

Fall/Winter 2021

The Royer-Greaves COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Vol. 5, No. 2

Visit our website to learn more about Royer-Greaves.

Dear Royer-Greaves Community,

We had hoped to mark our centennial year and honor Jessie with a year of events culminating in a music festival – a celebration of the universal language that’s been part of the curriculum since our doors opened. COVID-19 made such gatherings impossible for all of us in 2020 and the students and adults we serve are too vulnerable even now. Whenever conditions allow, we **WILL** have our big celebration, and all of you are invited!

In the meantime, we have found safer ways to celebrate. One is our centennial web page, where information about future events will be posted: royer-greaves.org/celebrating-our-first-100-years.

Another is this newsletter, in which you will read about our past, present, and future.

Jessie Royer Greaves was thinking about the future when she founded our school. Those who followed her also were when the many programs we offer for adults were added. To quote our new Board President Ari Christakis, “As Royer-Greaves has always done, we will look for children and adults whose needs are not fully served and find a way to serve them.”

Today, we humbly ask you to honor and help advance that mission by making a donation of any amount to Royer-Greaves. To do so, please visit Royer-Greaves.org and click on the yellow “DONATE” button.

Thank you!

Executive
Director
VICKY MAYER



Deputy
Director
DEBRA JEROME



Celebrating the Past & Embracing the Future With Two Royer-Greaves Board Presidents

Royer-Greaves School for Blind begins its second century with a new Board of Directors president – local attorney Ari Christakis.

Ari takes the gavel from outgoing president Dan Green, who decided to step down after more than 25 years as board president. Dan, a retired senior vice president of sales and marketing for Malvern Federal Savings Bank, has been a member of the Royer-Greaves Board since 1967, serving for more than half of the organization's 100-year history. He will continue to serve on the board.

Dan was Royer-Greaves' third president and the first one not related to Jessie Royer Greaves, who founded the school for students who have visual impairment coupled with intellectual and other disabilities in 1921. It was under his leadership that Royer-Greaves expanded its mission to serve adults through Royer-Greaves Services. This includes the Adult Training Program, which offers training, various therapies, recreation, and other services at the Paoli campus, as well as community-based residential options.

Asked what has kept him interested in Royer-Greaves for so many years, Dan said, "It's mainly the clients that we serve and working with the wonderful Royer-Greaves staff. If you went down the roster of our employees, you would see that they

have also served for many decades, which is remarkable.”

Ari, the new Board President, is an attorney with Buckley Brion McGuire & Morris specializing in real estate, land use, and government practice and has been a Board Member for five years. He hopes



to lead Royer-Greaves in an expansion of the community-based services it offers. “We started our first 100 years in Paoli. Since then, we have expanded to offer residential group homes and Lifesharing opportunities for the adults we serve that are located throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. I see us at a point of transition where we will continue to broaden our regional footprint,” he said. “Royer-Greaves will continue expanding our services into the places where people already live.”

There will always be a need to bring people together outside of their homes for educational and other services, however, so some growth and change will take place on the Paoli campus, Ari said.

“As Royer-Greaves has always done, we will look for children and adults whose needs are not fully served and find a way to serve them. Filling the holes in our social safety net is what an organization like Royer-Greaves is meant to do.”



Incoming Board of Directors president Ari Christakis and outgoing president Dan Green.

A Brief History of Royer-Greaves

1874: Founder
Jessie Royer-
Greaves is born
in Trappe, PA.



1892: Jessie graduates from Ursinus College and gives the commencement address, "The Higher Education of Women."

1901: Jessie graduates from Emerson College of Oratory and excels in a public speaking career.

Early 1900s: After visiting a school for blind children, Jessie changes her career and becomes a teacher at a Philadelphia school for the blind. Learning that children who didn't score high enough on an IQ test were labeled "uneducable" troubled her deeply.



1921: Jessie opens Royer-Greaves School for Blind, the nation's first school for blind students who also have a cognitive disability. The school opens in Strafford, then moves to King of Prussia, and finally to its current location in Paoli.



Early Years of Royer-Greaves:

Jessie learns that many students whose IQ test scores were low had been so underestimated that they were never given a chance to learn.



She develops teaching methods to reach them with great success. Students live in what is now The Manor House, and Jessie also lives on campus. She told them stories, led them

“(Royer-Greaves) means a chance to come to work everyday. The school has made many changes through the years and we were able to adjust to it. RG made a big difference in my life, and being dedicated to what you do everyday.”

-**Ron**, former student and current Lifesharing participant and Music Department volunteer.

A Royer-Greaves Alum Thanks His School for His Success

Peter Morin worked in retail and food service until he retired, lives independently in his Boston apartment, and enjoys walks around his city, books, and visiting family – all things he’s achieved with skills he learned at Royer-Greaves.

Peter, who is now 69, has some vision in one eye and is blind in the other. He also has epilepsy. He was living with his parents and seven siblings in Caribou, Maine, when his mom and dad decided the best way for him to get the education and skills he needed for a successful life was to attend Royer-Greaves School for Blind in far-away Paoli, Pennsylvania. He attended the school and lived on campus, as many adult students did then, from 1963 to 1975.

“They helped me learn to use the sight I have better,” Peter said. “They helped me learn to cook, and other things I needed, so I can live by myself.”

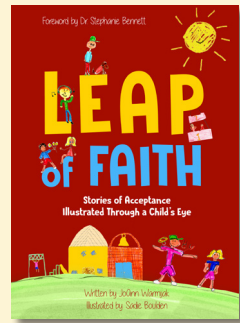
After leaving Royer-Greaves at 18, Peter found work at a Good Will store, and then as a dishwasher at a college, the job he held until he retired. He enjoys books on tape, having dinner at a local church once a week. He recently traveled to Kent, Washington, to spend time with sister Beverly Chahanovich, 68.

Beverly, 68, donates to Royer-Greaves because of the difference the school made in her beloved brother’s life. “What we didn’t know then was that our parents were going to die very young,” she said. “If Peter hadn’t had some training, some confidence building, and some encouragement to figure some things out on his own, it would have been so much more difficult for him,” she said. “He’s been living right in the city for 40 years by himself. He goes to the bank, he does his own grocery shopping. A lot of people can’t do that. I think the school taught him that he could do these things.”



Royer-Greaves Alumni Peter Morin, and his sister Beverly Chahanovich.

Royer-Greaves Parent JoAnn Warmijak Pens Anti-Bullying Children’s Book



JoAnn Warmijak and her son Mark, who attends Royer-Greaves’ Adult Training Facility, were outside a grocery store when a group of college-age boys hurled names at them from the open windows of their passing car.

JoAnn was relieved to see that Mark, who does not hear, was not looking at them and didn’t know what they said. That time, his feelings were spared. Hers, however, were not.

“I hurt for my son, and for the kid I once was, too,” she said. She had been bullied so much as a young teenager that she dropped out of school to get away from it. “I didn’t know what to say to my bullies, and I didn’t know



Author, JoAnn Warmijak

I could ask an adult for help,” she said. “I didn’t finish the 10th grade.”

Mark had also in the past been wounded by words.

To process her feelings and help others, she wrote the poems which evolved into the newly published book, “Leap of Faith,” which is now available through [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), and [Target](#) and elsewhere online. The book was published by Orison Publishers with the help of her friend, Dr. Stephanie Bennett. JoAnn and Stephanie agreed a child’s art work would best amplify JoAnn’s message, which lead to Stephanie’s granddaughter, Sadie Boulton, then 9, doing the work.



Illustrator, Sadie Boulton

JoAnn dedicated the book to Mark and is donating all proceeds to Royer-Greaves.

“I loved the playground, the merry-go-round and the swings. I loved performing for Royer-Greaves in different shows, like the bell choir, the men’s choir, mixed choir and the quartet.”

-Noel, former student and current Lifesharing and ATF participant

To Donate:

Honor the Royer-Greaves Legacy by Supporting Our Future

Every dollar donated helps children and adults who have visual impairment coupled with intellectual, physical, or developmental disabilities or autism to reach their full potential. To donate:

- Visit [Royer-Greaves.org](#) and click on the [DONATE](#) button to give via PayPal.
- Mail a check made out to Royer-Greaves School for Blind to:
Royer-Greaves School for Blind
ATTN: Controller’s Office
118 South Valley Road
Paoli, PA 19301
- To donate items or volunteer, please call 610-644-1810.

Thank you!

A Brief History of Royer-Greaves

(cont’d.)

in song, and was called “Mother Greaves.” The early curriculum includes math, Braille, social skills and employable skills, such as typing and furniture caning. Some students go on to college, others go to work.



1926 to 1962: Jessie’s work at Royer-Greaves is recognized by the State of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Association for the Blind, several universities and other entities.

1966: The federal government creates the Bureau of Education of the Handicapped.

1967: Jessie dies at the age of 92.



1970s and ‘80s: Society and federal law evolve. Many children with impairments similar to those of Royer-Greaves’ earliest students attend public school, and Royer-Greaves begins to serve students who need more intensive, individualized attention and education.

1989: The adult program opens.

1990: The Adult Training Facility is licensed.

2014: The first of four community-based group homes opens.

2016: On-campus dorms are closed.

2017: The Lifesharing program, through which adults share the homes of community members, begins.



2018: Work begins on a new strategic plan.

2021: Royer-Greaves completes its first 100 years of service.

