: "Star Wars: The Last Jedi"



## September

**9th:** Kiwanis Cornroast (Square)

**16th:** Chardon Square Assoc. Harvest Handmade Market (Square)

## October

**6th:** Fall Fest (Square)

**6-7th:** Jump Into Fall Days (Swine Creek Reservation)

**31st:** Halloween on the Square

## November

**10th:** Holly Days Artisan Boutique (The West Woods)

**29th:** Chardon Square Christmas Lighting

## December



**8th:** Home for the Holidays

For complete listings go to [www.chardonchamber.com](http://www.chardonchamber.com)





# Dear Readers,

We are excited to welcome you to the fourth annual Chardon Magazine. For several years, the Chardon Area Chamber of Commerce has looked for the proper avenue to spotlight Chardon and Geauga County. This magazine will reiterate to those who live here and promote to those who are visiting what a wonderful community we have.

Our mission is to support economic development and showcase Chardon as a vibrant business community. In the past year, eight businesses have opened their doors in Chardon while six others made major expansions. Each has brought something unique to the city.

Whether you are coming to shop on the historic Chardon Square, bike or walk the Maple Highlands Trail or attend one of our many festivals, we are certain you will enjoy the time you spend in Chardon.

For more information on upcoming events, visit [chardonchamber.com](http://chardonchamber.com) or [chardon.cc](http://chardon.cc) and don't forget to like our Facebook pages. We appreciate your continued support.



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# Royal pursuit

## Embarking on search for lost maple queens

By KRISTA S. KANO

The basement of the Chardon Branch of the Geauga County Public Library contains the entirety of the county's written history. Labeled boxes line the eastern wall of the genealogy room, while cabinets filled with centuries of newspaper microforms buttress the southern wall and spill out into a separate room across the shelves of books. For anyone asking an "ungoogleable" question about the county's history, here is where they'd find the answers.

Here is where the search for the lost queens of the Geauga County Maple Festival begins.

Of course, the queens aren't truly lost, nor forgotten. They're simply not recorded in a comprehensive list. Not by the Maple Festival Board, by the Geauga County Historical Society or seemingly, by anyone.

Instead their reigns survive in those newspaper microforms, in the photos and newspaper clippings in two "maple" boxes and in the institutional knowledge of the county's citizens.

For a few queens, their memories are recorded in "A Scrapbook of the Geauga County Maple Festival," compiled and edited by Shirley Stafford Boehmer. Through newspaper clippings, the scrapbook details how in 1929, Mary Doustiel, Queen of the Festival, her king Alger Dimmick, and Frieda Hill and Russell Hauter, named most popular girl and most popular boy, traveled to Washington, D.C. that year to deliver maple syrup to President Herbert Hoover.

It shows how in 1941, there was turmoil in Geauga, as all of the queen contestants were brunettes. Newspapers ran stories like "What, No Blonds? Maple Contest is a Puzzler," and then, "Maple Sugar Beauty Contest Gets a Blond at Last and All's Well," and finally, "Chardon Sirup Festival Hails: Miriam, I, Blond and a Queen (sic)."

Within two boxes labeled "maple" in the genealogy room, newspaper clippings, original photographs, festival programs and letters contain the names of the queens.

There's a newspaper clip that identifies "pert, twinkling Jane Diedrich of Chardon" as the 1962 queen. A few times, a single item will identify two queens, like when the Geauga Times-Leader captioned a photo, "West Geauga Senior Beth Rosenberger, 18, of Russell is crowned as 1979 Geauga Maple Festival queen by her predecessor Debbie Ward of



Photo courtesy of the Chardon Branch of the Geauga County Library

**In 1957, the belle of the Chardon Maple Festival was named Princess Sheauga, rather than Maple Queen. Pictured from left, are Sandra Best, Beverly Opper, U. S. Rep. David Dennison, Princess Sheauga Julie Woodford, Juanita Carlson and Jeanne Allyn.**



Photo by John Maynard

**In 1941, only brunettes entered the running for Maple Queen, until Miriam Bates, 16, of Painesville entered. Ms. Bates, pictured with Mike Farinacci, was crowned queen that year.**

Newbury."

There's also a photo of Becky Motil, 1979 queen, and a letter she wrote to the festival board saying, "I've tried to write a thank you note many times in order to express my appreciation for my year as Maple Queen, but I couldn't seem to find the right words. I enjoyed myself so much every time I traveled to other festivals – the people I met were wonderful and the towns were interesting – yet if not for the people who accompanied me, it would not have been half so fun. I was proud to be your representative. I shall always recall my reign as Maple queen with fond memories, which are tinged with regret that it has to end."

But even after pouring through those files, many queens are still unaccounted for, and the search must broaden to institutional knowledge and the hope that a local librarian, school secretary or high school alumni association president will just happen to know a former queen, or perhaps know someone who knows a former queen.

The library's marketing manager Lori Weber, for instance, happens to be the sister of Lisa (Valyko) Belza, now of Grafton, who was crowned in 1988.

Or the library's genealogist will recommend leaving a message for another librarian who

**Continued on page 10**



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## Continued from page 8

may know some former queens. That librarian will introduce her sister-in-law, Helen (Young) Seufer of Chardon who was crowned in 1956. Mrs. Seufer, now 80, will just happen to have a scrapbook of her own with a newspaper article from 1969, when the festival held a queens reunion, that lists former queens from as far back as 1927 (the festival started in 1926), as well as their husbands and their current hometowns.

With a steadily growing list of names, comes the matter of contacting these queens. But as Angela May, the pageant's current chairwoman, pointed out, the women are difficult to track down. Ms. May attempted to have a queens reunion a few years ago, but came across roadblocks when she realized that many of these women have moved, gotten married and changed their last names.

Louise Jackson, of the Geauga County Historical Society, will also be tracking down the queens, in hopes of filling the society's new maple museum at Century Village Museum in Burton, set to open this summer. The museum will have an entire room dedicated to the Maple Festival, and, hopefully, a full list of queens, so that they'll be honored and remembered.

"The presence of a Maple Queen is one



Photo courtesy of the Chardon Branch of the Geauga County Public Library

**Allison Kozak, third from right, was crowned Maple Queen in 1980. Ms. Kozak, from West Geauga High School, is surrounded by her court.**

aspect that has remained consistent," former Chardon Mayor Bob Eldridge told the Geauga Times-Leader in 1992. "That's gone back almost to the very beginning. Over the years, the queen has been dubbed with titles rang-

ing from Princess Sheauga to Maple Princess, but all have possessed the same sought-after qualities and characteristics.

"They're just good, wholesome, all-American girls." ■

# Former queens recall their crowning moments

By KRISTA S. KANO

The Geauga County Maple Festival queens are difficult to track down. They are crowned when they're in high school, and many move, get married and change their names. But sometimes, by pure happenstance, a queen can be located. Here are their memories.

## Helen (Young) Seufer, 1956

Growing up in Chardon, Helen (Young) Seufer had always gone to the Maple Festival, and as a student at Park Elementary School in Chardon, would clean up the square with her classmates in hopes of finding some dropped dollars.

So in 1956, when she was 18 and a student at Andrews Academy for Girls in Willoughby,

now Andrews Osborne Academy, she decided to enter the pageant. At the time, the winner was chosen by how many 50-cent buttons contestants sold.

"Well, I worked on Main Street (in Chardon) and I thought that's a good place to be to sell buttons. A gentleman came in one day and said 'I want you to be queen,' and he handed me \$35. That was a lot of money. So I sold quite a bit," Mrs. Seufer, now 80, said.

Mrs. Seufer came in second, selling just five buttons less than the winner, but when that girl dropped out, Mrs. Seufer was named queen.

"We still had the railroad station, so we went on a ride down to Youngstown on a train to pick people up and bring them to Chardon. We were hostesses. It was not good weather. It

was cold and rainy," Mrs. Seufer said.

"It was so bad that whole weekend. It was raining and very, very cold and muddy. When we rode around in the parade around town, we all just wanted to go home. We were wearing prom dresses," she said.

Queens did not receive a crown or a sash at that time. Instead, they were given gifts from local businesses, and Mrs. Seufer still has a pink jewelry box she was given from Bostwick's. She is now married and has three grown children by the then young and handsome Chardon High School graduate she was dating at the time, Ken Seufer. When he was asked what it was like to have the Maple Queen on his arm, he only could offer a

Continued on next page

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## Continued from previous page

sheepish grin.

She told her children stories about being Maple Queen, most of which she no longer remembers after 62 years, but said, "They thought it was neat and they liked it."

### Lisa (Valyko) Belza, 1988

Lisa Belza also remembers going to the Maple Festival every year with her family, and has fond memories of "the stirs, the cold crisp air and the sense of community."

Mrs. Belza, now of Grafton, grew up in Chardon as a tomboy and didn't consider running for queen until she was a junior or senior in high school at Notre Dame Academy, now Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin.

"I was nervous because I couldn't walk in a pair of heels at the time. I borrowed my friend Kim's dress and when I won I couldn't believe it," Mrs. Belza said.

"I was really surprised and now, everything's a big blur. I found out on a Thursday and then the whole weekend festivities begin. You're busy the whole time with lunches and making appearances. It was a blur but one of my favorite weekends growing up as a teenager."

Mrs. Belza keeps her crown and sash in a cedar chest.

"Occasionally when I'm cleaning up, I reminisce. My son thinks it's so weird. He can't see me doing it and my daughter Grace thinks it's cool and my daughter Faith just smiles. I don't think she knows what to think of it yet. When you're a mom, you're not cool in your kids' eyes and you were never young."

Mrs. Belza competed in the Maple Run a few years ago, and is always sure to return for the pancake breakfasts.

### Ashley (Anderson) Gier, 2010

When Ashley Gier was crowned in 2010, she was excited to be the winner, but also noted how special it was as she and everyone in her court were from West Geauga High School.

Mrs. Gier had done a few pageants earlier in her life to boost her self confidence and knew Mary Sheridan, the 2009 queen, who had spoken highly of the competition.

Mrs. Gier went through the interview process, answered a question from a fish bowl about bullying ("I don't remember my answer, but clearly it was fabulous") and performed a skit that meshed her love for interior design with music.

Her favorite part of being queen, she said, was attending the other community festivals around the state.

"You could not stop me from attending those festivals. I loved the souvenirs and experiencing what these different cities prided themselves on," Mrs. Gier said.

She visited a pottery festival two days after she had her wisdom teeth removed, she went to a duct tape festival and a banana split festival. ■

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Ernie, a Peruvian Huacaya alpaca, smiles as his corral mates Desi and En Fuego mingle in the background at Promised Land Farm, home to 80 Peruvian Huacaya alpacas bred by veterinarians Ed and Ruthanne McCaslin at their Thwing Road farm. The farm is the second oldest alpaca farm in Chardon.

Photographs by Peggy Turbett

# Little Peru

## How one Chardon couple helped make Geauga County an alpaca paradise

By **MATT WEINKAM**

In a small outdoor pen just a 3 minute drive southwest of Chardon, a majestic male alpaca stands tall and still.

His name is Attitude – Michelangelo’s Black Attitude to be exact – and he’s the prize stud of Promised Land Alpacas, the second oldest alpaca farm in Chardon.

Attitude’s superior fur quality and appealing proportions are ideal for breeding and the reason he has sired a large number of alpacas on the farm.

“He’s the king around here and he knows it,” said Ruthanne McCaslin.

Mrs. McCaslin and her husband Ed McCaslin are a kind of royalty themselves. Doctors of veterinary medicine and well-known experts in raising, breeding and treating alpacas like Attitude, the McCaslins have been instrumental in helping start more than 30 alpaca farms in the Northeast Ohio region and beyond.

As of the last national count, Geauga has the most small-sized alpaca farms of any county in Ohio, and Ohio has the most of any state in the country. For this reason, some refer to the area as Little Peru. That’s all thanks in large part to the McCaslins.

The McCaslins’ adventure with alpacas began

more than 20 years ago when they visited the Geauga County Fair with their three children.

“We were walking around when suddenly our son ran up and said, ‘You gotta come see these crazy animals!’” Mrs. McCaslin remembered.

Having owned and operated Lakeshore Animal Hospital in Mentor since 1972, the McCaslins were more accustomed to the small animals they cared for in their veterinary practice, but one look at the alpacas at the county fair and it wasn’t long before they bought one for themselves.

Within a year, they had purchased five animals and boarded them together while they searched for a large enough property to start



their own farm. The struggle to find the right place was so full of near misses and seemingly perfect finds that fell through, when the family finally purchased the property on Thwing Road, the kids knew just what to call it: the promised land.

The name fits. Even on a grey winter day, the stretch of field just outside Chardon that makes up Promised Land Alpacas is so serene it seems gifted, sacred. The main attraction is a large barn out back that holds the majority of the 80 alpacas that the McCaslins call their own.

Inside the barn, three dozen or more alpacas move like a school of fish, gathering at the corners of the pen and casting wary eyes at the sight of a newcomer in their midst. They're familiar with the McCaslins but skittish around strangers. Several of the braver babies, called cria, approach curiously to stare and sniff, then dart away.

"Each one has a different personality," Mrs. McCaslin said. "Some are shy, some sweet, some talkative."

She hugs a light brown alpaca by the neck and introduces her.

"This is Queen, one of our friendliest."

**Queen huffs at first but calms under Mrs. McCaslin's familiar touch, waiting patiently as she looks the animal over and feels her cloud-like fleece. When she's released, Queen shakes her head and jogs away, making a sound halfway between a grunt and a sigh, glad to be back with the herd.**

According to the McCaslins, alpacas were first imported to the U.S. in large numbers in the 1980s and '90s. Although they had evolved in the Peruvian Andes, alpacas quickly became popular in America due to their docile nature and adaptable, low-maintenance lifestyle.

"Easiest livestock to raise," said Mrs. McCaslin. "By far."

Alpacas require less food and care than other animals. Ten or 12 alpacas eat as much as one horse, and they use a community manure pile so it's easier to clean up after them.

They aren't as dangerous or difficult to handle as other livestock either.

"They don't have upper teeth in the front so they can't bite you to hurt you. And they don't have hooves. They have a padded foot with toenails. So they might kick you if they get nervous, but you would end up with a bruise, not a broken leg," Mr. McCaslin said. "They're animals that you can safely have your children around."

Even mating and birthing are easier. Alpacas are induced ovulators, meaning a farmer can choose the breeding season and therefore

**Continued on page 14**

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For a list of all events visit our calendar at [www.chardon.cc](http://www.chardon.cc)

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**Continued from page 13**

the birthing season. Alpacas also give birth in the morning and require almost no intervention in the process.

“I jokingly tell people the two most important things you need are a chair and a rope,” says Mrs. McCaslin. “Use the rope to tie yourself in the chair so you don’t get up and intervene when things are going smoothly.” She laughed.

Once they are born, the cria are usually on their feet and nursing within two hours, and they’re able to run by evening.

“It’s a miracle,” Mrs. McCaslin said. “That’s one of the neat things. We’ve been doing it for 22 years now, and it’s still a miracle every time.”

This is how the McCaslins became alpaca evangelists. After learning how easy it was to care for the animals, they began helping others start their own alpaca farms, selling 12 or 15 a year to local and out-of-state farmers.

As veterinarians, they naturally learned as much as they could about how to care for the creatures, taking early advice from Anthony Stachowski, an alpaca importer and veterinarian in nearby Mantua. Mr. McCaslin added to the field, conducting original research on mite control in alpacas that was published in Alpaca Magazine and translated into German and Swedish. After they had only been raising alpacas for a few years, they taught one class about common parasites to four or five local farmers, but the demand grew quicker than they ever imagined.



Veterinarians Ed and Ruthanne McCaslin, with their dog Pixel, raise 80 Huacaya alpacas for show and breeding at their Promised Land Farm in Chardon. The McCaslins are well-known experts in raising, breeding and treating alpacas and have helped start more than 30 alpaca farms in Northeast Ohio.

Today the McCaslins offer classes on alpaca care and medical issues once a month, with alpaca farmers and veterinarians sometimes coming all the way from California to learn.

Not to mention the constant calls for advice. “She’s almost universally known,” said Mr. McCaslin of his wife after she answers the phone – it’s another alpaca owner calling with

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a question. "Farmers ask their local veterinarian for help, and they don't know so they say, 'Give Dr. Ruthanne a call.'"

Over time, as the McCaslins taught more classes and helped others get started in the business, Promised Land Alpacas became a family tree with deep roots in Geauga County and branches stretching in every direction.

One couple the McCaslins converted to alpaca farming is Jeanne and Ted Yurkon who live just 2 miles down Thwing Road. The Yurkons were local farmers who fell for the animals and all the things that could be made with their wool. Today they run a small store, Glacial Ridge Farms, selling items made of alpaca fleece out of a room in the front of their house. With 15 animals of their own, the Yurkons send the raw alpaca fiber to Lazy Meadows Farm in Pennsylvania for processing, where separate yarn is made from the fleece of each individual alpaca. That yarn is then used to make sweaters, shawls, coats, hats, gloves and throws that bear the name of the alpaca that provided the material.

"We're really grateful to have the McCaslins here," said Mrs. Yurkon. "They helped us get started, and they're always there if something comes up."

A few years back something did come up. An alpaca at the Yurkons was ready to give birth but was facing a complication that threatened the mother's health. The Yurkons knew tying themselves to a chair was no lon-

ger an option. The animal needed help and they knew just who to call.

The McCaslins came right away. With care and skill, Mrs. McCaslin was able to resolve the issue and ensure a safe and healthy birth for both mother and child. The cria, like all baby alpacas, was on its feet by nightfall, testing the ground beneath it, unaware of any trouble or of the gentle, experienced hands that saved the day.

These days the McCaslins are starting to slow down. "As we're getting older we're trying to sell a few more than we produce and gradually try and get our numbers down a little bit."

At the same time, they're helping more than ever, getting ready to travel to North Carolina to teach a hands-on class.

And they couldn't be happier. "People should know how fun it is to care for alpacas," said Mr. McCaslin. "They're very calming. It can lower your blood pressure just looking at them."

Mrs. McCaslin agrees. "After a busy day at the office, to come back and just be among them is very stress relieving."

For anyone curious to learn more about alpacas or interested in seeing the majestic Attitude, the McCaslins are always willing to have visitors.

"We love to show them off to folks!" says Mrs. McCaslin with enthusiasm. "Anyone who would like to come for a visit should give us a call." ■



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# Making a difference

## Judge Stupica brings experience, compassion to bench

By VALERI FURST

On a Sunday night, when many people are dreading the start of the upcoming work week, Chardon Municipal Court Judge Terri Stupica can't wait to get to the office. Entering her second term, Judge Stupica has a passion for her work and firmly believes that she is in a position to make a difference.

"I really love my job because it gives me the opportunity to help people. You give a person a

line of rope, and they can either build a bridge or hang themselves. And when you see someone who finally gets on the right path after years of struggle, it is gratifying to know that you played a part in that," Judge Stupica said.

Judge Stupica first took office in 2012, the first female trial judge in Geauga County history. She is proud of that fact and does a lot of speaking engagements, encouraging women to get involved or run for office. But Judge Stupica is quick to point out that she does not view her victory in the political arena as gender specific.

**"I always say, 'Never let anyone tell you that you can't do something.' But it also takes a lot of hard work. Women are making great gains and should be considered equal to men as long as they have the qualifications."**

Judge Stupica, who was born in Euclid, had wanted to be a judge since she was in seventh grade. She was always asking questions and felt the law was the right path. Judge Stupica worked as an attorney for more than 12 years, and now that she is on the bench, she feels she is in the right place to do the most good. In her first year with the municipal court, she was asked to start an Opiate Task Force to explore options for improving the situation in Geauga County.

"The task force was formed after we were approached by a narcotics officer from Euclid who said people were coming into their community to buy heroin. Addiction is a terrible problem; 90-percent of the criminal docket involves drugs, alcohol and opiates in particular," said Judge Stupica, 54. "It is a constant battle, but we have had some success increasing awareness and offering more assistance to those who need it. For instance, we now have a women's sober house in Claridon Township and we are always looking at ways to improve treatment, rehabilitation and education."

In tandem with Legal Aid and the Bar Association, Judge Stupica was also instrumental in helping to set up a legal clinic in Chagrin Falls to help people with smaller offenses such as speeding tickets and minor misdemeanors.

"Housing disputes, traffic violations and other minor crimes can turn into big issues for people who don't know their rights or their way around a court room," she said. "People can lose their jobs or even end up in jail when really what they needed was information and good legal advice. At the clinic, attorneys work for free in exchange for continuing legal education



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*Pictured L-R: Jennifer Bidlingmyer, David Puckett & Mary Beth Phillips.*

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Photograph by Peggy Turbett

credit, and it has been very successful.”

Judge Stupica definitely has a fun side as well. Some have nicknamed her “Leopard Girl” because of her passion for leopard print. In fact, she has several items in her office made of that motif including a large chair made to look like a shoe covered in leopard fabric. She is married and has two sons. Still, the judge’s mind is never far from her job. In this second term, Judge Stupica is thinking about starting a night court to make it convenient for people who have to work and can’t make regular courthouse hours.

“The goal is to make the court a better place all around so that people can be more productive citizens. My door is always open, for lawyers and the public, and I love to hear what they have to say. We are a community and I am honored to serve.” ■

**Chardon Municipal Court Judge Terri L. Stupica works at the court just off of Chardon Square. Judge Stupica was the first female trial judge in Geauga County history.**

Photos by Grace Rybak

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# Living memorial

Peaceful park grows from Chardon tragedy

Photograph by Alana Clark


The Chardon Living Memorial Park was dedicated in 2017 in memory of the shooting at Chardon High School on Feb. 27, 2012 that claimed the lives of Danny Parmertor, Russell King Jr. and Demetrius Hewlin. The sculpture, entitled “Echoes of the Heart” by local artist Matthew Albright, greets visitors to the park. The bench is dedicated to the survivors who had the “courage to overcome the pain you endured that day.”

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By LAURI GROSS

There is a 17-acre park in Chardon that welcomes visitors with some of what's common to well-loved parks. There is natural beauty and various outlets for the energy of the young and young at heart. But this is no ordinary park. This park was born of equal parts sorrow and joy. Its creators were motivated both by hurt and healing. Even its name inspires reflection: Chardon Living Memorial Park. It is first and foremost a Chardon institution. It is a living memorial – as opposed to just a plaque or a statue – to young victims of a shooting tragedy at Chardon High School Feb. 27, 2012. On some levels, it is still simply a park.

When Chardon-area residents decided to help the community on the path toward healing, some formed a committee that raised more than \$300,000 for the park that stretches between Maple Elementary (308 Maple Ave. in Chardon) and the city's Chalet (220 Basquin Drive).

The Chardon Living Memorial Park opened in October of 2017 as a place to honor the lives lost, celebrate the survivors, provide a place for visitors to reflect and recognize the good in a community that continues to support one another.

Steve Turpin, who chaired the Chardon Living Memorial Park Committee, said the park is used by people of “all ages and groups. I see lots of kids on the play center and fitness

center. It is quite noisy – in a good way – at times. But in the woods or at the Reflection Shelter, the sound is subdued.”

Specific elements of the park were designed in memory of the students who lost their lives that day. The open-air fitness center is dedicated to Demetrius Hewlin and his enjoyment of sports. Demetrius was one of the victims. The playground commemorates the love of the outdoors of Russell King Jr., another victim. The third victim, Danny Parmertor, is memorialized in the refurbished half-mile trail in the woods, which recalls his young, wild and free spirit. The park also features commemoration plaques and benches, including one that honors survivors and another that honors the first responders who answered the call the day of the shooting.

**The park includes a 10-foot high steel heart sculpture created by local artist Matthew Albright who donated his talents to the project. The sculpture is called “Echoes of the Heart” and includes a bell at its center.**

The park is part of the Great American Peace Trail, an international, public participatory art project designed to engage children with hands-on, cross-cultural awareness with the goal of sharing peace and diversity with

their neighbors.

Mr. Turpin said, “I am heartened by how our park can be a part of the continuing endeavor (of the Great American Peace Trail).”

Spring 2018 will see another addition to the park. Ursuline College student Molly Hegner – also a 2015 Chardon High School graduate – had the idea of a mural at the park. “I thought it would be a way for myself and Ursuline to give to the Chardon community,” she said. “I love art, and this was a way for me to give back to my community through art.” The 4-by-8 foot mural will feature the Chardon Living Memorial Park emblem and will be mounted near the Chalet. Ms. Hegner is working on the mural with fellow Ursuline students Barbara Brodник, Ashley Rowell, Sierra Thompson and Olivia Cooney. All are Ohio residents, but Ms. Hegner is the only Chardon graduate. “Without the help of my fellow students, I would be lost,” Ms. Hegner said.

The Chardon Living Memorial Park represents a promise fulfilled, even as its meaning, its impact and its physical presence continue to evolve.

“People feel a certain closure,” said Mr. Turpin of the park. “I have heard some stories about how some have been affected to get to this point: depression, frustration, relief, but in the end a sort of peaceful vindication.” ■



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Marci Mondello-King cuts Paula McNabb's hair at her Chardon Square salon, Marci's Hair on the Square. In addition to local politicians, judges, teachers and stay-at-home moms, Mrs. Mondello-King cuts hair for people in jail awaiting trial, WomenSafe clients and families in financial need.

# Window on square

Photograph by Michael Johnson



# Salon owner dedicated to people in Chardon

By KRISTA S. KANO

**O**n Feb. 1, Chardon Square glistened with a fresh coat of snow, so light that even the smallest breeze could lift it off the ground around the gazebo and send it fluttering towards the green clock tower. An older gentleman walked down Main Street holding the hand of a small boy bundled tightly in a jacket, mittens and hat, and Ohio Sen. John Eklund, R-Munson Township, walked briskly across the street, no doubt on his way to an important meeting.

This has been the view for Marci Mondello-King since 2001 when she moved her salon from the space now occupied by Ubuntu yoga to a downstairs space left vacant by Chapman Shoes.

That morning, a freshly tanned Mrs. Mondello-King had a packed schedule after a month-long Florida vacation. Her day started at 8 a.m. with a local business owner and right on time, was followed by Beverly McClelland who came in to freshen her highlights.

As Mrs. McClelland's color settled, Mrs. Mondello-King, 54, moved on to Mrs. McClelland's husband, recently retired sheriff Dan McClelland who arrived with Midge, the world's smallest police dog, clad in a Rachel Ray purple sweater.

"This is one of the places in a small town

where everyone knows your name, like Cheers," Mrs. McClelland said.

As she sat in the large bay windows while Mrs. Mondello-King coiffed Mr. McClelland's hair, Mrs. McClelland explained that after their hair stylists retired, they needed someone who could be flexible with both of their busy schedules.

"I called Marci and asked if I could come in the evening. She said she had full evenings, but said she would do it for me. That's the way it is around here," Mrs. McClelland said. "And she would always fit Dan in when he was in the cruiser. He'd get a call and have to leave, and she would finish him up later.

**"And Marci did Dan's mom's hair when she was in her 80s and still driving," Mrs. McClelland continued. "Marci would go out and stop all the traffic so Millie could back out. Little Marci stopped traffic because she didn't want Millie to get hurt, or for Millie to hurt anyone else."**

And that is the reason for the success of Marci's business. Besides being a top-notch hair stylist who earned a 98 out of 100 when she took her state boards in 1982, she has also

dedicated herself to the community she serves.

## Early years

Growing up in Mayfield Heights, Mrs. Mondello-King always knew she wanted to be a hair stylist.

"When I was 9, I had a little doll, and when you pressed a button, her hair grew. I thought it was the coolest thing. That was my favorite doll and by seventh grade, I knew this is what I wanted to do, no questions asked," Mrs. Mondello-King said.

Unfortunately, her attorney father was set on Mrs. Mondello-King following in his footsteps and convinced her to go to college at Kent State University.

"I joke to this day that I went to college and I majored in racquetball. I was only there a semester and my mom and dad came to visit. I said that I'm having a really good time, but I'm going to go for four years, get out and go to beauty school, so we're wasting time and money," Mrs. Mondello-King said.

Her parents relented and at age 18, Mrs. Mondello-King enrolled in beauty school.

"It was the coolest thing I could ever imagine. I loved every part of it, and once I got to the floor, I loved every part of beauty school," she said.

After she graduated, putting in an extra 500 hours to get her management license, Mrs. Mondello-King started working at a salon in Euclid Square, though she was only there a short time.

**Continued on page 22**



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## Continued from page 21

“A gentleman came in for a perm. It was the 1980s, don’t laugh,” she said. “One week later, he came back. And when you’re a new hairdresser and you see someone coming back a week later, your heart sinks because you feel like you did something wrong.”

Mrs. Mondello-King was with another client, and the man asked if he could talk to her when she was done. Her heart pounding, Mrs. Mondello-King finished the cut, and went to talk to the man.

“He said that was the best perm he’s ever had. He said he was thinking about opening a hair salon and if I would be interested. I didn’t believe him,” she recalled.

Luckily, her father knew the gentleman from playing racquetball, and Mrs. Mondello-King agreed to run his two-chair salon inside of a gym at age 18.

She stayed there for about six years, but her life changed once she got married and her first son, Keith, came along.

“I wanted to be at home with my baby, so I closed the shop and started working at Hairlines in Lyndhurst. It really worked with my home schedule,” Mrs. Mondello-King said.

After six years, another baby and a divorce, Mrs. Mondello-King needed more hours and hoped to be close to her children’s school, Maple Elementary School in Chardon.

One day in 1996, Mrs. Mondello-King and her father were driving around the square

when they noticed a for-rent sign in a second story window, and she was intrigued.

**“When I moved there, there was just something about the square that I loved,” Mrs. Mondello-King said. “My friends were visiting once and her little girl said, ‘I didn’t know Ms. Marci lived in Sesame Street!’”**

## Step to future

Mrs. Mondello-King called the number on the sign and went to see the space.

She remembers the 29 dusty, pink steps that led to the vacant space, the floors with holes in them, the old brick walls, the high ceilings and the three huge windows.

“The potential was there,” Mrs. Mondello-King said.

Mrs. Mondello-King purchased 30-year-old furniture from a salon in Collinwood, and luckily everything was red and black, Chardon’s colors.

“I was by myself. I made fliers and walked to every development. I would go back to the salon, run up those 29 steps and sit at my 1950s reception desk and wait for the phone to ring.

I just waited, but eventually it rang,” she said.

After five years of building connections with her clients and hiring more stylists, Mrs. Mondello-King started to outgrow the space. Around that time, the building was sold, and Mrs. Mondello-King knew she would need to start finding a new location.

“My dad’s friend had a place in Chardon and said I could get a great rent price, but my heart was in the square. I’ve always loved the square. I had the greatest view and I knew the square was the place to be, so I wanted to stay,” she said.

After Chapman’s Shoes closed, Mrs. Mondello-King’s father purchased the building, and she moved downstairs, where she’s been for the past 17 years.

Mrs. Mondello-King styles hair for judges, county commissioners, pastors, stay at home moms and teenagers, and fits them all in between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m., taking no lunch breaks.

She, however, gets the most satisfaction out of cutting hair for community members who need it most. She cuts hair for people in jail who are awaiting trial, at the Geauga County Job and Family Service’s program Help Me Grow, at Morning Star church’s Hearts 2 Hands program for families in financial need, and for women in need through WomenSafe.

“This community has put me where I am today,” Mrs. Mondello-King said. “It’s helped me have my own business, and I believe so strongly it’s our responsibility to give back to this community.” ■



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# That family feeling

## Couple turn historic Chardon Motel into state-of-art senior living

By VALERI FURST

For decades, the Chardon Motel on Water Street has been seen as an eyesore. Originally built in the 1940s, the site had fallen into disrepair and was in serious need of some TLC.

Enter Phil and Annette Smith, who had a vision that would give the building a new lease on life and do some good for the community. This spring will be the official opening of Thistle House, an independent senior living facility. The Smiths see it as a way of giving back to the city of Chardon.

“Community spirit is important to both of us and so is family,” Mr. Smith explained. “We know there are a lot of people in our area who can’t continue to live in their house for whatever reason but they don’t want to move far away or live in a big facility. Right now there aren’t a lot of options, and this will give people the opportunity to stay independent, in a close knit community, close to home.”

The Smiths, who have been married 25 years, own and operate FirstLight Home Care which provides non-medical assistance to people in their homes. Mr. Smith, a former engineer, and Mrs. Smith, who worked in customer service and sales, wanted to do something together that would allow them to work for themselves. A business that focused on taking care of people seemed the ideal choice.

“The idea of making people’s lives more comfortable was appealing to us, and we both had experience dealing with home health care for our families. Our grandparents and Phil’s brother who had bone cancer all needed assistance, and while the care they received was fine, we knew we could do it better,” Mrs. Smith said.

In business since 2011, their company has grown to more than 90 employees who work in Lake, Geauga and parts of Cuyahoga counties. Mrs. Smith said when they hire people, they look for folks who aren’t in it just for the money but want to be part of a family. That sentiment is what led them to the next chapter in their lives, the opening of Thistle House.

“The motel came on the market in 2017 and we saw it as an opportunity to do good in our community while taking the next step in our business. We do home care but what about the people who can’t stay in their homes? Where do they go other than assisted living or nursing homes? Emotionally, that can be difficult and devastating,” Mr. Smith said.

Thistle House, so named because Chardon



Photograph by Peggy Turbett

**Phil and Annette Smith, owners of FirstLight Home Care, are transforming the former Chardon Motel into Thistle House, a boutique senior living home with assisted and independent living options in 16 units.**

is the French word for thistle, a plant that used to be natural to the area, will have 16 apartments complete with full bath and kitchenette. There will be 24-hour staffing, and additional amenities include three meals a day, laundry service, and several common areas including a two-story dining room, gathering space and a full commercial kitchen with an eat-in feature. The cost per month will be in the low \$3,000’s.

The Smiths say people have already expressed interest in living there, and they expect it to fill up quickly. Then, if all goes according to plan, the hope is to open a second facility.

“We are providing a boutique, smaller community option, but quality of care is most important,” Mr. Smith said. “If we can do that in addition to providing quality of life at a reasonable cost, we will be successful.” ■



# Edible art from heart

## Chardon baker, entrepreneur creates cookies for stars and the rest of us

By LAURI GROSS

The first time Denise Hagan saw people chewing her cookies, it was a big deal. “I had never watched them before,” said the owner of the D is for Delicious cookie bakery in Chardon.

“Normally, people pick up the cookies and leave. (Watching them) was so cool,” she marveled. The baker had this delightful experience when she was attending the Big Shots and Little Stars event at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland last fall, a fundraiser for pediatric

cancer survivors. About 1,200 of Ms. Hagan’s cookies were among the offerings.

“They had the cookies displayed beautifully,” Ms. Hagan recalled. “My husband and I would smile big as people went up to grab more (cookies) to put in their purse to take home. People were so sweet. They said, ‘These are amazing. Where is your shop?’ I said, In my house.”

Then Ms. Hagan reflected on the spectacle and asked herself, “I make cookies!?! How did this happen? I didn’t seek it out. God led me here. I don’t know how else to explain it. I had

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**Denise Hagan, owner of D is for Delicious cookie bakery offers custom cookies and cookie-decorating classes.**

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A graduate of Chardon High School and Ohio University, Ms. Hagan was a fourth-grade teacher for nine years when her first daughter was born, with special needs. “I felt inadequate at everything I was doing,” she sighed. When her second daughter was born, Ms. Hagan resigned from teaching and “stumbled into baking,” she said. “The creative aspect drew me. I started doing it for my kids’ birthdays. It gave me an outlet. It was rewarding and gave me a way to connect with other moms.”

Then she started making them for other people.

This summer she is planning to open the D is for Delicious cookie shop and party area in Chardon, at 602 South St., in the Woodiebrook Gables shopping center (visit D4DCookies.com). Ms. Hagan was anticipating a late June or early July grand opening community event. Her family now includes three daughters, ages 5, 10 and 13, and husband Paul, also a teacher.

For all her cookies, Ms. Hagan uses a single recipe that she got from her friend Jen. “This is not a sugar cookie that is like concrete. They are really moist and flavorful.” She is happy to share her cookies but not her recipe.

Despite all being made from the same recipe, each of Ms. Hagan’s cookies is a custom work of art. From a collection of a few hundred cookie cutters (and growing), Ms. Hagan crafts cookies for literally any occasion. The calendar provides plenty of inspiration, as many of her cookies celebrate seasons and holidays. She makes cookies to mark local sporting events, plus of course birthdays, baby showers, anniversaries, get-well and really anything else. She even creates company logos in icing on her colorful cookies.

The cookie crafter also offers cookie-decorating classes. Like the cookies themselves, the classes began in her home. Later, she offered classes at a Chardon restaurant and then at the Heritage House on Chardon Square. Ms. Hagan prepares the cookies and icing

ahead of time and lets the attendees do all the decorating.

Initially, Ms. Hagan’s cookie-decorating classes were holiday themed but she has since added classes with emoji and other popular themed cookies. “These classes have been really fun for families to spend time together. Dads come, too. I call it community through cookies,” she said. Ms. Hagan also offers “Ladies Night Out” classes. With so much of her energy now focused on getting the shop open, Ms. Hagan currently is only offering classes at private events.

Still, she is bursting with ideas for the fu-

ture, including cookie baskets, advanced decorating classes, and new cookie flavors. Oh, and maybe a cookie delivery service. Delivered with a song. Sung by husband Paul. “He is very musical,” she said.

The D is for Delicious shop will include display cases of ready-made cookies as well as some that can be personalized on the spot. The party area will be situated in the front of the store in full view of passers-by. The whole thing will be very colorful. Stating the obvious, Ms. Hagan said, “It will be a very happy place.” ■

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Photographs by Peggy Turbett

**Sharon Krysiak, manager, left, and Billie Erickson, right, president and co-owner of Fowler's Milling Company, sell the mill's flours and baking blends, along with maple syrup, jams and other Geauga County food products, in the retail shop on of the mill on Fowlers Mill Road in Chardon. The mill grinds locally grown corn and wheat for wholesale, retail and farmers markets across the United States.**

## By PARIS WOLFE

In the mid-1980s Billie and Rick Erickson were entrenched in successful professional careers in Columbus, Ohio. Billie was director of visual merchandising for a department store and Rick was a research engineer at Battelle.

Among other things, they shared a passion for baking. Rick, with his engineering background, was fascinated by the differences in flours – hard, soft, winter, summer, whole grain – and the milling that created them. In fact when the couple traveled, they would visit vintage milling operations to learn about history, architecture and mechanics.

By chance they learned that Fowler's Mill in Munson Township – Billie grew up nearby in Chardon – was for sale. They made the leap and purchased the 1834 mill. They envisioned converting the historic wood building into a bakery, but installing a proper septic system was too costly.

Instead they decided to go with the flow and

# County jewel

## Historic mill products find synergy with farm markets

restart the mill. It had been closed 30 years. Certainly they would sell flour and corn meal. But their bread-and-butter would be mixes. With the maple capital next door – Chardon – the first mix was for pancakes.

“Our motivation was to restore and keep this architectural jewel in the county,” said

Billie, admitting the business plan wasn't completely developed at the beginning. “We didn't really understand who we were going to sell these mixes to. We didn't look at it from a business perspective. We knew we wanted to build a life and livelihood around this mill.”

Fortuitously, a national farm market trade





Fowler's Milling Company's retail shop on Fowlers Mill Road in Chardon offers baking blends that give consumers a short cut to traditional comfort foods.

show was in Cleveland the year they began. Farm markets, not to be confused with farmers markets, are retail operations at working farms. These are businesses like Patterson Fruit Farm in Chester or Sage's Apples Farm Market in Chardon.

At the conference, the Ericksons found synergy with farm markets. Billie developed apple mixes – crisp, cobbler – to be sold during apple season. Shoppers could buy a wholesome product to use apples and were, in fact, likely to buy more apples to use it.

“Because we discovered this niche, we were able to launch our business,” she said. Over time, the Ericksons created new mixes to follow the seasons. Available all year, they focus on strawberry in the spring, continue through blueberries, blackberries and peaches, and end the year with apples, pumpkin and the holidays.

Using the mixes, consumers save time on their way to traditional, comfort food. “Our apple cake is a traditional apple cake that farm wives made for centuries,” Billie said. “We just blend all the ingredients so the consumer can short cut the process. They just add the liquids and the fruit.”

The best selling mix is an apple crisp, patterned after Billie's mom's recipe.

The business is in a good place, Billie said. “I think we are in another farm market renaissance. Our farm market operators are enjoying more traffic, people want to come to the farm to pick their own. And, of course, the farm-to-table movement has been beneficial.”

Consumers currently find mixes in the red mill building in Munson Township as well as farm markets throughout the eastern United States. Mixes are often private labeled with the farm's name. In January, Billie was off to another trade show in California to expand sales even more.

The Ericksons see a bright future for the mixes and the mill. “I like keeping the heritage of this building functioning in the way it was supposed to be,” Billie said. ■



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Photographs courtesy of Pioneer Waterland

One of the most popular places in Geauga County during a hot summer day is Pioneer Waterland & Dry Fun Park. The park has been part of the summer scene for more than 30 years and maintains its nostalgic vibe.



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# Wet and dry fun

From speed slides to go-karts, Waterland is cool family escape on hot summer days

By **MARIE ELIUM**

Perhaps no place in Geauga County holds more summertime memories than Pioneer Waterland & Dry Fun Park

For more than 30 years, the Chardon landmark has been a warm-weather mainstay, drawing thousands of families, friends and kids – lots of kids – squeezing every bit of the summer out of each long, hot day. A mosaic of wet towels, bottles of sunscreen, cool drinks and a cacophony of excited squeals are the backdrop of a nostalgia-steeped Pioneer outing that always passes too quickly.

By most standards, Pioneer Waterland pays homage to a simpler time. It doesn't try to

**Continued on page 32**



Attractions at the 75-acre Pioneer Waterland & Dry Fun Park in Geauga County include three curly water slides. Last year, park owners added floating platforms to the pool.

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**Continued from page 31**

compete with huge indoor centers like Kalahari near Sandusky. Its closest rival – if you can have rivals in the summer fun arena – is in nearby Geneva-On-The-Lake, with its own nostalgic vibe.

The Kile Road park is holding its own in a world of video games, travel ball leagues, summer classes and other activities that pull families and children away from laid-back pursuits like a languid afternoon spent pool-side.

The park got a much-needed boost when seven local businessmen bought it at auction

four years ago after the owner died. Dan Sammon, Mark Suveges, Don Michalek, David Browne, Dan Emerson, Jim Brown and Frank Dyrz remembered the park from its prime when it drew visitors from throughout Northeast Ohio. They thought it would be a good investment for themselves as well as for the community.

The list of projects at the 75-acre park was more extensive than many of them expected. The 13 picnic pavilions that can hold up to 2,500 visitors had fallen into disrepair. Company picnic bookings and other large events were down. The 14-acre parking lot needed to be graded. Roofs had leaks. The park's center-

piece, a 2-acre, 2-million gallon pool, patched over the years needed to be emptied so the concrete could be reground and smoothed. They got to work, pouring tens of thousands of dollars into the park.

The owners of the spiffed-up, expanded Pioneer Waterland are keeping up with the times with batting cages, go-karts, miniature golf and as many latest-greatest water features they can introduce as time and finances permit, explained Mr. Sammon. A Fun Zone game arcade, S.A.F.E. Archery, professional batting cages and a Grand Prix Go-Kart Super Track are available to guests for an additional fee.

Not only have the owners reintroduced plenty of non-water activities (that's where the dry fun park comes in), but they also have been upgrading and expanding the water attractions and have repainted the two tall speed slides, which along with three curly slides, are among Pioneer's most popular attractions.

Mr. Sammon and Mr. Suveges said that last year the owners added floating platforms to the pool – an addition that was wildly popular with visitors. On their wish list is a giant, floating pyramid with a slide.

To keep up with the newest water park offerings, some of the business partners visit trade shows and check out magazines geared to amusement park owners. There's always something new to consider for upcoming seasons in an effort to attract new guests while keeping long-time visitors entertained, Mr. Suveges said.

Pioneer counts on getting between 70 and 80 good water park days; 110 days is what they need to make a profit, he said. Last year, the owners agreed to squeeze a few more days out of the season by offering a Halloween Fall Fear Fest that stretches over six weekends after the park closes at the end of August, Mr. Sammon said.

The event has exceeded their initial expectations, with crowds of people showing up each weekend for a half-mile Haunted Forest Walk, a corn maze and a Zombie Laser Shoot. Fear Fest will be back later this year with more events guaranteed to scare.

Pioneer Waterland is one of the area's biggest employers of teens and college students. The calls start coming in from applicants around Christmas, and interviews take place throughout April and May. By the time the park opens on June 1 the park will have 200 seasonal employees on the payroll. From the snack bar to the gift shop, the lifeguard stands and the front gate, Pioneer Waterland is a dependable summer job for many of the region's students.

As with any company in the entertainment business, the partners take their jobs seriously and are on the lookout for ways to bring more guests through the gates. The large property has more than 100 camping sites that haven't been used in years. They're reintroducing camping this season and are taking reservations now for primitive and full hook-up water and electric sites, Mr. Sammon said.



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The park owners occasionally take time to enjoy their investment. Mr. Sammon's favorite is hanging out on the lazy river in an inner tube. Mr. Suveges' is the speed slides. "I could do that all day long," he said.

So why do families keep coming to Pioneer Waterland after all of these years? No doubt the upgrades and new features and special events are draws. Another is its affordability, Mr. Suveges said. Guests can bring their own food and picnic at the park, or buy treats from the moderately priced snack bar. There's always a game or two at the basketball courts, all of the water features and the pool are closely supervised by trained lifeguards and staff. On cloudy, cool days, the go-karts, batting cages and miniature golf draw visitors.

**"There are so many things for people to do," Mr. Suveges said. "It's stress-free for families. I love just sitting in a cabana and watching kids have fun."**

Pioneer Waterland and Dry Fun Park opens May 26 this year, weather permitting. For more information about ticket prices, special events and camping reservations visit pioneerwaterland.com. The park is located at 10661 Kile Road near Chardon. Call 440-285-0910 for more information. ■

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# Showing support

Photograph by Peggy Turbett

Pat Preston, owner of Preston Superstore and supporter of several nonprofits and causes in the greater Chardon area, stands in the Chevrolet showroom of his multi-brand vehicle dealerships that cover 10 acres in Burton. Mr. Preston employs 150 people, about a third of whom have been with the company for two decades or more.

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# Pat and Diane Preston give from the heart to a grateful community

By LAURI GROSS

**T**he nicest people serving the nicest guests. You might expect to see a sign like this in front of a quaint bed and breakfast, or maybe a homey restaurant. But a car dealership? The team at the Preston Superstore in Burton – featuring Kia, Ford, Chevy and Cadillac dealerships – embrace and embody this company motto, even if it is an unusual one for a car company.

Owner Pat Preston and Diane, his business partner and wife, seem to be philanthropists first and business people second. Either way you look at it, their success at both endeavors is undeniable. Originally from Pennsylvania, Mr. Preston began his career in hotel management but in 1993, he switched gears and purchased a Cadillac/Chevy dealership with his brother. The Prestons arrived in Geauga County that year, with their kids aged 2, 4 and 7. In 1995, the couple bought out Mr. Preston's brother and added Ford (in 2000) and Kia (in 2001) to the dealership mix.

The always-growing Preston Superstore now employs 150 people on a 10-acre campus on both sides of Kinsman Road. "Every

expansion we've done, before we finished it, we've outgrown that space so it's been one expansion after another," said Mr. Preston, appreciative of having such a good problem. Their daughter Jackie Franck and son Bill Preston also help run the company.

**Mr. Preston said about 75 percent of his business is from repeat customers. "The reason they are loyal," he explained, "is my employees are outstanding people and they do a great job." Nearly a third of the employees have been with the company for two decades or more.**

When it comes to philanthropy, Mr. Preston said simply, "When we get asked to help, we try to do the best we can." Together, the Prestons decide where their donations can do the most good.

"We just look for where the money is going to end up and whether it is a good cause and serves a good community purpose," Mr. Preston said, and added, "I am looking for something that brings families together."

Mr. Preston has donated cars to be raffled off by charitable groups including the Newbury Veterans Memorial, the Chardon Living

Memorial Park, the Cardinal Local School District and the Chagrin Falls Eagles (raising money for juvenile diabetes).

"If I am giving away a car, I like to raise more money than the car cost me," Mr. Preston explained. "We did that with Cardinal schools. They raised more than \$50,000 for that car, so they were able to substantially underwrite their kids' school activities fee for fall and winter."

Mr. Preston also is a regular supporter of local 4-H groups. "I like 4-H. I've heard incredible stories from talking to families for over 25 years," he said, referring to 4-H kids who were able to pay for college by saving money raised by 4-H activities such as auctioning off the livestock they raised.

He also supports the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Great Geauga County Fair, local chambers of commerce, the Geauga County Veterans Memorial, area schools, Geauga Habitat for Humanity, St. Helen's Church, DDC Clinic for Special Needs Children in Middlefield, youth sports programs, University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center, the Wounded Warrior Project, police officers and more.

"There are people who might buy from me because I donate to a cause that is important to them, but if you don't have quality service and sales people, they won't stay with you very long," he said. To other would-be philanthropists, Mr. Preston offered, "You can't look at it as though there is a payback. Just donate to things you care about. Just do what you think is right." ■

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Photographs by Peggy Turbett

A single-client chemotherapy infusion room at the Seidman Cancer Center at University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center offers privacy and natural light for the duration of treatment. The center underwent a \$5.6 million upgrade in July 2017 and now offers patients comfortable rooms with picturesque views.

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# Care close to home

## UH Geauga Medical Center expands cancer treatment to residents

By PARIS WOLFE

When Kathryn Gustola sits still for three hours of chemotherapy infusions every other Wednesday, she's in a semi-private room with large windows overlooking purple coneflowers, yellow daylilies and flowering shrubs in the healing garden at University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center at UH Geauga Medical Center.

"It's like you're inside getting treatment, but you're outside with nature at the same time," the 73-year-old Chardon resident mused. "Sometimes I can see the sunrise coming up over the valley in the east near Burton and Middlefield."

The environment wasn't always that way. When Mrs. Gustola was diagnosed with stomach cavity cancer in 1994, she recalled visiting her doctor in a trailer on the rural Geauga Hospital property just outside Chardon in Claridon Township. As the hospital grew and changed over the years the cancer practice moved from the trailer into the main building. Two infusion chairs were added in the early 2000s. Eventually, patients received their chemotherapy in a large, windowless room in the center of the building with about a dozen chairs.

**"I didn't care for that at all," Mrs. Gustola said. "I prefer to be by myself. It's nice to have just one or two chairs in a room now instead of 12 to 15 people at the same time."**

While treatment is never easy, aesthetic improvements like private space and windows became a reality in July 2017 when the UH Seidman Cancer Center at the Geauga hospital underwent a \$5.6 million upgrade. The result was an 11,500-square-foot addition to the hospital building with 10 exam rooms for medical oncology care. Patients now receive treatment in 18 private and semi-private infusion bays with large windows overlooking the woods that replace the former shared infusion space.

In the past, patients had to traipse through the hospital to the radiation oncology department. Now it is directly adjacent to the cancer treatment facility, further enhancing the space as a one-stop center. An appointment desk helps schedule visits so patients can see their

doctors all on the same day.

With more service capability, the hospital has grown from one to three full-time oncologists, and more specialists work at the growing medical center. That reduces patient travel to other facilities for advanced care.

"Our goal is to provide the excellent cancer care that you would get at any major center,"

said Medical Director Dr. Judah Friedman. "There are situations where you have to go to UH's main campus for complex surgeries, but it helps to have treatment closer to home."

Providing comprehensive care and more of it closer to home is becoming more significant

**Continued on page 39**

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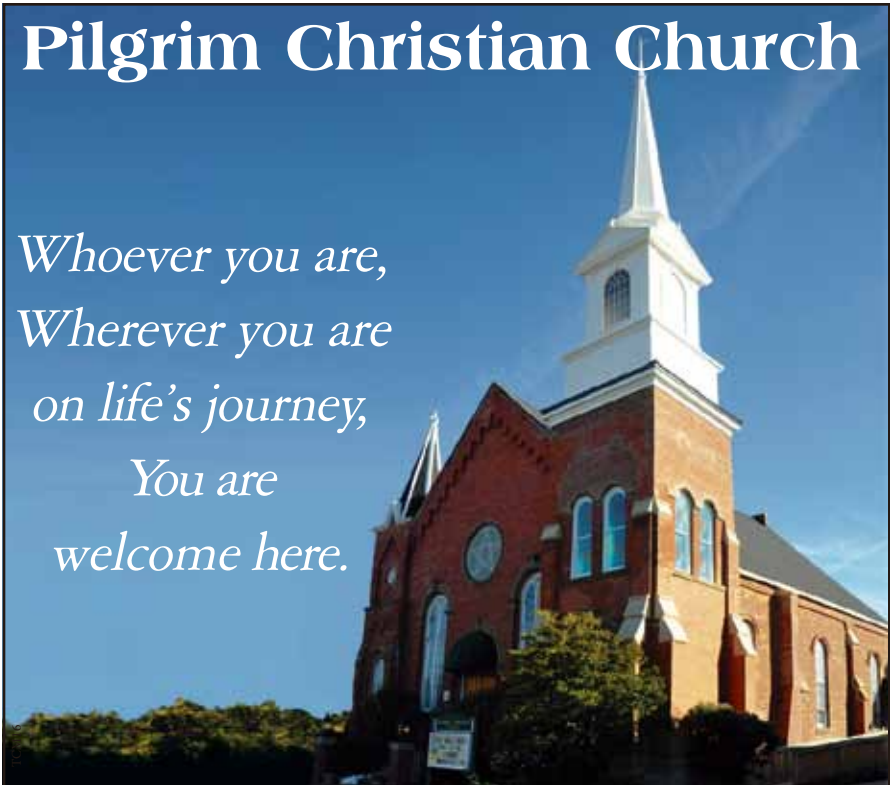
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Oncologist Dr. Judah Friedman is director of the University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center at Geauga Medical Center. Dr. Friedman said the hospital aims to provide excellent care closer to home.

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**Continued from page 37**

as the county's demographics shift, said Patti Ljubi, director of clinical services. "Growth of the oncology business comes with an aging population," she said. "Part of our analysis was what kind of cancer patients are getting in Geauga County, mostly lung, breast, prostate."

Some patients require treatment every day and want that as close to home as possible. "We want to be convenient to help patients and their caregivers maintain their lifestyle and jobs," Ms. Ljubi said.

That's especially significant for the 20 percent of patients coming from the Amish com-

munity. Traveling to Cleveland for cancer treatment – which some require daily for six weeks – can cost up to \$200 per day/per person just to hire a driver.

Gauga County residents showed their desire for the facility with more than \$2.8 million contributed to the project.

As Emilie Gottsegen, senior development officer, puts it, "UH Geauga has become a destination hospital, not just a stop on the way to downtown."

Ms. Gustola certainly appreciates her short drive and quality of care. "I know several people who go there. We all love the new treatment center." ■



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Photograph by  
Peggy Turbett

Chardon City Councilwoman and Geauga County Republican Party Chairwoman Nancy McArthur stands near the mural in the Chardon Municipal Center before a council meeting. After moving to Chardon in the 1990s, Mrs. McArthur decided to get involved in the community by serving on the Planning Commission and then ran a successful campaign for council in 2009.



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# GOP voice

McArthur's 'yes I can' philosophy puts her on path to leadership

By KRISTA S. KANO

Chardon Councilwoman and Geauga County Republican Chairwoman Nancy McArthur believes in a limited government. She believes in herself, and she believes in getting things done.

Mrs. McArthur grew up in Houston, Texas where family and church were the center of her life. Though her parents weren't political, she remembered conversations about Barry Goldwater from Arizona around the dinner table, and their social lives revolved around the church. Her parents instilled in her the importance of a limited government that interfered as little as possible, but Mrs. McArthur never thought of herself as a Republican.

"I was infused with an idea that we should do things on our own, that the government is there, but that we control our own destiny," Mrs. McArthur said. "I was the only girl and had three brothers, but I didn't see myself as not being able to do what my brothers did. Of course I could, and no one told me I couldn't.

"Of course, I was treated a little different by my father, but I was very headstrong, and I would always say 'Yes I can, Dad.'"

Her father, an electrical engineer by trade, was an elder in the Church of Christ, and when Mrs. McArthur was 14, he moved the family to New York City, where he was called to be a preacher in the church there. Mrs. McArthur ended up moving back to Texas and studied music at North Texas State University, now the University of North Texas. She eventually returned to New York City, where she met her husband, Michael, whose family owned a business in Chardon.

Mrs. McArthur's community involvement began when she and her husband returned to Ohio and purchased a home in Euclid in a beach club community. Mrs. McArthur became involved in the community's board and eventually became its president.

"I was always telling people, I'm happy to listen to your complaints, but unless you have a solution and you want to be part of the solution, I'm not going to let you come in and beat these people up," said Mrs. McArthur, 60. "Some people said, 'OK, I'll get involved,' and other people stopped coming to meetings."

Continued on page 42

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**Continued from page 41**

Around 1995, Mrs. McArthur, her husband and two children, Kelley and Keenan, moved to the Woods of Burlington in Chardon.

**“I became plugged into the community, as you do when you have kids in school. With my business background, I started questioning what’s going on in the city. I noticed that there didn’t seem to be any cohesion with the types of businesses and the architecture,” Mrs. McArthur said.**

Mrs. McArthur and her friends started talking about getting involved in the city government, and Mrs. McArthur applied to become a member of the Chardon Planning Commission. In the five years she served on the planning commission, Mrs. McArthur got to know local business leaders, city employees and council members.

“As I became more involved with the people in the city, I saw that there was some real dysfunction on council,” Mrs. McArthur said. So she decided to run for council, and hoped

to run as a slate with the then-incumbent Leslie Bednar, Chardon High School history teacher and football coach Mitch Hewitt and John Mallen.

“It was an interesting time on city council in 2009,” Mrs. Bednar said. “Council had struggled with several disruptive issues in the months before the election. I admired her for wanting to enter that arena. It was very different than her public service previously. I had worked with her on the planning commission as the council appointee and I admired her tenacity and her research. It was courageous for any non-incumbent to run for City Council at that time.”

The slate won the election and Mrs. McArthur got to work. In her first term, Mrs. McArthur was chairwoman of the Finance Committee, served on the Legislative Committee, and convinced council to do an audit that ended up identifying \$500,000 in savings.

“I think she found her voice,” Mrs. Bednar said of Mrs. McArthur’s first term. “She learned how to research so that she could determine what she believed was the best solution for the community. I saw value in what she brought.”

At that time, Mrs. McArthur also decided to become involved in the Geauga County Republican Party, and ran for state senate, District 32 in 2012 against incumbent Capri Cafaro of the Youngstown mall magnet family.

“(The party) gave me some support, but I ran my own campaign. She (Ms. Cafaro) still won, she won 2-1, but I made her show up and talk and work for it,” Mrs. McArthur said. “When you run for office you learn so much. You can read a book and talk to people, but unless you’re doing it, it’s not the same.”

The party then recruited Mrs. McArthur to run against John Patterson for the Ohio House District 99 seat in 2014, and she lost. That year, Mrs. McArthur also became the chairwoman for the Geauga County Republican Party, succeeding Ed Ryder who decided to not run for re-election. Early on in her chairwomanship, Mrs. McArthur worked to create a platform and revamp the bylaws for the party and recruit others to run for office, which she still does.

In all her work, Mrs. McArthur said she does feel an extra level of pressure as a woman in a field of mostly men.

“Men often don’t limit themselves. They fake it until they make it and we (women), don’t always do that. We need to do a better job of trusting ourselves,” Mrs. McArthur said.

“I don’t know if we put these limits on ourselves, or if we allow other people to limit us. It’s probably a little of both. It’s hard to see yourself in a role if no one else has ever done it before. I do hope that I am an encouragement for women to want to step up.” ■

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Photograph by Peggy Turbett

State Sen. John Eklund, R-Munson, discusses issues and interests at Beans Coffee Shop on Chardon Square. Sen. Eklund represents Ohio's 18th District, which covers Portage County and portions of Geauga and Lake counties.



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# Battling opioid crisis among important issues to Sen. Eklund

By RYAN DENTSCHIEFF

A little over six years ago, a lawyer who enjoyed simple things like landscaping and splitting wood at his Munson Township home, playing his trombone and spending time with his family, decided to enter the realm of politics.

In 2011, Republican John Eklund – an antitrust attorney for Calfee, Halter and Griswold, LLP, where he continues to practice law today – was selected to fill the state Senate seat vacated by Timothy Grendell, who was appointed by the governor to serve as the Geauga County Juvenile and Probate Court judge. Mr. Eklund then won the District 18 state seat during the election in 2012 and 2016.

District 18 covers all of Portage County, the majority of Lake County and parts of Geauga County.

Sen. Eklund, 62, gained inspiration for his political aspirations from GOP leaders

**“We had all heard about ‘brain drain,’ about young people leaving Ohio and the lack of opportunity. And in my case, it had become family drain. So I thought, while Gov. Kasich and Sen. Portman are talking about reviving Ohio and turning things around for our state, here’s an opportunity to perhaps be a part of that.”**

— Ohio Sen. John Eklund

including Gov. John Kasich and U.S. Sen. Rob Portman. But the struggling job market was the issue that hit home.

“It was at a time when between 2006 and 2010, my older daughter and her husband were compelled to leave Ohio, twice, be-

cause of a lack of opportunities here,” he said.

His daughter, Jennifer Cline, sought a teaching position, but moved to North Carolina due to better opportunities. She moved back temporarily when her husband, Tim, enrolled in law school. But after he graduated in 2010, when legal jobs here were few, the couple moved out of state again.

“We had all heard about ‘brain drain,’ about young people leaving Ohio and the lack of opportunity,” he said. “And in my case, it had become family drain. So I thought, while Gov. Kasich and Sen. Portman are talking about reviving Ohio and turning things around for our state, here’s an opportunity to perhaps be a part of that.”

The overall experience since joining the 33-member state senate, he said, has been uplifting. Working with dedicated lawmakers and helping people remain Sen. Eklund’s prime motivations.

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**Continued from page 45**

“It became very clear to me early on that everything that comes before us down there (in Columbus), everything that gets worked on in the legislature, is important to somebody,” he said.

“When you stop and realize that there are Ohioans who bring issues that are so important to them, to us to do something with them, it’s a very encouraging thing because it tells me that people in Ohio continue to have a measure of confidence in our system of government. They may or may not have any confidence in Eklund, or Kasich, but

they have confidence in our system of government enough to entrust their important things to us,” the state senator said.

He also has enjoyed the opportunity to meet and work alongside people who dedicate their lives to issues that the majority of people rarely think about or personally work to address, such as helping individuals with developmental disabilities, needs for behavioral health care, criminal justice, the environment and the opioid crisis.

“The list goes on and on, and it’s great to have this opportunity to see people so dedicated to trying in their own way to make

Ohio and our country a great place.”

He continues to work diligently on finding ways to address the opioid epidemic in which a record number of Ohioans including many in Geauga County have died from overdoses.

**Sen. Eklund said the best way to combat the opioid crisis is through educating youth, not simply about the dangers of the drugs but also “providing them with the tools they need to become responsible decision makers” later in life.**

State lawmakers are working with physicians, pharmacists, dentists and other medical professionals to find ways to reduce the need for prescription pain medication and at the same time allow patients to get the care they need.

Sen. Eklund was a sponsor of Senate Bill 319, which passed in the House and Senate in December of 2016, and added controls to drug laws.

Gov. Kasich signed it into law in January of 2017. Some key components of the bill include establishing a more structured registration and regulation system for opioid distributors, increasing accessibility to naloxone, an anti-overdosing drug and improving and expanding access to behavioral health treatment.

These efforts can only go so far, Sen. Eklund said, focusing on the importance of talking to children about the issue. Having the knowledge to make good choices now and later in life is essential, he said.

“My great concern remains, let’s suppose we get this opioid stuff under control, what’s going to be the next thing?”

Sen. Eklund’s term in the senate will end in 2020 and he cannot run again for the seat due to term limit laws.

He’s not sure about what challenge he will embrace next.

“Given the way I came into the Senate, I’ve since come to regard myself as the patron saint of ‘you never know.’ But what I do know is that I want to be purposefully engaged in something important to our community and to the state of Ohio.”

Sen. Eklund lives in Munson with his wife Meg. The couple have two daughters, Mrs. Cline and Amanda Kurzynski, who lives in Kentucky with her husband, Doug. The Kurzynskis have four children and the Clines have three, each with a set of twins. ■

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**Spinner's Good Time Diner**, 602 South St., is a '50s style diner with homemade cuisine, a jukebox and plenty of nostalgia. Open 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sundays. Call 440-286-1186.

**Maple City Taps and Eatery**, 11095 Chardon Road, has Cleveland-style BBQ with wings, pizza, shrimp and steak. Open 2 p.m. to 2 a.m. Mondays through Fridays, 12 p.m. to 2 a.m. Saturdays and 12-8 p.m. Sundays. Visit [maplecitytaps.com](http://maplecitytaps.com) or call 440-285-9953.

**Bass Lake Tavern**, 426 South St., features casually sophisticated dining with a menu including steaks, chops, wild game, seafood and homemade soups and desserts. Open 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sundays. Visit [basslaketavern.com](http://basslaketavern.com) or call 440-285-3100.

**Yangtze Chinese Restaurant**, 133 Main St., has standard Chinese specialties. Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and 11 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Call 440-285-3739.

**El Patron**, 301 Center St., is an informal cantina serving fajitas, enchiladas and specialty margaritas. Open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fridays, 12-11 p.m. Saturdays and 12-8 p.m. Sundays. Call 440-285-0702.

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**Square Bistro**, 205 Main St., is a neighborhood bistro featuring fresh, creative and unique cuisine using locally sourced ingredients. They offer handcrafted beers, specialty cocktails and a wide variety of wines. Open 4-9 p.m. Mondays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, with bar-only happy hour 4-6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Visit [www.square-bistro.com](http://www.square-bistro.com) or call 440-279-0101.

**Beans Coffee Shop**, 121 Main St., is a clas-

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**Joey's Italian Grille**, 209 Center St., fea-

tures classic favorites in addition to a gluten free menu including desserts. Open 4-9 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays. Visit [joeyesitaliangrille.com](http://joeyesitaliangrille.com) or call 440-279-0031.

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**Buckeye Chocolates**, 510 Water St., is a café with decadent chocolates, a full espresso bar, and a full breakfast, lunch and dinner menu that changes seasonally. Open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays. Visit [buckeyechocolate.com](http://buckeyechocolate.com) or call 440-286-5282. ■

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# Home for Holidays

Photographs by Peggy Turbett



Lily Ann Akos of Chardon savors her cocoa brimming with chips and whipped cream from the free hot chocolate in the Heritage House on Chardon Square.



A sweet fantasy of gingerbread and candy captivated Maddie Radabaugh, 3, left, and Neveah Elliot, 4, in the Heritage House on Chardon Square during the Home for the Holidays in 2017.

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*Belong to a rare gem in the heart of a small town.*

Thistle House Senior Living is an intimate family oriented community allowing residents to enjoy the comfort and dignity of a well-deserved lifestyle. This boutique setting offers various tiers of Assisted and Independent Living options.

526 Water Street • Chardon, OH 44024

For additional information, call

**440.313.2933**

## Country Living in the City of Chardon

The amenities, location and value you have been looking for in a community that feels like home.

- ❖ *Walking distance to dining, shopping and entertainment*
- ❖ *Suite designs include ADA bathroom, personal kitchenette and furniture inspired storage*
- ❖ *Executive Chef offering Farm to Table menu*
- ❖ *Housekeeping and Laundry Services available*
- ❖ *Options for RN care plan management*
- ❖ *Planned social, cultural and educational activities*
  - ❖ *Holiday celebrations*
  - ❖ *Indoor walking club*
- ❖ *Full array of Personal and Companion care options*
  - ❖ *Security of 24 hour staffing*



## From backgammon to bathing assistance this is home care.

We are caregivers. And more.

We all embark on times in our lives when we could use a little help. Whether you need support caring for a senior, an adult with a disability, a veteran, or a loved one who's recovering from a surgery or other health event, FirstLight™ Home Care is here for you. Our services include:

- Conversation & company
- Medication reminders
- Bathing assistance & hygiene
- Laundry & light housekeeping
- Transfer & posture positioning
- Eating assistance
- Mail & paperwork organization
- Meal preparation
- Shopping & errand services
- Continence & toileting care
- Oral hygiene
- Transportation & activities

Our extraordinary caregivers are extensions of your family who provide non-medical care in home, hospital or healthcare settings. When you choose FirstLight, you get more than a caregiver. That's because we also happen to be joke testers. Recipe tasters. Home beautifiers. Backgammon buddies. Errand runners. And so much more.

Schedule a complimentary consultation today.

**440-286-1342**

chardon.firstlighthomecare.com





# Need urgent care? Do your waiting at home with our online check-in service.

For a more comfortable urgent care experience at the Chardon Campus, simply log on to our free check-in service at [lakehealth.org](http://lakehealth.org). Select an estimated treatment time, and wait at home until your time to be seen. It's that simple!

(In an emergency, always dial 911.)

Powered by **InQuicker**.



## Chardon Campus Urgent Care Center

510 Fifth Avenue, Chardon, OH 44024

# 440-286-8908

Monday - Friday, 8 am - 8 pm

Saturday & Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm

[lakehealth.org](http://lakehealth.org)