

From the desk of President & CEO Orion Bell

Ribbon Cutting

The average temperature in Cleveland in January is 35 degrees.

It was a little colder than that on January 22. We went outside anyway.

Just over two years ago, Benjamin Rose launched major renovations at Margaret Wagner House. This multi-million-dollar project included many upgrades to the 65-year-old building: a new roof, elevators and HVAC systems. There were upgrades to plumbing, lighting and electrical systems, and improvements to common areas, laundry and office spaces. New flooring, the restoration of the main entrance and the regrading of the entry drive have made the building more accessible. More importantly, the renovations included the addition of twenty apartments, expanding the number of affordable housing units for older adults living in Cleveland Heights. Existing units were renovated and upgraded as well, with new appliances, cabinetry, countertops, flooring, finishes, paint and color schemes.

On Wednesday we celebrated the completion of the project with an open house and ribbon cutting. There were tours of the building and the apartments. A few hardy souls even braved the cold for a ribbon cutting at the front entrance. It was a celebration of our mission and our commitment to older adults. I think Margaret Wagner would have been proud. [Read the full blog.](#)



Winterlicious Cooking Class and Tasting Event

Winterlicious is back again to spice up a dreary winter night! Master Chef Mario Reyes of TRIO Community Meals is hosting an exclusive Cooking Class and Tasting at Benjamin Rose Headquarters on Thursday, February 27 from 6 – 9 p.m. This in-person event allows you to observe Chef Mario as he cooks five different courses for you. Participants receive recipes for all dishes served, tasting portions, wine pairings and the opportunity to engage with and ask Chef Mario cooking questions.

Seating is limited, so purchase your ticket today! Regular tickets are \$125 and include all five tasting courses and wine pairings. VIP tickets are \$200 and include seating in the first two rows, so that you can see Chef Mario up close. [Get your tickets!](#)

Sponsor Winterlicious! Sponsorship and advertising opportunities for Winterlicious help support the mission of Benjamin Rose while showcasing your company. [Download the sponsorship prospectus.](#)



Benjamin Rose Announces New Board Leadership

The Benjamin Rose Board of Directors has appointed Belva Denmark Tibbs as Board Chair and Dr. Kathryn Bryan as Vice Chair, effective January 1, 2025, for a two-year term.

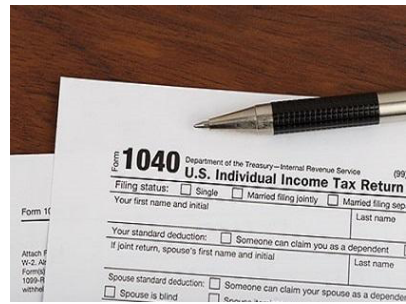
Denmark Tibbs and Dr. Bryan bring diverse expertise and a strong dedication to community service and philanthropy, making them invaluable additions to their respective leadership roles.



Denmark Tibbs retired from HealthSpan (formerly Kaiser Permanente) after a distinguished 25-year career primarily overseeing operations as a senior executive. She has served as board chair of the Saint Luke's Foundation and is currently a member of the Ideastream Public Media board. Throughout her career, Denmark has been recognized with multiple awards for her dedication to community service and mentoring youth.

Dr. Bryan began her career as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Cleveland Clinic, Case Western Reserve University, and the Cleveland VA Medical Center before transitioning to financial planning with Skylight Financial Group. She specializes in working with a diverse client base, including physicians, research scientists and families with special needs, as well as businesses in transition and LGBTQ families. Dr. Bryan has served on multiple boards, including Medina Creative Housing, Renee Jones Empowerment Center and A Place for Us. Currently, she is on the executive board of Connecting for Kids and serves as an advisory member for Solon Community Living.

The Benjamin Rose Board of Directors consists of 24 women, continuing a tradition established at the organization's founding in 1908. Founder Benjamin Rose included a provision in his will mandating that the agency be governed by an all-female Board, a directive that has been faithfully upheld throughout the organization's history. [Read more.](#)



Free Income Tax Preparation

Need help filing your taxes? We can help you get your refund—usually in two weeks—through our drive-up tax service at our headquarters at Benjamin Rose. You can stay in your car while our IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers perform this valuable service for you. Se habla español. There are two ways you can schedule your appointment: visit www.refundohio.org or call 211 to use the automated system. [Learn more!](#)

Aging in Place

Our FREE Aging in Place: Know Your Housing Options course is designed to assess our homes for safety, accessibility, and affordability; explore ways to use home equity to stay in our homes; and discover housing options. [Learn more!](#)

This course is a three-part series. This registration is for the following days, from 1-2:30 p.m.:

- February 4 (Tues)
- February 5 (Weds)
- February 6 (Thurs)

Join Orion Bell to Learn More About Benjamin Rose

Interested in learning more about the programs and services of Benjamin Rose? Join us on **Wednesday, February 12 at 9 a.m.** for Second Wednesdays with Benjamin Rose. Benjamin Rose President & CEO, Orion Bell will provide an overview of the many programs we offer and discuss how you can get involved in our work. [Register now!](#)



Homebuyer Education

Are you interested in buying a home but not sure where to start?

Our FREE HUD-approved homebuyer education class can teach you the important basics of the home buying process. We will provide you with the knowledge you'll need to secure an affordable mortgage and buy the right house for you. [Register now!](#)



This course is a four-part series. This registration is for the following days, from 6-8 p.m.: February 24 (Mon), February 25 (Tues) and February 26 (Weds).



Financial Education Workshops for Older Adults

Our FREE financial workshop series for older adults is back! Join us virtually every day from 2 - 3:30 p.m. from **February 24 - 28** to take charge of your finances before they take charge of you. [Register now!](#)

Topics include:

- Recognizing & avoiding elder financial abuse, scams & fraud
- Preparing for the future
- Budgeting, goal setting & saving
- Taking control of credit & debit
- Benefitting from benefits

Volunteer Opportunities

Meals on Wheels Driver

Volunteers are urgently needed for our Meals on Wheels program to deliver meals to homebound older adults, either in their own car or as a rider in one of our meal delivery trucks. Volunteers pick up meals from our Margaret Wagner Apartments and deliver to older adult's homes throughout Cuyahoga County. Various shifts are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. [Learn more.](#)

Tax Preparation Volunteer

With no previous experience required, you can help Benjamin Rose in preparing free personal income taxes. In this position, volunteers help to file free and accessible tax returns for middle to low-income participants at one of our free tax clinics between February and April as a part of our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). You can help by volunteering to be a tax preparer or a tax site greeter. [Learn more.](#)

Resources for Caregiving

Visit our Resource Library to find tips and useful information for caregivers.

Each month, we add new content to help caregivers manage a loved one's care, navigate challenges and take care of themselves. Recent articles explore topics such as [Medicare's GUIDE program, navigating cold, flu and Covid season and winter household maintenance.](#) [Find resources.](#)



Staff Notes

Orion Bell, president & CEO, authored an op-ed for cleveland.com titled [Pharmacy benefit manger reforms will help protect older Americans](#). Orion also participated in a panel discussion hosted by Untied Way and the Sound of Ideas on [accessing services for older adults in Northeast Ohio](#).

Jessica Bibbo, PhD, research scientist, presented *Sharing Our Lives with Pets: Benefits, Challenges and Opportunities* for the Beacon Hill Village and Boston Public Library.

Lisa Weitzman, MSSA, LISW-S, ASW-G, C-ASWCM, director of strategic partnerships, presented *The Role of Family Caregivers in Hospice Care: Why They Matter and How to Support Them* for the Hospice of the Western Reserve. Lisa was also interviewed for an article in the Cleveland Jewish News titled [Cleveland are fosters community-focused living for seniors](#).