

A publication for the friends and families of Cray Youth and Family Services, Inc.

**Office: 44 South Beaver St.
New Castle, PA 16101
(724) 654-5507
www.CrayYouth.org
www.ConfluenceCoffee.org**

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HARD WORK, PERSERVERANCE AND FOSTER CARE

At a young age I would think to myself that I wanted to be better than what was sitting in front of me, but then realizing my circumstances I thought I may never get there. I had so many people doubt me, they doubted my capabilities, my drive and my want for a better life.

I unfortunately spent a lot of time in a residential treatment facility at no fault of my own, surrounded by people who wanted better for me. People who encouraged me to do my best, to go for the gold. So, I worked hard and I'd study for hours and slowly my grades improved. I could feel the changes, I could see the future. However, something was missing and that was a FAMILY. So, here comes Foster Care. When I was younger I had spent some time in Foster Care, but it was never the right fit. But this time would be better. This time I had Foster Care workers who knew me, knew what I wanted and needed. Who cared about me! They found me a family, a big family and MY family. Suddenly, I felt inspired to do great things and I worked so hard to take a path that would lead me in the right direction.

After a year of living with my family, I asked them to adopt me and they said yes. Finally at 17, I had my forever family. One who will support me, love me, encourage me, pick on me, and include me forever. I graduated from High School with a 3.9 GPA and then I was accepted into Indiana University Culinary to pursue my dream.

I now have a future! I have a family! I have Parents that will be grandparents to my children! I have a Brother and three Sisters. I'm one of the lucky ones, I have forever!

Please, if you have ever considered being Foster Parents remember that this is what the future could look like for the child you bring into your home.

Sincerely,
Michael



From The Director...

Here we are already summer, how did everyone enjoy the rain we have been getting? I heard someone say to me recently, “ Spring was on Thursday this year, right??” Well, anyway, I digress. We here at Cray have many exciting plans for our kids this summer including Pirate games, Kennywood trips, cookouts, retreats, swimming, and hopefully just enjoying outside activities in the community. I hope you take the time to read about all the great things going on in our programs. Between Project Search, Cray Challenges, Cray Education Center, and our Independent Living Program, we had 31 students receive their high school diplomas. Congratulations to both our students and the Cray staff that helped to propel these youth to successful outcomes! With our fiscal year coming to an end, I am proud to report that we were able to make strides towards more fiscal soundness despite this being Cray’s first year under my direction. I must attribute much of this to the many of you who have been steady contributors to Cray’s mission whether through your “Time, Talents, or Treasure”. I also want to thank all Cray Staff for all their hard work which without them, Cray could not have achieved all it has in my first year at the helm! It has been truly an honor and a dream come true to be able to serve as the leader of such a tremendous organization with so many remarkable staff and kids. The future looks very bright for Cray’s twenty plus programs and the incredible impact that Cray can continue to have on our community. Have a great summer and hope all that spring rain is behind us!

Don Kemerer



Independent Living Activities

As some of the school based programs are winding down, Independent Living is kicking into summer gear. We began by celebrating the success of six high school graduates. Life Skills classes are now underway. Some of the scheduled presenters include representatives from the Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County, Children’s Aid Society, Lawrence County Drug and Alcohol and LCCAP. We are also participating in college tours at Thiel College, SRU, PSU Shenango, Geneva College, BC3, Clarion University and Westminster College. A select few will conclude the summer by attending the Statewide Independent Living Retreat for a fun filled week at the University of Pittsburgh’s Johnstown campus. We hope everyone enjoys their summer. Before you know it, it’s back to school time!

Continued Mission

As some of you are preparing for your summer vacations, you might be upgrading your luggage. Please consider donating it to Cray. We have made it our mission that the youth we serve will never again transport their belongings in trash bags. Any new or used luggage in good shape would really be appreciated and put to good use.



Cray Mentoring Program

1-2-1 Mentoring &

Compeer Youth Lawrence County

44 South Beaver Street

New Castle PA 16101

Phone: 724-654-5507

Fax: 724-654-5546

Email: Craymentor@gmail.com

1-2-1 / Compeer Youth Advisory Council Members

Chip Rickenbach: Chairperson

Chris Cunningham: Vice Chair

Don Hollerman: Treasurer

Jane Fobes

Miriam Gwin

Michelle Locke

Bernie Muckian

Ashley Carr

Michele Kelly –Thompson

Carla Krisuk

Vickie Thompson

1-2-1 / Compeer Staff

Director: Allisyn Wolfe

Case Worker: Tiffany Wellman

Currently Serving:

42 Volunteers and 75 Youth

1-2-1 is funded in part by:



**2019 Bowl-A-Thon
Raises Nearly
\$25,000!**

On April 7, 2019, Cray's Mentoring Programs (1-2-1 Mentoring and Compeer Youth Lawrence County) held our Bowl-a-thon fundraiser at **Colonial Lanes** in New Castle. The event raised nearly \$25,000 to support our programs. We had 35 teams participate this year from our community. We also had 12 of our community based mentoring matches come out to bowl, and several of our kids who are waiting for a mentor were able to join us as well! Special thanks to **DayStar Marketing** for the T-shirts and signage. When they weren't busy bowling, participants visited the auction (**featuring items donated from over 50 individuals and businesses**), danced to music provided by **Neal Hinterlang**, had caricatures drawn by **Robin Mudrey**, or took silly photos thanks to **Gary and Meg Williams Photobooth**. In addition, all bowlers enjoyed food and drinks donated by **Pizza Joe's, Sheetz, Walmart, Dallas Hartman, and Giant Eagle!** We cannot thank our community enough for the consistent support of this event over the years- All of the funds raised stay right here in Lawrence County and cover nearly 25% of our annual operating expenses!



THANK YOU TO OUR BOWL-A-THON EVENT SPONSORS!

Treloar & Heisel **Mutual of America**
AFSCME Local 2902 **Gwin Brothers Transport Inc.** **Berner International**
Clen-Moore Presbyterian Church **New Castle Rotary #89** **New Vision Pioneers**
Preston Auto Group **Silgan Closures** **First National Bank** **Allegheny Petroleum**
Human Services Center **Packer Thomas** **UPMC Jameson and UPMC Horizons** **Wesbanco**
New Castle Kiwanis **Mack and Cathy Parrott** **Flynn's Tires and Auto Service**
New Wilmington Kiwanis **Wampum Hardware** **GNC Community FCU** **New Castle Kiwanis**
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Lakeland Chrysler Jeep Dodge **In Memory of Betty I. Baker** **Maureen Chiafullo-Haid, Realtor**
David A Domenick Investments **Luxenberg, Garbett, Kelly, and George**

Congratulations, Graduates!

When High School Graduation and College Graduation rolls around, some of our mentoring matches close, but that doesn't mean the relationship is over! Many former "Matches" continue on as friends after graduation. We congratulate our volunteer **Keely Flynn** on her graduation from Westminster College. We also celebrate the graduation of High School Volunteers **Grace, Kaitlyn, Tyler** from Neshannock High School and **Alex, Shannon, and Danielle** from Mohawk High School.

Our volunteers aren't the only ones graduating- a BIG congratulations to Aliya, Haliagh, and Paige on your High School graduation! All three young ladies have been in our program for a long time and developed amazing relationships with their mentors over the years. We are beyond proud and excited to see what the future hold for each of you!

Happy Anniversary!

1 Year

Welcome New 1-2-1 and Compeer Matches!

Amy and Allyonna

Katie and Adrianna

Alice and Hailey

Michelle and Shyanne

Mario and Brandon

Lindsay and Gionna

Joe and Chris

Allisyn and Kasie

3 Years

Jen and Angelina

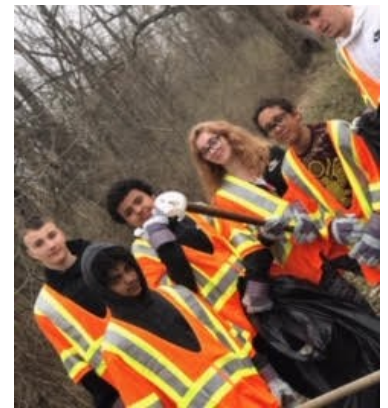
CRAY EDUCATION CENTER

At this time of the year there is a phrase that often comes to mind, "Hard work is like paint, it covers up a lot of mistakes". Every spring in late May we take time to celebrate the completion of 12 years of school at the Confluence in downtown New Castle for Cray Challenges and Cray Education Center. For 20 high school seniors their hard work has been rewarded with a high school diploma. Friends, families and classmates gather to join in the opportunity to take one more moment to recognize the achievements of the young people. The keynote speaker was Diamond Christian, herself a graduate this spring and an alumnus of Cray Challenges. Her speech focused on learning to appreciate the impact of adults in our lives and to not take things for granted. Each student's teacher offered a few words about each graduating senior. It was a morning filled with smiles and happy tears. These are the moments that pass quickly, but mean so much to the people who love these young adults!

As Cray's education programs grow we sometimes forget to mention and appreciate our staff of 23. Any success we see is because of the love and caring these people bring to our programs. This year alone we welcomed five big-hearted souls. These included teachers Kesha Coleman and Anthony Sainato, aides Ron Howard and Demond Davis-White and a transfer from another program in Cray, Abby Stambul. We have enjoyed their efforts and look forward to spending many years with these wonderful people. Sadly, we are losing Suzanne Murphy who is moving full-time into the Truancy program. She has been a shared employee for the last year or two.

As usual our students participated in several community projects including working with the Neshannock Municipal Building crew to clean many miles of roads of clutter and trash. Countless students volunteered their time to help beautify local area. Also, without fail, our students continued our tradition of cleaning Pearson Park for the 18th straight year. This is a bi-annual project with we work in conjunction with the park staff.

Please have a safe summer and hope to see you all safe and rested in August!



PROJECT SEARCH

The Project SEARCH program which serves Lawrence, Beaver and Butler counties, graduated seven students in June. Program Director, Don Kemerer, oversees the UPMC Jameson initiative which is open to students ages 18-21 who are intellectually challenged or who have autism. Participants of the program learn skills to equip them to find jobs in the community at competitive wages. Eight new students will join the program in the fall.

Members of the Project SEARCH Class of 2019 are, front row, from left, Andrew Martin, Susan Bond and Laura Stark; back row, Jaxon Sevier, Mark Seamans, Nicholas Tanner and Paul Beck.

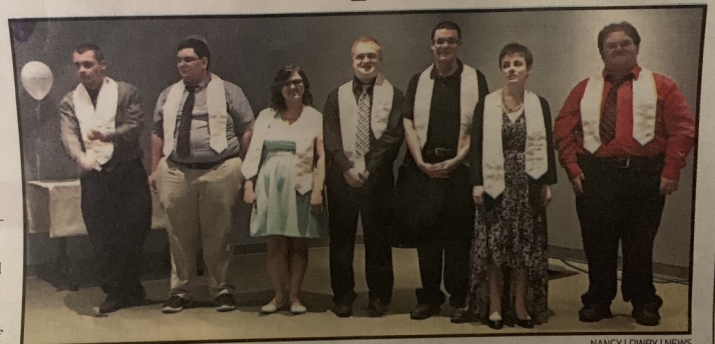
Students graduate from UPMC Jameson program

BY NANCY LOWRY
NEW CASTLE NEWS

The "Magnificent Seven" graduated last night to the applause of friends and family who saw them through their yearlong program.

Don Kemerer, executive director of Cray Youth and Family Services, called the night at The Confluence "an exciting evening, but a bitter-sweet one too. We're happy that you have completed the program, are graduating and moving on with your life and to new jobs, but we'll miss you," he said.

Al Boland, vice president of operations at UPMC Jameson and UPMC Horizon, said class members Paul Beck, Susan Bond, Andrew Martin, Mark Seamans, Nicholas Tanner and Paul Beck.



Members of the Project SEARCH Class of 2019 are, from left, Nicholas Tanner, Paul Beck, Susan Bond, Andrew Martin, Mark Seamans, Laura Stark and Jaxon Sevier. The seven had their graduation program last night at The Confluence.

NANCY LOWRY | NEWS

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FISHING FUN DAY

On June 1, eighty-seven kids from all Cray programs, along with families, staff and mentors, participated in the annual fishing fun day sponsored by the Coachman's Club. Every child affiliated with Cray was provided with a free fishing rod and allowed to fish their private stocked ponds. Volunteers helped with baiting hooks, giving pointers and releasing fish. They also offered a meal to all who were in attendance. What a great opportunity for everyone. Thank you, Coachmen's Club, for making life better for our Cray kids.



TRUANCY PREVENTION

Truancy Prevention Program 2018-2019

Truancy Caseworkers, Kristy Wansitler, Rob Colich, and Lynn Hailstock continue efforts to improve school attendance in school age children of the community and surrounding school districts through various interventions, family engagement, monitoring, and school and provider collaboration. Suzanne Murphy has joined the team as Truancy Supervisor in August 2018. The program currently serves 18 families, which includes 23 children.



The Confluence

Planning a party? The Confluence is a great place for gatherings large & small. Manager Patty McCann offers custom catering designed to satisfy your personal tastes. Private parties can be scheduled for any day of the week (even outside of our regular business hours). Enjoy a private room for up to 85 people or book the entire café and enjoy the comfort of our main dining area. Call now to reserve your date: (724) 698-7604.

We hope you'll visit us this summer during the free summer concert series at the adjacent Riverwalk Park. We will be selling our famous pizza outside during these events!

Cray Youth and Family Services, Inc.
44 South Beaver Street
New Castle, PA 16101

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New Castle, PA
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BE A SUPERMAN TODAY AND HELP MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR KIDS

As Cray transforms for the future to meet the growing challenges that face kids and families in Lawrence County, we need your help! Please consider a donation to Cray.



YES, please accept my contribution of \$ _____

Please designate my contribution to assist:

_____ 1-2-1 Mentoring _____ Where Most Needed

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please make checks payable to Cray Youth & Family Services

*All donations, monetary & in-kind, are tax-deductible.

_____ Please check here if you do NOT want your donation publicly acknowledged.

Donations can be made online through
JustGive.org by visiting our website:
www.CrayYouth.org/donate
(credit card fees and processing charges are
deducted from gift online)

What's in your will is a testimony of what is important to you. When thinking about giving, an ultimate gift is one that will last. Please consult your attorney or tax advisor when considering your estate planning.