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"Helping people to live, learn and work in our community"

Northeast School celebrates history

It has been a good run! Yes, in June, 2015, Northeast School will celebrate 41 years of history serving children who have disabilities.

It was September, 1974, when the school opened. It was the first school built by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, even before educational services for children with handicaps were required. At that time, the program was known as the Franklin County Program for Mentally Retarded and prior to the opening of Northeast School, services were provided in churches or unused public school space. In November, of the same year, Southeast School was opened in Groveport. In 1978, West Central School opened.



Official Groundbreaking Ceremony for Northeast School in 1972.



Northeast School in 1974.

Some will remember the former school locations that were used prior to use of the Board's newly built schools in the 1970s. Peace Lutheran Church, located on Clark State Road in Gahanna, was used prior to the opening of Northeast School. Other former schools located around the county were Thurber, St. Francis, First Avenue, St. Mary's, Alum Crest, Marburn, Medary, Holy Family and many more. St. Francis School served high school age students and burned to the ground one night, requiring a quick shift in locations.

Nancy Mosure led the way as the first Principal of Northeast School. Sam Geldis began as a teacher and later became the Curriculum Supervisor for Northeast School. Other Principals included Cindy Hyatt, Debbie Swinehart, Carol Rantala and the current Principal, Bonnie Ford.

The Superintendent of the Board was Stephen Pleasnick, who provided the final push to get the school built. Superintendent Pleasnick was hired in February, 1973. Dorothy Renner, Acting Administrator prior to the hire of Superintendent Pleasnick, presided over the groundbreaking in 1972 joined by state and county officials, including Dr. Roger Grove, Commissioner of the Ohio Department of Mental Hygiene and Corrections. Don Harlow, Assistant Superintendent supervised the construction process. Current Superintendent Jed Morison was a Supervisor of Special Olympics, Recreation, Aquatics and Physical Education for the Board at that time.

With a total of eighteen classrooms and additional specialized instructional areas, the school has served thousands of children over the years. Students as young as six and up to twenty-two, referred by local school districts, have been attending Northeast School for the past forty-one years.

Following the 2014-2015 school year, Northeast School building will continue to be used for adult services and current Northeast School Students will move to West Central School, located in the Franklinton area.

Thanks to outstanding staff over the years and a supportive Gahanna community, Northeast School has many wonderful memories.

It has been a good run!



Northeast School May 2015.

The early days

When Northeast School opened in September, 1974, it was the first county built and owned building for children with developmental disabilities. Previously all services were provided in leased or loaned space in churches and private or public schools.

Since that opening day, the neighborhood around the school has built up. The school opened with 18 classrooms serving students ranging in ages from six to twenty-one. Classes had 12-15 students at that time and services were under standards of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

In November, 1975, one year after Northeast and Southeast schools opened, Public Law 94-142 was passed by the 94th Congress of the United States. This was called the "Education of All Handicapped Children Act" and it led the way for Ohio to pass Amended House Bill 455, which was signed by Governor Rhodes in May, 1976.



Marjorie Petruzzi, third from left, was President of the Northeast Parent Group



Parents always played an important role with Northeast School.

Ohio's version of the "Education of all Handicapped Children Act" mandated that school-age programs of the County Boards must be chartered and under standards of the Ohio Department of Education. This also led to the requirement that all school districts provide or arrange for services for all children living in their district. The Franklin County Board could no longer accept direct referrals. Rather, referrals must come through the school district. Today that requirement remains, and now more and more services are provided by local school districts, providing neighborhood school options for their children with special needs.

As school districts have taken on more responsibility to meet needs of all students, regardless of handicap, and parents have demanded services in their local neighborhoods, the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Schools has continued to provide an excellent option for students requiring more intensive medical or behavioral services. In 2012, the Board decided to focus on transitional services for 14-22 year old children and young adults with emphasis on employment or other adult program preparation. These services will continue to be an alternative for school districts and families and will be provided at West Central School.

It is estimated that Northeast School has served over one thousand students through the years. Many have gone on to get community jobs or to receive services from the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities throughout their adulthood.

One graduation missed!

For the past forty-one years, commencement exercises have been held for students who graduated from Northeast School.

Just one problem - somehow one group finished their schooling with no graduation ceremony due to the confusion of opening Northeast School their graduating year.

When discovered, former Superintendent Steve Pleasnick and then Assistant Superintendent Jed Morison arranged for a special ceremony on December 20, 1995.

Pictured to the right is the 1975 graduating class of Northeast School. Their delayed graduation ceremony was held on December 20, 1995. Just 20 years late!!!



From the left: Former Superintendent Stephen G. Pleasnick, Lee Polock, Ken Armentrout, Pam Semon, Tom Knight, Steve Trouten, Lisa Amos and Superintendent Jed Morison. This was the first graduating class of Northeast School.

Salute to Northeast Staff

Northeast School has been fortunate to have outstanding staff members over the years. While we would like to recognize all staff that have played a part in the school's success, the list would be too long.

So, this salute is to staff names from the last staff roster at Northeast School, whose good work is representative of all staff that have guided our students over the years.

Special thanks to the Northeast School staff:

Bonnie Ford, Principal
Loretta Bankston, Instructor Assistant
Elizabeth Baumhackl, Instructor
Rebecca Beaudet, Instructor
Kelly Bowers, Instructor
Sue Boyers, Instructor Assistant
Mary Brooks, Instructor Assistant
Anita Brown, Instructor Assistant
Mary Butler, Instructor Assistant
Todd Cheek, Instructor Assistant
Megan Christy, Instructor
Stephanie Ciskowski, Instructor
Bonnie Dowell, Nurse
Debbie Finley, Instructor Assistant
Robert Garrett, Instructor Assistant
Patsy Gayle, Instructor Assistant
Ollene Grizzle, Instructor Assistant
Darleen Hayhurst, Receptionist
Susan Hedges, Instructor Assistant
Amy Hipple, Art Teacher
Gina James, Instructor Assistant
Kim Kesner, Music Teacher
Monica Klein, Instructor Assistant
Carla Lynch, Instructor Assistant

Marianne Male, Physical Therapist
Greg Marinelli, Maintenance
Julie McKnight, Instructor
Taylor McKnight, Instructor Assistant
Teresa Mulinex, Licensed Practical Nurse
Roberta Mully, Substitute Instructor Assistant
Jeanne Murphy, Instructor Assistant
Katy Rearick, Occupational Therapist
Richard Robertson, Behavior Support Specialist
Mary Sevy, Instructor
Shannon Shannon, Cook
Gretchen Shevelow, Physical Therapist
Sharon Skaggs, Support Instructor
Karen Smith, Psychology Assistant
Patrice Sorenson, Instructor Assistant
Anne Tipton, Instructor
Karen Toohey, Instructor Assistant
Molly Trunk, Instructor
Sherry Wade, Instructor Assistant
Carol Weaver, Cook
Christine Weaver, Instructor Assistant
Holly Wiseman, Language Development Specialist
Angela Wright, Substitute Instructor Assistant
Robyn Wright, Instructor Assistant



Northeast School Staff in May, 2015. Thanks for all your good work!

Gahanna supports Northeast

Since construction began in the early 70s, the Gahanna community has been a wonderful partner with Northeast Schools.

According to Superintendent Morison, support has been apparent and consistent from day one. "Whether it was the Mayors, Police Department, School System, City Council or the residents, they were all in our corner, the whole time."

Karen Angelou, former President and current Member of the Gahanna City Council was one of the first staff to teach at Northeast School. Superintendent Morison stated, "As a teacher, Karen was one of the best and since she retired she has continued to be a wonderful advocate for us."

As the story of Northeast School continues, Gahanna will continue to be a valuable partner. While the name of the building may change, the purpose will continue to be to support individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities values its partnership with the City of Gahanna.



Northeast School Choir, led by Karen Angelou, former Music Teacher and current member of Gahanna City Council.

Northeast School pioneers

Who were the 'pioneers' who were the first to move into Northeast School in September, 1974?

According to a staff roster printed at that time, here is a listing of the original staff:

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|--|---|
| <i>Nancy Mosure, Principal</i> | <i>Hattie Kirk, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Priscilla Allen</i> | <i>Donna Kirkwood, Clerk</i> |
| <i>Kitty Andrews, Teacher</i> | <i>Laurie Kozar, Teacher</i> |
| <i>Karen Angelou, Music Teacher</i> | <i>Dolores Lattimer, Speech Trainer</i> |
| <i>Mary Baker, Teacher Assistant</i> | <i>Dorothy Marshall, Teacher</i> |
| <i>Kathy Bernon, Art Teacher</i> | <i>Lucille Mathews, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Doug Blandy, Teacher</i> | <i>Raymond Mercer, Maintenance</i> |
| <i>Bill Bone, P.E. Teacher</i> | <i>Betty Merchant, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Sherryl Bourgeois, Teacher</i> | <i>Sandra Miller, Teacher</i> |
| <i>Eileen Bradel, Teacher</i> | <i>Mary Alice Morris, Aide</i> |
| <i>Sheila Breece, Teacher Assistant</i> | <i>Jim Opperman, Manual Arts</i> |
| <i>Violet Carr, Teacher Assistant</i> | <i>Martha Anne Palmore, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Melva Clark, Teacher</i> | <i>Arvella Patten, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Fred Cooley, Maintenance</i> | <i>Lyn Fishback Peters, Teacher</i> |
| <i>Mary Cooley, Teacher Assistant</i> | <i>Cam Reese, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Diana Cowgill, Teacher Assistant</i> | <i>Edna Strait, Cook</i> |
| <i>Eileen Cox, Teacher</i> | <i>David Titus, Maintenance Foreman</i> |
| <i>Vicky Craft, Teacher</i> | <i>Madeline Trouten, Cook</i> |
| <i>Margaret Curnatte, Teacher Assistant</i> | <i>Jerry Urse, Home Economics</i> |
| <i>Kathy Daniels, Teacher</i> | <i>Joellen Warner, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Juanita Francis, Teacher</i> | <i>Adalyn Watt, Teacher Assistant</i> |
| <i>Same Geldis, Teacher</i> | <i>Robert Wilder, Maintenance</i> |
| <i>Pam Gow, Teacher</i> | <i>Elizabeth Zimmerman, Teacher</i> |
| <i>Margaret Guttridge, Teacher Assistant</i> | |
| <i>Artha Jean Harris, Teacher</i> | |
| <i>Irene Henderlich, Receptionist</i> | |
| <i>Wanda Kennedy, Teacher Assistant</i> | |

Special thanks to these pioneers, who served as the first staff for Northeast School.

(Our apologies if we have missed anyone!)



Nancy Mosure, First Northeast Principal.

Dateline

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