

Positioning for a new era *by Alice J. Kethley, Ph.D., Executive Director*

We're approaching a new millennium, one that promises an explosion in the elderly population and the inadequacy of support such as Social Security and Medicare.

Fortunately, The Benjamin Rose Institute is not alone in piecing together a solution. We will continue to work with many other organizations, both public and private, to meet the challenges.

We have proof that collaboration is a successful formula: the Fairhill Center for Aging, once an abandoned mental institution, is now a thriving campus of over 20 organiza-

tions that serve all types of seniors, (see note about the computer lab on the back cover), thanks to the partnership of BRI, University Hospitals as well as the member organizations.

In another partnership with HM Shared Services, we have seen how, after one year of operation, Concordia Care has helped over 50 people to remain in their own homes. These are people whose health and quality of life have been greatly improved and who were in jeopardy of being placed in a nursing home. As one participant's daughter said, "Concordia has given me my mother back."

HealthRays Alliance is evidence that there is strength in numbers: 20 long term care agencies in northeast Ohio with the common mission of improving the lives of the retired population have joined together to set the highest standards of quality care at the most affordable price to those we serve.

Partnerships between two or more organizations with similar missions can accomplish far more than a single agency in the quest to guarantee quality care for the elderly and their caregivers.

As a single organization, we at BRI recognize the needs of Cleveland's aging population that require partnership and collaboration in order to



Kethley House is the first building at Benjamin Rose Place, bordered by Fairhill Road (left) and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Trustees and staff envision Benjamin Rose Place as providing a "continuum of care" for older people: a range of housing and activities that will allow people to age in place.

form an adequate safety net for the larger population. We also recognize BRI has a charge it must fulfill to its own clients and constituency.

In response to that, we have expanded our community services through At Your Call-B.R.I., which allows people to choose as-needed home care. We also built a new nursing home and are now ready to embark upon further development of Benjamin Rose Place.

To meet the new millennium, we must continue to envision the needs of the future aging population, strive to meet the existing needs of older individuals and their families and build on the lessons we have learned in the past.

It is our goal to work both with other organizations, individuals and their families, as well as internally, to provide leadership into the 21st century. ■

Also in this issue...



See who met
Charles
Lindbergh
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Meet each
of our new
trustees
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AIT? Find
out! Page 7

● Going above and beyond in resident care ...

Dr. Nadine C. Bruce, the medical director at Kethley House at Benjamin Rose Place, recently became a Certified Medical Director (CMD) in Long Term Care. Only 1,206 physicians have earned this certification since 1991. The CMD program was created to enhance medical directors' role in long term care, which includes nursing, hospice and subacute care facilities. The program recognizes that medical directors have both clinical and administrative roles. Dr. Bruce, director of Metro Medical Associates at MetroHealth Medical Center, will be recognized at the upcoming American Medical Directors Association's symposium in Florida.



Nadine C. Bruce, MD, MACP, CMD

● **First of its kind study ...** A study of BRI's Margaret Blenkner Research Center is trying to determine whether or not managed care insurance can be improved by offering additional support services to families of people with Alzheimer's disease. Support services include support groups, care planning and educational material. The four-year project is being conducted with Kaiser Permanente, the Cleveland chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, University Hospitals' Alzheimer's Center and the University of Connecticut's School of Medicine. The project is funded by the Cleveland, Bruening, Prentiss and Abington Foundations. David M. Bass, Ph.D., is the principal investigator of the project's evaluation.

● **Join mailing list for free seminars ...** The Mental Health Program of the Community Services Division has sponsored educational presentations on mental health issues affecting older people. Speakers are psychiatrists, some of whom consult with Benjamin Rose Institute staff on client cases. Presentations are held monthly on alternating sides of town. They are free and open to professionals and the public. Forums cover topics such as how an older person's mental health can be affected by medications, and mental health issues related to older African Americans. To be placed on our mailing list, call Jo Cramer at **216/791-8000**.

Alzheimer's disease not the only cause of memory loss

Excerpted from a "Coming of Age" column by BRI librarian Karen McNally Bensing. "Coming of Age" appears every other Sunday in the Plain Dealer.

Forgetfulness is frustrating but not uncommon among people of all ages. Your memory worsens if you are tired or have too much to think about. And you just may not be good remembering certain things—like people's names.

Those with serious memory disorders have poor memories of recent events although they have excellent recollections of the past. While you will eventually remember the name of a person who said hi to you at the mall, people with Alzheimer's disease probably never will.

The National Institute on Aging estimated 4 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. However, Alzheimer's disease is not the only condition that causes memory loss.

Huntington's disease (a hereditary disorder), Korsakoff's syndrome (related to alcoholism), AIDS dementia complex and multi-infarct dementia (small strokes) all affect memory. Major strokes, head injuries and depression can impair memory as well.

Some memory impairments are treatable. Certain medications can cause forgetfulness that

disappears if the drug is discontinued or the dosage adjusted. Malnutrition, dehydration, and thyroid disorders can also produce confusion and memory changes.

It is important that older people experiencing memory loss seek medical help to determine the cause.

Suggestions for helping a person with memory loss:

- Keeping busy helps people maintain their abilities and independence, and can prevent depression.
- Talking to people with Alzheimer's disease is essential to making them feel included. Nonverbal communication methods such as pointing or nodding can be helpful.
- A gentle touch, a smile and hugs often communicate your feelings better than words.

Regardless of the cause, support groups for both families and the person with memory loss can be helpful. You may want to check with your local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. The national Association's web site (www.alz.org) has lists of facts and locations where you can find support. ■

Remembrances

of BRI clients, Kethley House at Benjamin Rose Place residents, and former trustees

Marie Reeves has been a Kethley House resident since August 1997. She was born May 8, 1905.

I was born in Cairo, Illinois, but grew up mostly in St. Louis and Indianapolis. I was the youngest of seven children. We were a very close family.

When I was nine, there was a riot. I don't know what started it, but it was tragic to see a man who had been involved. He came to our house, he was bleeding, and told us



My son Herman lived on the next floor of my apartment complex.

we better move. Our neighbor was a dear white woman and she wouldn't let them bother our house. We went across the river to St. Louis, and the Red Cross helped us.

Unfortunately, my father died when I was 11. My mother and I lived together; we were so close.

One day when I was 15, I was on my porch, and this boy who lived at a boarding school came by to talk to me. My mother told me I was too young to have company. But she loved Louis. He was full-blooded Zuni Indian; my mother was part Cherokee.

We started dating, and a year later we were married. We had Herman and two years later, Vivivion.

My sister Octavia started having health problems. We moved to Cleveland so I could help take care of her. Louis didn't feel very accepted, though, and moved back to his reservation in New Mexico.

Later, my mother, my sons and I moved back down to St. Louis. She took care of the boys while I went to work. I worked in a clothes-making shop and cleaned houses.

One of the houses was Mrs. Morrow's, the mother-in-law of Charles Lindbergh. I was there when he came back after flying to Europe. It was quite a party, let me tell you!

During the war I worked in the factory where they made airplanes. My boys were in the service. Herman was stationed in Iwo Jima. Vivivion became a first sergeant. I got a letter from President Clinton when he died a few years ago.

I met Thomas Reeves, who was a mortician, through a friend. We liked to go dancing and to the cabaret. His family—he had five sisters—had a lot of parties.

Thomas died in the 1960s. Around that time I was working at a hair salon on Chagrin. This other woman

and I were asked to appear in a fashion show. We had an autumn fashion show on Northfield Road,



I never dreamed I'd be chosen for modeling. I was thrilled!

and did some other shows. I believe we helped open up the way for black models in the stores.

I worked at the hair salon for 15 years. Then I had a heart attack. To make matters easier, a customer asked me to run her antique store.

Herman died two years ago. I still can't believe he's gone. He and I lived in the same building. Both of my sons were very well-liked.

I try to stay active in my church. It's non-denominational; I have friends of all races and religions. I used to be the church "mother" because I'd speak to young people. Mrs. Solomon was the financial secretary there, but I call her my daughter. A lot of other friends from the church visit me as well.

My great niece and other family members, including my niece from Thomas' side, send me pictures and visit when they can. They're wonderful. ■



Celebrating one of my favorite holidays at my former apartment.

We welcome our new trustees!

The Benjamin Rose Institute (BRI) welcomes three new trustees who bring important expertise to the board.

Being a BRI trustee is a role laden with commitment and responsibility.

Trustees are expected to attend monthly full-board meetings. In addition, there are monthly committee meetings through



Donna Rego

which trustees offer guidance to the staff

in various departments. Trustees serve in other capacities as well.

Donna Kelly Rego is an organizational specialist who helps nonprofit and religious organizations create ways to increase their effectiveness. She is the chairperson of The MetroHealth System and is a former pastoral associate of St. Malachi Church. She holds many leadership posts in the community, and has received numerous honors for her achievements.

Leigh Fabens is a doctoral candidate in English at Case Western Reserve University,

where she has been a teaching assistant. She has served as board chair of Hawken School and is the former director of the Cleveland District of the Met Opera National Council Auditions.

W. Susan Dempsey is vice president of operations and marketing of University Mednet. She has 17 years of health care experience. She also has training and education in clinical laboratory technology and is



Leigh Fabens and Susan Dempsey

involved in several community activities.

And we bid farewell and wish our best to two committed trustees, **Louise P. Dempsey** and **Beverly Sload**, who are leaving our board. ■

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Home Care Aide of the Year



Lillie Sams was named *The Benjamin Rose Institute (BRI)'s 1998 Home Care Aide of the Year*. Aides provide vital personal care and housekeeping services to older people in their homes. Special guest at the recognition was former aide administrator **Odellia Robinson**, who left BRI to become a Cleveland city councilwoman. From left: Ms. Robinson, BRI executive director **Dr. Alice Kethley**, Ms. Sams, director of clinical operations **Eileen Wallenhorst**, and aide administrator **Mary Lou Bender**.

Memorial and Tribute Gifts

We are pleased to acknowledge the continued generosity shown through the Memorial and Tribute Gifts, which provide ongoing support for the Institute's direct service to clients, regardless of their financial resources. Following are gifts received between November 1 and December 31, 1998.

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Dr. Alice J. Kethley

Ms. Polly Clemo

Wish List

Following are items that can greatly enhance the care we provide clients of the **Adult Day/Partial Hospitalization Program**. The program helps older persons with dementia, mental illness or retardation, or developmental disabilities:

- 
- hand chimes
 - two CD players for simultaneous music therapy groups
 - an aquarium big enough for clients to see the fish.

Please call **216/621-7201 x207** to make a donation.

Why people give

Many of our donors have been helped by our caring staff. Even those who haven't can see by the letter below how The Benjamin Rose Institute can help families through a difficult time:

"Enclosed is my donation ... Your social worker went way beyond 'the call of duty' in her care and concern personally for my mother. She visited my mother in the hospital. And she helped me research nursing homes since my mother could no longer live in her own home. Her involvement made the whole process much easier, especially since I'm an only child. I am grateful to her."

—Mrs. B.

Your gift helps us help others!

Take part in a new research study

The Margaret Blenkner Research Center is seeking participants for a new research study, “Health Care Choices and Decisions in African American Families.”

Participants must have a physical or mental impairment, live at home, and have a non-paid caregiver helping them.

The project seeks to identify what factors affect how African American families choose and provide health care for their elders who suffer from physical or memory impairments.

The two-year project was funded by the AARP Andrus Foundation. Senior research associate Carol

Whitlatch, Ph.D., is the project investigator.

“To our knowledge, no study has examined the process of decision making in everyday care situations with both the family caregiver and the impaired adults,” she says.

“This is the first to examine that process in African American families.”

Participation will include:

- one or two interviews with mentally and/or physically impaired adults (interviews will be confidential);

- one 2-hour interview for family members who help the client the most;
- payment of \$25 to everyone who is interviewed;

“This study will be the first to examine health care decision making in African American families.”

- no use of participants’ names in the study’s quotes and results.

For more information, contact Dr. Whitlatch or project coordinator Shandra Tucke at **(216) 621-7201. ■**

Tuition reimbursement pays off

When Sonja Ferrell came home from work, she just wanted to sleep. But the kids wanted to play, dinner had to be cooked. And then the stack of books awaited her.

“It was hard, but I’m glad I did it,” says Ms. Ferrell of becoming a licensed practical nurse (LPN) at Kethley House

at Benjamin Rose Place. “Ever since I was little, I wanted to be a nurse.”

She became an LPN with the help of The Benjamin Rose Institute (BRI)’s Tuition Reimbursement Program. Previously, she had been a nurse assistant.

Ms. Ferrell’s co-worker, former nurse assistant Toni Marshall, was also promoted to a position she now cherishes after getting an associate’s degree with the help of the Program.

As Kethley House’s medical assistant, Ms. Marshall says, “It’s such a rewarding job. I love working with the doctors, and I’ve learned so much. I know how to remove a cast from someone’s leg, I can read X-rays and

comfort hospice patients and their visitors.”

Since 1995, the Tuition Reimbursement Program has helped 35 other BRI staff members with their schooling in order to enhance their careers or job skills. Eligible staff can receive \$500 annually toward their tuition. Participants have been both managers and direct-service employees from Kethley House, the Community Services Division, the Margaret Blenkner Research Center and BRI’s administrative division. The Program has a two-fold payoff:

- employees who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to quit;
- clients, residents and their families feel that better, consistent care is provided by familiar faces.



Sonja Ferrell, LPN, prepares a resident’s medicine. She plans to resume her schooling to become a registered nurse.

(continued on next page)

My life as an AIT by Sr. Frances Flanigan, H.M.

Do you know what an AIT is? No, it doesn't stand for Always in Trouble or Alien in Town.

It stands for Administrator in Training in a program mandated by the State of Ohio for individuals who aspire to be nursing home administrators.

I am probably luckier than most because I was able to come to Kethley House at Benjamin Rose Place under the direction of administrator Jerome Weissfeld.

Kethley House is the residential and rehabilitative services division of The Benjamin Rose Institute (BRI), which has cared for the elderly in the greater Cleveland area for over 90 years.

Kethley House was named by BRI's trustees in honor of Dr. Alice Kethley, the agency's current executive director.

I began my new life as an AIT on October 1, 1998. I was assigned to work with the admissions coordinator to learn how an individual becomes a resident (someone who is there for long term care) or a patient (someone receiving rehabilitative or short term care) at Kethley House. I followed the prospective patient through the social worker's interview where vital information was solicited from the patient or the family.

Most families were pleasantly surprised to see Kethley House, a brand

new facility that opened in March 1997. Inside Kethley House, one is reminded of a village street in France or Italy as one sees the flowers in window boxes.

Although most people didn't know what an AIT was, I received a warm welcome from all, including Frosty, a white dog with his own name/photo badge.

I saw firsthand the loving, compassionate care given by the nursing staff to the patients. I saw the calm, persuasive actions of therapists helping patients to learn to walk again or to recover the use of an arm.

I attended many of the activities provided by the staff from bingo games to bowling, from welcoming visiting musicians to quiet one-to-one encounters.

I was privileged to attend church services of many diverse denominations and saw the joy and happiness experienced by all the participants.

I have been on the units at midnight when all is quiet. I have been there at six o'clock in the morning when the house awakens to a new day.

I have learned many things—many details that will only reappear in the



Sr. Frances Flanigan, H.M.

final examination. The real lesson I have learned is that there are many loving people who minister to the sick and elderly with genuine devotion.

That is the learning I treasure the most and which I will take with me when I leave Kethley House at the end of March. ■

Tuition reimbursement (continued from page 6)

The seeds for the Program began five years ago with the help of trustee Nancy Rome and several staff members. Now a cross-divisional committee oversees the Program.

As for Sonja Ferrell, she plans to continue working on 3 South, Kethley House's unit for residents with medically intense needs.

And she plans to return to school to become a registered nurse. Her supervisor, Barbara Bahniuk, believes she's a natural for such a career move. "Families want to see someone who's at ease in taking care of their loved one. Sonja has that calmness."

Ms. Ferrell knows the Tuition Reimbursement Program can again help her. ■

The *Bulletin* is produced three times a year by the Development and Marketing Department of The Benjamin Rose Institute:

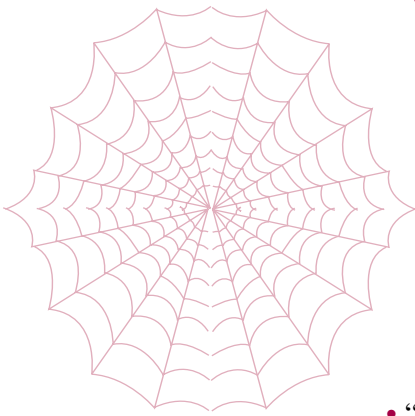
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Visit our newly reconstructed web site!

We've changed the look of and information on our site to better suit the wide range of people we can help. This includes older people and their caregivers, students, social service professionals and researchers. New House Communications (www.newhousecom.com) designed the site. What can you expect to find? Here are some highlights:

- “What Should I Do?” An **interactive bulletin board** that lets older people and caregivers alike post their suggestions about accessing help.
- **Volunteer** opportunities and profiles of current volunteers
- **Links** that can help everyone from older people to caregivers and nursing home administrators. Find out what the easiest VCR for an older relative to use is (www.seniorfriendly.com), or gather statistics from the U.S. Administration on Aging (<http://pr.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/stats/statpage.html>.)
- A collection of on-screen and downloadable, **reader-friendly information**, such as Facts of the Month, Checklist for Choosing a Nursing Home, Questions for Choosing Home Health Care, How to Avoid Fraud, and “Why do I have to take so much medication?”

Future expansion:

- Reviews on books related to growing older, by BRI librarian and award-winning *Plain Dealer* columnist, Karen McNally Bensing
- Updates on the development of Benjamin Rose Place
- and more. Visit frequently!

Getting technical

The Fairhill Center for Aging's senior computer training lab—staffed entirely by *volunteers*—is doing such a booming business that volunteer instructors and coaches are needed for the Intro to Computers courses.

Orientation and training are provided. Weekly hours are flexible. For more information, call **(216) 421-1350 ext. 136.**

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