

Dear Royer-Greaves Community,

A new year has begun, and we at Royer-Greaves School for Blind and Royer-Greaves Services have much to look forward to and accomplish. We will be focused on the future use of Lion Hall, growing our school program, improving our services and our campus, and planning the 2021 Centennial Celebration, to name just a few things.

But first, please join us in taking a moment to celebrate some of what we – students and adults, parents and teachers, volunteers, donors and administrators – accomplished together in 2018.

- The launch of Lifesharing, a residential option through which adults live with a family in the community, with support from Royer-Greaves.
- Facilities study and master planning. We have undergone an exhaustive study of our facilities and campus and have begun using the results to plan for the future needs of students, adults, and staff. Stay tuned!
- The purchase of our fifth community group home, which will allow more adults who need a little support to live their most independent lives and enable us to offer more respite care

for adults whose families or guardians need temporary help in caring for them.

- A new parent support group. This fantastic idea came right from several of our Royer-Greaves parents. The group meets regularly to support each other, brainstorm ideas, and have fun.
- Creation of new videos highlighting our programs. You can watch them on our website, www.Royer-Greaves.org.
- Expansion of our gardening program, fresh coats of paint on the walls of the Manor House and Adult Training Facility, spruced-up grounds, and much more were all achieved with the helping hands of volunteers.

We want to thank every member of our community who helped us achieve all of this and more in 2018. Let's work together to achieve more great things in 2019!

Sincerely,

Executive
Director
VICKY MAYER



Deputy
Director
DEBRA JEROME



Working Toward an Independent Life:

Royer-Greaves Junior Honors Her Skills at School and On the Job

Lia Berastain, 17, organizes stuffed animals in the toy section of Boscov's, talking and laughing as she moves giraffe stuffed animals and teddy bears into a neat display.

The Royer-Greaves School for Blind junior works at the Exton department store through the Discover Program, an internship-like program Royer-Greaves offers through its partnership with the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) and local employers. Lia, who has developmental disabilities and is visually impaired, hopes to parlay the skills she acquires into a full time job.

"I would love to have a job and my own money to buy food and clothes for myself. I plan on doing that by putting effort in my job and being independent," Lia said.

Fostering independence is central to Royer-Greaves mission, and Lia is well on her way, said Executive Director Vicky Mayer. "The hope is that all students at Royer-Greaves can one day become active, participatory citizens of their communities," Mayer said. "I see Lia on track with a very bright future."

Royer-Greaves School for Blind serves students ages 5.5 to 21, all of whom have a visual impairment along with at least one other disability.



Royer-Greaves provides academics, physical education, and instruction in the arts and music, all tailored for the students it serves. The Paoli school also provides specialized services that most other schools do not: music therapy, individualized nutrition and health assistance, and life skills and jobs training.

Lia landed her position at Boscov's after expressing an interest in retail to the people shaping her Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at Royer-Greaves and the CCIU.

Discover Program Vocational Specialist Joey Druecker and

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continued



Job Trainer Nanci Blum say Lia is excelling at work, and Royer-Greaves' education and support have been key to her professional development.

"Royer-Greaves practices pre-vocational training within their curriculum," Druecker said. "It has been great to see her progress."

Lia's determination and disposition make her a joy to work with, said Blum. "Lia is funny. She has a great smile, and I love how she wants to do well."

In Royer's Life Skills

Classroom, Lia practices folding and organizing shirts with the help of a special form. She also works with her teachers on professional presence, determination and task-solution stamina.

Before she became a teacher at Royer-Greaves, Moira McCarthy was a job trainer. She uses that experience to help shape Lia's training curriculum.

McCarthy "gives me great advice about my job," Lia said of her teacher. "She tells me that I can be awesome at anything, if I do what I have to do and do it how I have to do it. She corrects me and if I do something



wrong, she shows me how to do it in the right way."

Lia said McCarthy supports her in ways that go beyond school. "When I have a hard time with something, she just talks to me. She really understands me."

The appreciation is mutual. "It's motivating for me as her teacher to see how interested Lia is in learning and living independently," McCarthy said. "I have learned a lot from her."

While Lia enjoys the retail environment, her dream is to teach and play music for a living, and she is learning to play the guitar - just like one of her mentors and teachers, Royer-Greaves Music Therapist Suzanne Kane. "Suzanne has a great heart. She shows me a great example of how I should be. She shows me how to have more energy and be more positive. I would love to be like her when I grow up."

Lia believes the determination, dedication, and organizational skills she applies to Boscov's would serve her well in a music career or another job as well.

The successes Lia has already achieved are inspiring other Royer-Greaves students, Mayer said. "They hear her talk about what she is proud of and it encourages them to believe that they too can do the things that she does."

Congratulations to the Winners of the 2018 Jessie Royer Greaves Award



Four people were honored with the 2018 Jessie Royer Greaves Award, which recognizes extraordinary commitment and service to our school and its students and adults. The winners are:

Paul Kuntz of Malvern Security. Paul has donated his time and talent to Royer-Greaves for more than 20 years. He recently installed new smoke

detectors and alarms throughout Royer-Greaves.

Senneh Sengbe, Royer-Greaves Direct Support Professional and Lifesharing host. In addition to her role as a caring member of Royer-Greaves staff, Senneh is a pioneer in our new Lifesharing program, a residential option in which adults share the home of a community member. Senneh hosts Victoria Williams, a Royer-Greaves Lifesharing participant.

Lions Richard T. Taylor and Gus Meyer III. Richard, who is the Berks and Chester counties director of the Lions of Pennsylvania Foundation and Lions International past district governor, and Gus, who is a member of the Paoli, Berwyn, Malvern Lions and also a past Lions International District Governor, played huge roles in the Lions donations that enabled Royer-Greaves to purchase generators. Please see the related story on pg. 3.



\$15,000 Gift from Lions of Pennsylvania Foundation + Similar Donation from the Paoli, Berwyn, Malvern Lions Allows Royer-Greaves Group Home Residents to Literally Weather the Storm

Thanks to some generous Lions, the adults with visual impairment and developmental disabilities who live in a Royer-Greaves School for Blind residence can now weather power outages safely at home.

The Lions of Pennsylvania Foundation recently presented Royer-Greaves School for Blind with a check for nearly \$15,000. Coupled with a check from the Paoli, Berwyn, Malvern Lions Club, that money will fund the purchase of three electrical generators for group homes in King of Prussia, Drexel Hill, and Springfield.

The loss of electrical power, difficult for anyone, can be terrifying or even life-threatening for the visually impaired and developmentally disabled adults who live in the Royer-Greaves homes. In addition to visual and other disabilities, many have complex medical needs. "They have medicines that require refrigeration and medical equipment that needs power," said Royer-Greaves School for Blind Executive Director Vicky Mayer. "They have a limited understanding of what is happening around them, and relocating to another house or hotel can be a fearful experience. Limited mobility adds to the risk of transporting them during severe weather," she said.

The installation of the generators means that in a power outage, staff can continue to safely care and support residents at

home, with no interruption to the routine and care they need.

"Since 1925, when Helen Keller challenged the Lions of the world to be 'Knights of the Blind,' our mission

has been to help the blind and visually challenged," said Lions International Past District Governor Richard T. Taylor, who is the Berks and Chester counties director for the Lions of Pennsylvania Foundation. "The Lions of Pennsylvania Foundation provides matching grants to Pennsylvania Lions Clubs that allow the local clubs to fulfill our mission within their communities. Royer-Greaves' need for generators fits perfectly with the Lions' mission and goals."

This is not the first time that support from the Lions Club has improved the lives of students and adults at Royer-Greaves School for Blind.

"From our common purpose of serving those who are blind or visually impaired, a partnership arose and has continued to grow for decades," Mayer said. "What is most appreciated by me is the Lions' commitment to go above and beyond in their mission; where there is a need there is a Lion."



Support Royer-Greaves' Vision: Sponsor a Window

Royer-Greaves Manor House has some original windows and doors that are beautiful, but not as weather-tight as they once were. We want to preserve our history while lowering heating and cooling costs and looking out for the environment. The project includes rejuvenating 10 small, five medium, and 15 large windows, one large arched window, and six doors. The total cost estimate is \$10,500. Interested in participating? Choose the level that's right for you:

Ray: \$10- \$24

Moon Glow: \$25 - \$49

Starlight: \$50 - \$75

Sunshine: \$75-\$100

Visionary: \$100+



If you or your organization would like to sponsor a large window or door please call Executive Director Vicky Mayer at 610-644-1810 for details. Our donors will be acknowledged with a plaque.

Donations can be made via PayPal through the Royer-Greaves website, www.Royer-Greaves.org. Please write "Window Fund" in the "add special instructions" section. Checks can be mailed to Royer-Greaves School for Blind, 118 South Valley Road, Paoli, PA 19301. Please write "Window Fund" on the memo line.



We Couldn't Do It Without You

Royer-Greaves thanks everyone who donated to our 2018 annual fund drive or made a donation during our holiday open house. Through your generosity, we received a total of \$14,689. These donations help pay for supplies, equipment, and fun experiences for Royer-Greaves' students and adults. We could not do what we do, nor be who we are, without your support. Thank you!

Hands-On Fun From the Elmwood Park Zoo

Royer-Greaves School for Blind students made friends with some special guests from the Elmwood Park Zoo. The visit was not only super-fun, but the creatures with their various textures allowed for a fantastic sensory lesson, too.

