

Dear Royer-Greaves Community,

This fall, we finished our first year as Executive Director (Vicky) and Assistant Executive Director (Debra) of Royer-Greaves School for Blind.

Both of us took on our new roles after many years of working at Royer-Greaves in other positions. We are committed to honoring its many traditions, but also fostering growth and embracing new ways of serving our students and adults. We hope you'll enjoy reading about some of these things in this newsletter, including our new gardening program, a revamped communications campaign, and our growing student population.

Our successes are only possible because of the ongoing support of our dedicated staff and the vision of our Board of Directors.

One of our first shared goals was fostering a sense of teamwork, family, and shared vision across all of Royer-Greaves' services. We like to say there are many different departments and locations called Royer-Greaves, but there is only one Royer-Greaves.

If you are reading this publication, you are part of the one Royer-Greaves. Thank you.

Executive
Director
VICKY MAYER



Assistant
Executive
Director
DEBRA JEROME



New Students, a New Classroom, and Many New Experiences

Royer-Greaves School for Blind is investigating the feasibility of a new residential educational program for children with significant behavioral issues.

This new program, like all of Royer-Greaves, would serve children ages 5.5 to 21 who are blind or visually impaired and also have cognitive or physical disabilities. In addition, these students would have behavioral needs that cannot be met in a typical school environment.

Such a program would be more heavily staffed than our day school program and would include clinicians who focus on students' behavioral health. Behavioral program students would receive the same high-quality academic instruction, physical education, music and art instruction and other services that benefit day school students. However, students from the two programs would not be in class together. Instead, the new students will take classes in Lion Hall, where their dorm rooms will also be located.

The school decided to consider such a program after years of research and preparation, motivated by a dearth of schools that serve young people with this set of special needs.

"Royer-Greaves was founded to serve students whose needs were not being met elsewhere, and we would be so pleased to once again do just that with a program like this," said Vicky Mayer, executive director.

Other new happenings at Royer-Greaves:



■ Royer-Greaves School for Blind will celebrate 100 years of service in the year 2021, and we have begun planning our Centennial Year Celebration for the entire Royer-Greaves community! Stay

tuned for more details. We will also mark this milestone by developing a facilities master plan and launching a fundraising drive, both of which will enable us to support Royer-Greaves' multi-faceted mission in its second century.

■ We have launched a new residential option for Royer-Greaves Adult Training Facility participants: Life Sharing. Adults taking part in this option live with a family – sometimes their biological family, and sometimes another family that opens their home and hearts to them.

This setting provides permanent relationships

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Royer-Greaves In the News

- The Philadelphia Inquirer featured an interesting and informative feature story about our music program and the work of Suzanne Kane and Mr. Ron Curry.
- The Daily Local featured our Easter Egg Hunt, with its beeping eggs that students and adults found with their ears.



- The Daily Local ran a beautiful piece on our new garden program, a labor-of-love for the ATF adults, ATF Supervisor Domnic Odida, and Assistant Executive Director Debra Jerome.

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New Students, a New Classroom, and Many New Experiences *continued*

for adult participants and opportunities for them to develop the skills necessary to become more independent. The families receive training to help them best support the needs of the individual staying with them and a monthly stipend. As a result, biological families are better able to support their family member with special needs. Other families who open their homes to these adults also enjoy the rewarding experience of making a huge difference in a special person's life.

■ We are expanding our Royer-Greaves Gardener program! Assistant Executive Director Debra Jerome and ATF Supervisor Domnic Odida started the program for adults attending the ATF in spring 2017. It was so successful that we are adding more raised beds, opening participation to students as well as adults, and inviting members of the community to work with us as volunteers. Please see related story on page 3.



■ Do you own a local restaurant with adequate space between tables for wheel-chairs? Could your business use some help with simple tasks, such as folding

pizza boxes or planting flowers?

Royer-Greaves seeks more local business partners who are willing to welcome and work with Adult Training Facility participants. Our adults benefit tremendously from spending time in the community, learning new skills and socializing. We seek places that can accommodate a group of adults with special needs for lunch, or who could use Royer-Greaves adults' help in a task that will help them learn a new skill. Our staff remains present at all times.

■ We have a new life skills classroom in Peyton Hall! This is where students and adults will practice skills they need to live as independently as possible, such as setting the table, making the bed, cooking, and doing laundry. It is essentially a small studio apartment with a kitchenette, laundry area, and bedroom.

■ Royer-Greaves has a new bus for our education program. It's about the same size as our old bus, but it is designed to more effectively meet the needs of the participants.

These new programs and changes all fit within Royer-Greaves' mission.



Royer-Greaves In the News *continued*



- Brad Segall of the Philadelphia Agenda did a heartwarming and in-depth interview of Royer-Greaves moms Sandra Smith and Jatae Winkey-Posey, moms of Sonia Smith and Jala Winkey, respectively, for a Mother's Day radio show about raising children with special needs.

- The garden program will also be featured in the December issue of Pennsylvania Gardener.

- Daily Local columnist Bill Rettew wrote a lyrical piece about our music program.

To read these stories in their entirety, visit <http://royer-greaves.org/in-the-news/>

Reflecting on a Year of Accomplishments

In late 2016, Royer-Greaves School for Blind began a new marketing campaign to promote our school community and the ever-expanding services we provide our students and adults.

We've launched a state-of-the-art website that details our people and our programs, providing information for current and prospective parents, students, adults, and referral sources. We have also reached out to these audiences with postcards and carefully placed advertisements.

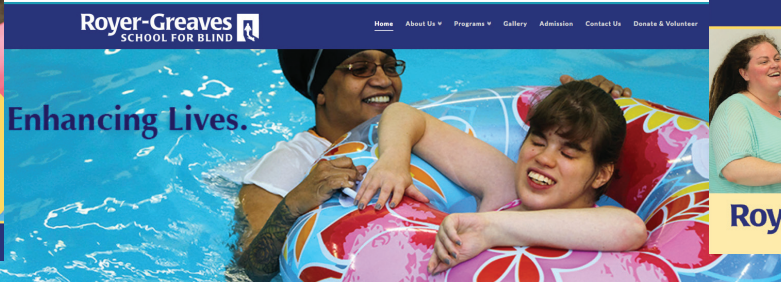
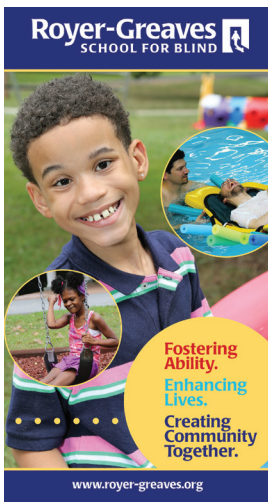
We developed a new strategy for reaching out to referral sources that resulted in tours and student placements.

Royer-Greaves strives to be part of the broader community. We did so this past year with our annual Holiday Concert

performance *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. It was our best-attended concert anyone here can remember! We have also reached a broader than ever audience through the media, which covered everything from our music program and new garden to our Easter Egg hunt. Please see "Royer-Greaves in the News" on Page 1.

Royer-Greaves honored our past, publishing a revised story of our founder, Jessie Royer Greaves. Please visit royer-greaves.org/our-history and click the photo of "Dr. Jessie Royer Greaves: Teacher, School Founder, and Education Pioneer" to read it.

Last fall's fundraiser raised \$20,000. Best of all, through all of these efforts and more, our school is growing. Since last fall, our student population has grown by more than 100 percent.



10-Year-Old Donates His Summer Earnings to Royer-Greaves

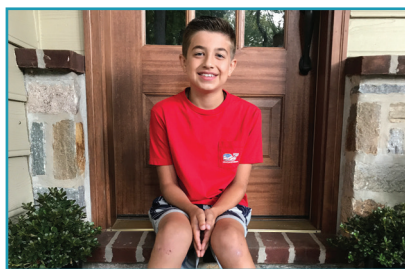
Evan Falcone, a 10-year-old Tredyffrin-Easttown Middle School fifth grader, spent the summer working beyond the daily chores his parents expect of him to earn money for his bank account.

But after a summer of weeding for his dad, cleaning the house for his mom, and not spending his birthday money, he decided to give the \$50 accumulated to Royer-Greaves instead.

"I want to share with people who don't have as much as me," said Evan. This was a chance to make a difference," he said, and making a difference felt great. "I felt like I did the right thing."

The path that lead Evan to this decision began during the summer when he and his mom, Debbie Falcone, went swimming at the local YMCA. Evan noticed another little boy who had some disabilities singing to himself in the pool.

That night when Debbie tucked Evan in, he asked his mom if she had noticed the little boy in the shallow end of the pool.



"The next day, he came downstairs with his money, and said, 'I want to give this to the people over at Royer-Greaves. They help people like that boy.'"

Evan learned about Royer-Greaves because his former elementary school, Beaumont Elementary, gives a concert there each year.

When he's not at school or doing chores, Evan plays soccer, basketball and baseball, runs track, and is learning to golf. He is a member of Boy Scout Pack 113 and enjoys reading about Lamborghinis, Maseratis, and other fast cars; collecting rocks and minerals; and traveling to new places. Evan hopes to one day play professional soccer for Futbol Club Barcelona.

"We are all so touched by Evan's generosity," said Executive Director Mayer. "He's done so much good at age 10. I know without doubt he has many great accomplishments ahead of him."

Vegetables and Skills Grew in our Campus Garden

Susan Collins gripped the handle of a gardening tool and, with a little help from her aide, tilled the soil in a vegetable bed at Royer-Greaves School for Blind. Minutes later, her sense of touch helped her find the right spot to plant a green bean seedling.

Collins and other adults in Royer-Greaves Adult Training Program also raised tomatoes, red and green peppers, and eggplants. They tended the garden daily, weather permitting. The harvest was good – so good, that it all got eaten! There was not enough left to make it to the East Goshen Farm Market this summer, but the goal is to make it there in 2018. The garden program itself will also grow next year, with new beds and more people – our school students! – participating.



The garden project was a chance to practice important skills while learning new things.



"They touch the soil to see if the soil is dry, and to determine how much watering is needed," said Royer-Greaves Assistant Executive Director Debra Jerome. "They are able to measure how much the plants have grown by placing their hands at the top and measuring against their bodies," she said.

"Some of our individuals didn't know the process of growing food, how a vegetable comes to be," said ATF Supervisor Domnic Odida. Learning to differentiate the plants, vegetables, and gardening tools by the way they feel adds to the list of objects clients can identify through touch, Debra added.

Want to Make a Difference? Donate or Volunteer!

Royer-Greaves School for Blind serves students ages 4.5 to 21 and adults 21 and over who are visually impaired and have other disabilities. We provide the education, training, services, and support to allow all our individuals to achieve the most independent and enjoyable life possible. We need your help.

Monetary donations are always needed and will directly support our students and adults. Checks to Royer-Greaves School for Blind can easily be sent with the included envelope. Donations can also be made through PayPal. Please visit royer-greaves.org/donate-volunteer and click the "Donate" button.

Gently used clothing and household goods, in "give-to-a-friend" condition, are also accepted. Please call first to see if we need what you have. Note: We do not need pianos.

You can also make a tremendous difference by donating your time. Royer-Greaves loves to host corporate community service projects! Our biggest needs include weeding our flower beds, painting, and grounds clean-up. But if your company team members have a special interest or skill, there's a very good chance we can use it here at Royer-Greaves. Call the school and ask for Executive Director Vicky Mayer for more information.

We also welcome individual volunteers to do similar work, or to work directly with our adults and students. Please note that volunteers who work with adults or students must have a background check and child abuse clearance, among other requirements. They will also be interviewed by the administration.

To inquire about volunteering or donating goods please call Royer-Greaves at 610-644-1810.

Learn more about us at www.Royer-Greaves.org



Mark Your Calendars for the Dec. 10 Royer-Greaves Holiday Concert!

At Royer-Greaves School for Blind, music is everywhere, every day. Royer-Greaves serves students and adults who have visual and other impairments. Some are non-verbal, and so music is their favorite form of expression. For everyone on campus, the universal language of music is a most powerful means of connection – regardless of age and ability, everyone enjoys the

shared joy of singing and dancing together. At 2 p.m. Dec. 10,

Royer-Greaves students, faculty and staff invite the public to share in this boundary-breaking musical connection with us at our annual holiday show. The event takes place in our gymnasium at 118 S Valley Road in Paoli and is free and open to all. Please join us!

