

# The Safe Haven Way

A publication of Safe Haven Farms, Butler County, Ohio

Fall 2020

Greetings from picturesque Safe Haven Farms! Life here on the farm has been a welcome retreat from some of the uncertainty over the past several months, prompting our staff and farmers to explore new ways of enjoying the simple pleasures of daily life. Our gardens and greenhouses produced an abundance of fresh vegetables and beautiful flowers, the horses and the alpacas enjoyed munching on plenty of green grass, and the morning hikes along our trails provided an energizing start to a variety of daily activities.



With this seemingly idyllic setting, there was still something missing – time with family and friends, celebration of our favorite holidays (Easter, Independence Day, Mother's/Father's Day), special outings to restaurants, the YMCA, and community celebrations. As the months slowly passed by, we discovered that ordinary occasions have now become extraordinary. The parents of our farmers have indicated how sad the past several months have been without the regular contact they were accustomed to, but with the use of technology, many have found a new way to connect with their "farmer." As restrictions lifted, short outings to visit loved ones slowly made their way back to the farm.

Safety for the residents, day participants, and our Choices staff are of great importance, but still Covid-19 found its way to the farm with 2 individual cases. Thanks to the quick actions of staff members and around the clock care, the virus did not spread and both patients made a wonderful recovery. We are grateful for the dedication of Choices in Community Living, our service provider, and the adjustments that have been made to provide essential care and programming at SHF – they are our heroes.



The past nine months have been challenging and have brought changes to our farm, yet, through it all, **we have remained committed to our mission to provide a caring community of choice for adults with disabilities.** Due to the unpredictability of COVID, fundraising events have been changed or postponed and other sources of revenue have greatly decreased or are simply no longer available.

**Your renewed support will assist Safe Haven through this critical time, so that all programs can be fully maintained and the lives of those we serve can be positively impacted. A gift from you will provide necessary resources to carry out our mission to those we serve today and those we will serve in the days to come. Together we can look with hope to the future.**

**Thank you!**

*Janie Cochran, Executive Director, Safe Haven Farms*



Thank you to those who made a donation in memory of Jena Botting, Choices/Safe Haven Farms caregiver who passed away in 2018. She was loved by so many on the farm and her presence is certainly missed. In April 2020, her memorial bench was placed at the farm with a wonderful scenic view of the houses and the tree lined backdrop.



*Spring 2020 Newsletter Correction – Thank you Gary & Marlene Dukart for supporting SHF. Our apologies for not including your name in our previous newsletter. We appreciate your gift to Safe Haven Farms.*



# Safe Haven Farms Welcomes First Executive Director

By Pam Lockwood, Safe Haven Farms Board President

The Board of Directors at Safe Haven Farms is excited to announce the hiring of our first Executive Director, Janie Cochran. Janie comes to us from PARACHUTE: Butler County (CASA) Court Appointed Special Advocates where she was their recruitment and development specialist. Her work experience includes volunteer recruitment, fundraising event coordination, grant writing, community outreach, marketing/social media and public speaking. She is a graduate of Morehead State University and has previously worked as a high school home economics teacher and a fabric and color specialist.



Janie serves as an active member of the Middletown Chamber of Commerce, UCBMA, Hamilton Joes Board of Directors, Power of the Purse Giving Circle and has been an advisor to Miami University's Chi Omega chapter for 20 years. She resides in Hamilton with her 2 children Chloe, a recent Miami University graduate and Gabriel, who participates in Project Life at Butler Tech.

We were thrilled that Janie had familiarity with farming. She grew up on her family's dairy farm in Kentucky and stated that she wants the Safe Haven "farmers" to have the continued opportunity to share meaningful experiences much like she remembers from her time on the farm.

Janie has quickly been taking on operations and functions which the Board has carried for the past ten years. She is getting to know all the residents and she is often out and about the farm taking pictures of their activities and interacting with the Choices staff. The virus has prevented Janie from meeting all of the parents and engaging in the holiday activities we normally have throughout the year, but we are hoping that changes soon. We are delighted Janie is here! **WELCOME Janie!**

## Walk On for Special Riders went Virtual this year!

By Leslie Odioso, SHF Board Secretary

Safe Haven Farms has weathered many changes this year brought on by a global pandemic. Fortunately, no one had to worry about the weather for this year's fundraising walk! **"Walk On for Special Riders,"** benefitting the equestrian program, was all virtual, held in late September. Participants signed up to walk, run, ride, or bike from any city, state, or location they chose. All were invited to submit pictures by email of themselves in their SHF walk t-shirt enjoying their activity. We received photos from supporters in California, Washington State, and Central Park in NYC as well as families on a walk in their neighborhood or local park. Back on the farm, the SHF residents and Choices staff held their own safely distanced walk followed by refreshments, rides by the miniature horses, and fun time with the alpacas. Safe Haven Farms greatly appreciates the support provided by our corporate sponsors, walkers and team sponsors, and PATH sign contributors.



### Our mission thrives because of YOU!





## Fall Photo Gallery



## Fresh from the Farm

By Denny Rogers, SHF Board Treasurer

The temperature is dropping, the leaves are almost gone and another growing season at Safe Haven Farms draws to a close. The harvest was bountiful from April through October, but things were definitely different this year due to COVID restrictions. Gone were the day participants and community volunteers

to help with the work of the garden. Gone, too, was the popular vegetable stand outside the Pendleton Art Center in downtown Middletown where vegetables were sold, and friendships were made.

Yet in spite of the unique challenges, our horticulture program continues to flourish and grow. Under the leadership of Mike Rogers, the on-site residents were able to continue to support the gardens. Instead of the weekly farm stand retail outlet, he started a very popular Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. With the CSA, ten customers signed up for a full season of vegetables from the farm and received their overflowing box of vegetables from the harvest each week. One satisfied customer wrote *"All of the produce has been beautiful with a nice variety and it's been so much fun to see what comes in my box each week. Thank you so much for sharing the fruits of your labor!"*



Due to the increasing community interest in buying locally, the gardens of Safe Haven Farms are continuing to grow and provide more work opportunities for our farmers and expand our impact. We received grants in 2020 from the Middletown Community Foundation, the Butler Rural Electric Community Connection and a gift from an anonymous donor through the Hamilton Community Foundation which has allowed us to convert our large pole barn into a vegetable processing space and farm store. Here we will be able to significantly increase our capacity for growing seedlings under grow lights in cold weather to get a head start on the outdoor growing season in our gardens and hoop houses. The building modifications are nearly complete and include a large heated and air-conditioned space for more seedling carts and planting tables, sinks for cleaning and processing vegetables after harvest, counter space for assembling weekly CSA orders, and a large cooler for storing vegetables

before they are sold. There is also a small farm store planned where the community can come to buy vegetables if they can't make it to the weekly vegetable stand in Middletown.

Our horticulture program meets a community need for locally grown produce and provides meaningful activities for our farm residents and day participants. But it would not be possible without the many individual and foundation donors who support our programs and the community members who purchase our produce. We hope the COVID restrictions will be improved by next spring and with our increased capacity we will be able to expand our CSA program and resume our vegetable stand in Middletown in the spring of 2021. If you would like to volunteer to help with our gardening program, please contact us at [volunteer@safehavenfarms.org](mailto:volunteer@safehavenfarms.org).







**Safe Haven Farms**

Mailing Address: **NEW!**

P.O. Box 62034

Cincinnati, OH 45262

Street Address:

5970 No Mans Road

Middletown, OH 45042

[www.safehavenfarms.org](http://www.safehavenfarms.org)

### Halloween Comes to the Farm

Great day to celebrate one of our favorite holidays – *Halloween!*

Socially distanced trick or treating, awesome hayrides, and a photo booth for those who like to ham it up. Costumes this year went from the traditional to the unique. A great time was had by our farmers and staff, while the horses and alpacas wondered how they could join in the fun. Taking time to celebrate holidays and the change of seasons keeps spirits high and positive feelings all around.

