



MSSSG

Mountain Shadows Support Group

Mountain Shadows
Community Homes
Mountain Shadows
Special Kids Homes
Mountain Shadows
Outreach Services

WINTER ♦ 2008

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You Can Help Us Build Our Own Small Piece of Shangri-La

“I’m sure there’s a wish for Shangri-La in everyone’s heart. And I know that secretly, everyone is hoping to find a garden spot where there’s peace, security, where there’s beauty and comfort.”

LOST HORIZON BY JAMES HILTON

James Hilton’s novel *Lost Horizon* describes an imaginary paradise on earth, a secluded hideaway of great beauty and peacefulness. Now, thanks to a generous contribution by clinical psychologist, Dr. Mark Schindler, Mountain Shadows is well on its way to creating its own small piece of Shangri-La for its hard-working staff.



Site of the future “Shangri-La”

We all know our Mountain Shadows employees are very special. They work long hours, performing unglamorous, physically and mentally demanding tasks to ensure our residents receive only the highest level of care. The decisions they make often affect quality of life issues, sometimes life and death issues. For the most part, they receive little recognition for all they do. Often, to be honest, they could choose other less challenging, less stressful, and higher paying careers. Yet, they choose Mountain Shadows. Why? Time and again, our staff tells us it is because of their commitment to, and love for, our residents.

As a non-profit organization, our funding is limited, so it is often difficult to find the resources to recognize our staff for their dedication. This is where Dr. Schindler enters the picture. Mark has been a consulting psychologist at Mountain Shadows for more than 12 years. He and his dog, Thumper, are well-known members of the extended Mountain Shadows family. “I enjoy working with the residents and staff,” says Mark. “Working with the residents is very rewarding. Many of them are not able to communicate their needs verbally. In a way, I get to act as Sherlock Holmes. We have to figure out, through the client’s behavior, what they are asking for. All behavior is meaningful.” Also meaningful to clients and staff is Thumper, who has been joining Mark on his

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Amanda Bryant of Palm House Moves from Childhood to Childhood

“You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. I have heard the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.”

BLACK ELK, HOLY MAN



Amanda

Everyone at Mountain Shadows Palm House knew when Amanda Bryant came home. “When I heard the front door hit the wall,” says Stacy Miller, Mountain Shadows Director of Health Services, “I knew Amanda was home. She sometimes threw the door open so hard that things fell off the wall. She was just letting everyone know that Amanda was in the house.”

When Amanda, a Native American from the Peoria Tribe in Oklahoma, first burst through the front door of Palm House in 1996, she brought with her the spirit of her ancestors. Tom Brown Jr., whose Native American name was The Tracker, once said of his Indian forefathers, “Indians learned to be patient observers like the owl. We learned cleverness from the crow, and courage from the jay, who will attack an owl ten times its size to drive it from its territory. But above all of them ranked the chickadee, because of its indomitable spirit.”

Amanda shared the indomitable spirit of the chickadee. Though physically and mentally challenged, she knew what she wanted and usually got it. “Amanda always sat in the same spot at the dinner table,” says Stacy. “I remember one day I was sitting in her spot at the table doing some paperwork. I had papers spread all across the table. Amanda came in and stood right next to me, just looking at me. After awhile, I asked her if she would sit in the chair next to me, so I wouldn’t have to move all of

my papers. Amanda just stood there and kept staring at me. Finally, I got up, moved all of my papers, and sat in another chair. Amanda immediately sat down in her chair, looking quite satisfied. She had her spot and I just had to laugh. That’s the way it was with Amanda—she was always telling me how to do it, not me telling her!”

Clara, Palm House DCS (Direct Care Staff), shared a similar story. “Amanda knew what she liked and what she didn’t like – and sometimes we would get her dressed in the morning and later return to find her sitting with another top and we get her dressed again, then return only to find her with another top again!”

An Indian Holy man once said, “Out of the Indian approach to life there came a great freedom, and intense and absorbing respect for life, and the principles of truth, honesty, generosity, equity and brotherhood.” Amanda exemplified this approach to life. While Amanda was highly spirited, Miriam, DCS, says, “She was the sweetest girl in Palm House. She laughed a lot and made all of us in Palm laugh a lot.”

Indian Chief Maquinna said in 1818, “Once I was in Victoria and I saw a very large house. They told me it was a bank and that white men place their money there to be taken care of, and that by and by, they got it back with interest. We are Indians and we have no such bank; but when we have plenty of money or blankets or other necessities, we give them away to other chiefs and people, and by and by they return them with interest, and our hearts feel good. Our way of giving is our bank.” Laughter and an easily shared smile were Amanda’s ways of giving back with interest—and it made all of our hearts feel good. Jaimee, DCS, adds, “Amanda was always

Please see AMANDA on page 6

Gabriel House Offers Global Vision for Disabled Children's Care

It was on an outreach mission into the migrant camps of the Oaxacacan Indians that Ted and Renie Faver began to see the horrors endured by the handicapped children of Mexico. Said Renie on the Gabriel House website, "The disabled children crawled through the dirt and mud unable to walk. They often fought with the camp's dogs over scraps of food. They were dirty and neglected. They were a shame to their families who thought that to have a child like this was a disgrace. They were abused in terrible ways."

When Renie and Ted heard about a small, disabled boy who was being kept chained in a cage by his parents, they knew they had to investigate. They traveled high into the hills and found an elderly couple who were goat herders. It was there, in the quiet hills of Mexico, that they also found the eight-year-old boy the couple kept locked in their outhouse. They kept the boy there, they said, because he was mentally retarded and had a habit of wandering off while they tended their flock. The boy also suffered from epilepsy and he was tied into a feed sack at night so he wouldn't hurt himself when he thrashed around from nightly seizures. The boy's name was Gabriel.

After one look at the situation, Ted and Renie knew they couldn't leave the boy there. It was then that Gabriel House was born.



Jenny Ramkissoon, LVN and a resident of Gabriel House



Staff and resident of Gabriel House

Today, Gabriel House is a non-profit Christian residential home dedicated to the total care and rehabilitation of 50 profoundly handicapped children and children with immune deficiency disorders. Their mission is to extend hope and dignity to the children at no cost to their impoverished families.

Ruth Hill, RN Consultant at MSSKH and Jenny Ramkissoon, LVN Educator at MSSKH, recently visited Gabriel House. "When we learned our church was planning to go to Gabriel House, we were very interested in going," says Ruth. "The children there have similar disabilities to the children at Special Kids.

"The trip was really an eye-opener. Outside of the house, it was dirty and dusty everywhere. When we went inside, a little girl ran up to me, smiling, and greeted me with a big hug. Then I noticed the cement floor. They had no carpeting. The wheelchairs for the children looked like hand-me-downs. It became obvious they had little to work with, even in the way of things like disinfectants. But what was amazing to me, was that all of the children were so happy, despite the lack of things that we would consider necessities. They were all content and it was clear they were not just putting on a happy face for visitors.

"We have come to expect certain things," adds Ruth. "We expect a certain standard of care.

Please see GABRIEL HOUSE on page 6

■ SHANGRI-LA *(continued from page 1)*

rounds at Mountain Shadows for the past nine years. “Thumper is a joy for the clients,” adds Mark.

Mark shared a passion for Mountain Shadows with his friend and colleague, Ken Herzog. Ken was also a long-time consulting psychologist for our residents and staff. “Ken was a very important part of Mountain Shadows,” says Mark. “Everybody liked him.”

When Ken died of lung cancer, Mark wanted to honor his memory. He offered to match up to \$3,000 in contributions to create a special memorial for Ken that would also honor the Community that had come to mean so much to him. The concept of building an employee break area was brain-stormed.

“Dr. Schindler’s idea is to create a place where employees can go and relax during a stressful day,” says Arlene Galvan, QMRP of Willow, Spruce and Pine Houses. “He sees it as a calm and peaceful retreat where staff can go to eat lunch or just unwind. It will be located in a beautiful, grassy area by Pine House. There are plans for a water fountain, possibly a gazebo area with a bridge leading to it, and tables shaded by large umbrellas.” Ahhhhhhhhhh ... a working person’s Shangri-La! And, also in memory of Ken’s fight with lung cancer, the area will be completely smoke-free.

“We are in the fundraising phase right now,” adds Arlene. “Dr. Schindler will match all contribu-



Working on the project are: (Front row) Donna Ponomarenko, Gisela Balderas, and Rachel Duenas; (Back row) Jen Wilson and Martha Castellanos.

tions up to \$3,000. We recently held a successful fundraiser at Rubio’s and plans for another fundraiser at Soup Plantation are in the works.”

“We are also currently selling some

really cool travel mugs with the Mountain Shadows logo,” adds Jen Wilson, QMRP of Plum, Apple and Oak Houses. “They cost only \$10 each! Drop by the main office or give us a call to buy one—or more!”

Arlene continues, “We will be holding a Community-wide rummage sale, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 22nd, starting at 7:00 a.m. Please drop off your tax deductible donations at the main office between March 4th and March 14th, or call me at (760) 743-3714, ext. 361, to make arrangements. We need clothing, household items, books, CDs, etc. All donations should be in good, working condition.”

“It is important to us to honor Ken’s memory,”

says Jen. “He was a huge part of the Mountain Shadows family for a long time. He was very involved in the resident’s lives. He was such an amazing resource! He helped residents and staff members so much. He

was an invaluable member of our team. The proposed employee break area will reflect his personality, which, even during times of crisis, was calming. All staff will be welcome. It will be a place to go and revitalize, to get in a good mind-set in order to be able to better serve our residents. I truly believe Ken would have wanted this.”

“Those people who worked with Ken were very lucky,” adds Mark. “I always believed Ken had forgotten more than I would ever know. I admired him for his patience in working with clients and for his natural curiosity.”

Haven’t you ever dreamed of a place where there was peace, where living was not a struggle, but a lasting delight? Of course you have. So has every man since time began. Sometimes he calls it Utopia, sometimes merely “that little chicken farm.” Here we call it Shangri-La. Here’s my hope that we will all find our Shangri-La.

LOST HORIZON BY JAMES HILTON

To help us build our very own small piece of Shangri-La for our dedicated staff, please contact the main office at (760) 743-3714, or Arlene, at ext. 361. ■

Ash House and the Beauty-Marked Bass

Dixon Lake is located in the avocado covered foothills just northeast of Escondido. The dam at Lake Dixon was completed in 1971 as the result of a water storage act passed almost a decade before. Since its inception, Dixon was intended for recreational use, as well as water storage. Fish were stocked in the reservoir six years prior to opening to the public. The lake quickly became a nest for large-mouth bass—and according to Dixon Lake lore, it also became home to a certain “million-dollar, 25+ pound, world-record, beauty-marked large-mouth bass.”

This particular bass has been made famous in recent years by a series of catches that have garnered national attention. In April of 2001, a Poway resident caught a 20-pound, 12-ounce bass in Dixon Lake. Just over two years later, in June of 2003, a Carlsbad native caught a 21-pound, 11-ounce bass. The coy fish is thought to be the same one caught in 2001 (and released) due to her “beauty mark,” a distinctive black dot on her chin. Then, in March of 2006, one of the most remarkable catches in sport fishing lore was “made.” Just before 8 a.m. on the morning of March 20th, Mac Weakley hooked and boated the largest bass ever recorded. The event was videotaped and three still pictures were taken. Then, the beauty-marked bass was released.

Is this 25-pound, 1-ounce monster alive and lurking beneath the placid waters of this unassuming lake? Mountain Shadows Ash House residents recently had the chance to find out.

Four residents from Ash House, Casey, Gary, Jeff and Mark, went to Dixon Lake. The foursome stayed in Dixon’s “accessible cabin” which overlooks the lake. The 750-square-foot brick cabin was designed for use by people with impaired mobility. The cabin was fully furnished and had a beautiful patio with a barbecue. The living room opened into a fully functional kitchen. The cabin was air conditioned and completely handicapped-accessible.

The residents stayed at the cabin over the weekend and enjoyed taking walks around the campground, barbecuing, and walking around on the dock—and they went fishing several times.

The highlight of the trip was just spending time in such a beautiful setting as they experienced new things—walking on the dock, fishing, and just enjoying themselves. Everyone had a really nice time.

When asked if they had seen the now famous Dixon Lake bass, Amanda and the residents remained tight-lipped; however, when this reporter spoke privately with one of the Ash House residents and asked him if he had seen a certain million-dollar, 25+ pound, world-record, beauty-marked large-mouth bass, his gaze drifted to the calm waters of Dixon Lake. He sat there quietly in his wheelchair looking off into the distance. Then, after a long moment, he simply smiled and rubbed his chin. And, with a glimmer in his eye, he turned and rolled slowly back up the dock to his cabin. ■



■ AMANDA *(continued from page 2)*

laughing and smiling. And she always made me smile. She liked to dance, loved the word ‘go’ and loved her Tigger doll.”

And on those days when Amanda did decide she wanted to wear clothes, she loved to look at herself in the mirror. Says Miriam, “She loved to get dressed up in something pretty. Then she’d look at herself in the mirror and say, ‘cute!’” Kaitlyn, another Palm DCS, agreed. “Amanda loved it when we would brush her hair and put a cute outfit on her. Then all day long she would say, ‘cute ... cute!’”

“Amanda had a wonderful personality,” says Fred Lindahl, Residential Program Coordinator. “She had great sense of humor and she loved Dr. Seuss Books—all of them!” Adds Stacy, “One of the most amazing things about Amanda was how she could piece together 3 or 4 different puzzles all at once, with no help!”

“We’d mix all the pieces together and she’d put them all together in record time,” continues Fred.

“When she was done, she’d throw them in the kitchen and say, ‘I’m done!’”

Amanda completed her last set of puzzles and passed away quietly in her sleep on September 21st, 2007.

“What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset, only to be reborn in a new form with each new dawn.”

CROWFOOT, BLACKFOOT WARRIOR

While Amanda’s shadow may no longer fall upon the grasses of Mountain Shadows Community Homes, her spirit will live on in all of us with each new sunrise. And if we listen closely, we may one day hear a familiar door slam and the walls of Palm House may shake once more. And if we do, we will all know Amanda is home, and her circle of life, from childhood to childhood, has begun again. ■

■ GABRIEL HOUSE *(continued from page 3)*

They do not have the resources to meet even our minimum standards—and yet they make it work! Though they had no carpet and few cleaning supplies, the cement floor was always clean as could be. Though there was only one water faucet in the house, every child was bathed and clean everyday.

“They are very creative in working with very little. They had one four-year-old girl who weighed 14 pounds. She required a urinary catheter. They were able to keep her healthy under circumstances we would consider unthinkable. The caregivers earn \$1.25 per hour. When we visited on November 17th, they had run short of money. Payday was supposed to have been on the 15th, but due to the cash shortage, no one got paid—yet every single one of the caregivers continued coming to work anyway.

“The caregivers clearly loved and were very protective of the babies. There was a two-year-old that weighed 12 pounds who needed a G-tube. Amazingly, they were able to care for him under these circumstances with no aspiration pneumonia. In spite of the limited resources, the children and the staff are happy and cheerful.

“When we asked if they had enough formula for

the babies, they replied, ‘most of the time.’ When we visited, they had no paper towels. A doctor visits only occasionally. We complain when Medi-Cal won’t pay. It definitely puts a new perspective on things. You don’t have to have a lot to care for the children.”

It may strike some as odd to devote an article to Gabriel House, or another home not affiliated with Mountain Shadows, in the MSSG Newsletter; however, we believe there is great need to foster a shared global vision to help disabled children across the world. We all share the same mission. Without help, these innocent children may be destined to lives of hopelessness and suffering.

Ted and Renie have found the children who now call Gabriel House home in dumpsters, in sewer drains, and in animal cages. These same special needs children can be found in similar circumstances or worse throughout third world countries.

“When I visited Gabriel House, I began to think about the resources we have and those that we can no longer use,” says Ruth. “Gabriel House doesn’t have that luxury. I left Gabriel House thinking maybe we have something we can spare.”

Maybe we all do. ■

Destiny Manifests at MSSKH for Noelle and Sean Krejci

Let's start at the end of this story.

When Noelle Krejci, a nurse with more than 15 years of experience in pediatrics, saw the small ad for a Registered Nurse at Mountain Shadows Special Kids it seemed much like most of the other ads she'd seen for RN's. "When I first drove up to the Mountain Shadow's office for an interview, something told me this place was *not* for me," says Noelle.

Now, wait just a minute! Did she just say that Mountain Shadows was *not* for her? Well, she certainly did, and we'll tell you more on that later, but for now we'll just say that little did Noelle know, as she drove up that long driveway to Mountain Shadows, she was about to slam head-on into her destiny.

Now let's go back about seven years to the beginning of this story. Noelle and her husband, Chris, were driving home with the beautiful, blond-haired, baby boy they had just adopted. "We named him Sean.

He was screaming the whole way home and wanted nothing to do with us," says Noelle. "He was scared to death of us.

"His biological mother was a drug addict. He had seizures. He did not eat solid food until he was four-years-old. He had a G-tube for five years. He was diagnosed with ADHD, anxiety disorder and failure to thrive, but today he eats everything and anything by mouth and lives a perfectly normal life. He just needed to be loved—and we love him to death!"

Noelle and Chris have three other children. Noelle gave birth to the couple's first child, Kayleigh, in 1992. It was a normal pregnancy and their daughter was healthy. Two years later, they had a son, Ryan, who passed away just two days after being born. Then in 1995, Noelle was pregnant again. She went into premature labor at 21 weeks and their second

daughter, Keirsten, was born at 28 weeks. "Keirsten spent the first two months of her life in the NICU, but we were extremely lucky with her and she is doing great now.



Sean

"Chris and I wanted another child and went to many specialists to see if having another baby was an option for us. To make a long story short, I was told I would have to be on bed rest starting at 20 weeks. We couldn't imagine putting our daughters through that, so we decided to look into adoption as an option.

"We adopted our first son, Jason, in 1998. Ironically, Jason's birthday is November 9th, the same date we buried our son Ryan. Jason was such a blessing! We knew how many other children did not have homes, so we decided to adopt again. That's when we adopted Sean, our second son, in 2000.

"While there were difficulties due to all of his medical issues, Sean has been a blessing to our family. He's an incredible boy! He's changed so much and done so well. He used to be so afraid of strangers that he'd cry anytime he saw anyone he didn't know. Now, he's made a total turnaround. He loves people and loves being the center of attention. This is interesting because he used to be so shy. Now, he loves entertaining and singing to everyone. He loves it so much, we are thinking of putting him in acting classes!

"There is nothing he doesn't or can't do. We have a very active family and Sean is an active part of everything we do. Sean loves soccer. Chris coaches his team, the Huskies. The team won first place and they were undefeated last year. Sean had his picture in the newspaper and was so proud! He wears his soccer jersey to school.

"As a family, we love to go out boat-

Please see SEAN on page 8

Jeff Mohnhaupt Joins Board

Jeff Mohnhaupt, Founder and President of Hopper Systems, Inc. (HSI), brings more than 15 years of hands-on experience in the field of IT management to the Mountain Shadows Board. Hopper Systems provides comprehensive systems management and support services to a diverse client base in San Diego and Las Vegas. Services provided by HSI include systems installation and management, client training, day-to-day systems maintenance, consulting and ongoing systems support.

Jeff's unique ability to "bridge the gap between computer geeks and non-computer geeks" and his strong desire to "help the little guy" have earned him the trust of a loyal client base, including Mountain Shadows. Since 1999, Jeff has overseen all IT functions at MSSG. In 2003, Jeff received the Moun-

tain Shadows Supporter Extraordinaire Award due to his work in successfully implementing an innovative, on-site, PPS system, which allows Mountain Shadows staff to more efficiently and cost-effectively monitor and manage all resident programs.

Prior to founding Hopper Systems, Jeff provided a wide-range of computer management and support services to companies including the San Diego Hospice, local school districts, law firms and other small businesses. ■



Jeff Mohnhaupt

■ SEAN *(continued from page 3)*

ing. We go to the river and have been to many lakes, including Lake Nacimiento, Lake Powell, and Lake Shasta. When we first went out in the boat, Sean *hated* it! He could not stand to have the wind in his face. Now he is always the kid at the bow of the boat with the wind blowing in his face. He's even learning to wakeboard! He's come so far.

"When I think of Sean, I don't think of him as *not* one of my biological children. He is my child as much as my girls are. I think that is often the misconception about adopted children, that there's not



Sean with his Mom

the same bond as with a biological child. But that's not true at all. We have that incredible parent-child bond. My older children treat him as if he is their biological brother. Our parents treat him as if he is their biological grandchild. We've never felt like we've done this great or wonderful thing by adopting him. We feel blessed to have him. Some would say they wish Sean's biological parents hadn't treated him like they did. But if they hadn't, we wouldn't have him now. It was meant to be.

"So ... so much for first impressions," says Noelle. "When I walked into Mountain Shadows that day to interview with Toni and Ruth, we began discussing Special Kids homes and the children's needs." As they talked, Noelle began to have an odd sense of déjà vu. "Suddenly, I heard them say C&C Kids Company and it clicked! I knew Mountain Shadows *was* for me. I knew I was meant to work here."

When Sean was taken from his biological parent's home, he was brought to a very special place to be cared for until a permanent home with forever parents could be found. That very special place was Maggie Marsh House at C&C Kids Company ... C&C Kids Company is now known as Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes.

Noelle had no idea of the connection before her interview.

We'd call that destiny. ■

Wayne Walthers: Steward of Mountain Shadows

Family farming is a tradition as old as America. And to most family farmers, this tradition is a way of life, not simply a vocation. Small family farmers often develop a deep connection with their land, observing and living in tune with the changing seasons, weather and soil conditions. Many consider themselves to be stewards, or caretakers, of the land. Historically, family farming in America has fostered the development of close-knit communities that thrive upon a foundation of core values like hard work, pride in a job well done, helping friends, and caring for the land.

Wayne Walthers, Mountain Shadows Plant Operations Supervisor, remembers his childhood on his family's farm fondly. "I grew up on my family's farm in Iowa. We farmed 226 acres. We raised corn, soybeans, wheat and livestock. Every day we got up very early to feed the livestock. Once that was done, we ate our breakfast—then we started our chores for the day. Depending on the season, that meant planting the fields, making hay, cultivating and harvesting crops. It was hard work, but it was a very good life.

"Sigourney, Iowa, the town I grew up in, had a population of roughly 2000," continued Wayne. "Everyone knew everyone else. There was a strong sense of community. If a neighbor needed help, everyone came together and helped out. There were three traffic lights in town, and only one worked at any given time. As a child, I had never even heard of people using drugs. A person's word was as good as anything that was written on paper. And every farmer I ever knew was honest. It was a very different lifestyle.



Wayne ensuring the karaoke machine works.

"Honesty was very important to my parents. I remember one time when my mother drove into town to do her grocery shopping. The drive



Scott Stovall (left) Horace Ford (center) and Wayne (right) on Dec 31, 2007 Wayne's last day at Mountain Shadows.

was 24 miles each way. Well, mom did her grocery shopping and when she got home, she noticed the grocer had given her a nickel too much in change. She immediately turned around, got in the car, drove 24 miles back to the grocery store, and gave the grocer back that nickel!"

Wayne married his college sweetheart, Peggy Roelfs, in 1963. "We are the exception," says Wayne. "I've been married to the same woman for more than 40 years. And I love her more now than when we got married." After college, Wayne and Peggy returned to his hometown and bought a 500-acre farm just ¼ mile, "as the crow flies" from his parent's farm. "My parents taught me to be a steward of the land." He and Peggy farmed their land for more than 20 years. Then in 1984, following the Russian grain embargo, they sold their farm and moved to San Diego's North County.

"Peg's brother-in-law lived in San Diego and had a lead on a job opportunity with a construction company," continued Wayne. "They were about to start a large project and I remember visiting the site before construction began. It was a chicken ranch and avocado grove. I joined the construction crew and the next time I saw the property the chicken and avocados were gone. The grounds were completely graded and the pads were all down." That was in 1985. Today those same grounds are

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home to the Mountain Shadows Community.

“Wayne has been with Mountain Shadows since, well, before there was a Mountain Shadows!” says Stacy Kendall, MSSG Director of Operations. “He was part of the team that built the place.” Adds Wayne, “When I came to the site, it was basically a bare piece of ground. We ran the water lines, poured patio slabs, helped with plumbing and electrical work. Basically all of the buildings were built in 1985, except what is now the main Office. The main Office was the ranch house on the original property and it was renovated later. When construction first started, there was no gas on-site, so there was no place to get warm. It was raining all the time and was very cold. There was a fireplace in what is now the Human Resources office, so that’s where the General Contractor lived. We all had lunch there everyday.”

“Wayne is a wealth of information,” says Stacy. “He knows more of Mountain Shadows history than anyone. He knows the ins and outs of every house. And Wayne is not just concerned with maintaining the buildings and vehicles. He is very close to the residents and always makes sure they get what they need—even when it’s not in his job description.”

Jen Wilson, QMRP, says “I am going to miss Wayne’s humor around here. He was always so funny—even when he was really angry about a lint trap being clogged, it was still funny ... I never would have smiled about it in front of him, but I would definitely smile about it after he walked away.”

Jan Spain, Physical Therapist consultant, adds “I just want to say that Wayne is someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty. He did for me big time more than once, but especially one time when my son was a baby. I had my son in his car seat in my van, and also had my dog. I stopped by my mom’s apartment building (about a mile from Mtn. Shadows) and went just outside the van to call my mother on the security system at the building. My dog jumped up on the car door and managed to push down the lock button. I was therefore locked out of my running van, with my baby and

my dog inside! I was a little hysterical. Wayne had broken into my van for me at Mtn. Shadows once before when I managed to lock my keys in the van. I therefore knew that he could do this (due to his previous life of crime, I think!). I phoned him at Mtn. Shadows to see if he could rescue me, and he did! This was probably 18 years ago (that baby is 19 years old), and I will never forget his kindness and willingness to help out a distressed mother. I have seen Wayne here ever since Mtn. Shadows opened in 1985 and I can’t imagine him not being here. I will miss him and am glad to know that I can call him to help with projects at my own home.”

Anya Klinginsmith, receptionist and Bridget

Faimon, QMRP, both cheer in that “... he was a great person to work with and had a wonderful sense of humor. He’ll be sorely missed!”

Scott Stovall says

that when he met Wayne he “... realized that Wayne was the Maintenance Department. I then went into a relaxed mode. Wayne helped me ease into the position. I had never worked for a care facility before, and Wayne taught me everything about State Licensing and Life Safety issues and let’s not forget appliance repair. Wayne made me feel comfortable working with him and MSCH. He dealt with all the situations that came up with no difficulty. I was really sorry to hear of his retirement but I knew it would come sooner rather than later. Wayne has only been gone since the end of December, and already he is missed by everyone. As they say, ‘It is better to know him and not need him than to need him and not know him.’ Have a good life Wayne!”

“I really enjoy being with the residents,” says Wayne. “Mountain Shadows is really a great place to work. We really have a great team.”

As a steward of the land in rural Iowa, Wayne Walthers upheld the family farmer values of working hard, doing a job well, helping friends and caring for the land. As a steward of Mountain Shadows, he maintained those same values through his hard work, friendship and dedication to caring for all of us within the Mountain Shadows Community. ■

“ Wayne has been with Mountain Shadows since, well, before there was a Mountain Shadows!”

Santa Visits Mountain Shadows



Lisa



Nettie



Brian



Debbie



Kendall



Linda

Human Christmas Trees Shine Their Light on MSSKH



Cami & Maverick House staffers teamed up for a bit of merriment at their recent holiday bash. After enjoying a tasty feast catered by Olive Garden, the fun and games began! The revelers were divided into teams and provided with a roll of wrapping paper, some brightly colored construction paper, scissors, tape, tinsel and several Christmas tree ornaments. They were then given 10 minutes to decorate one team member and create a human Christmas tree. “The staff was really creative,” says Shelly Dawson, MSSKH Placement Coordinator. “The human Christmas trees were adorned well. The members of the group that created the best tree won a great prize.

Everyone really got into the spirit and had a good laugh. It was an excellent team-building experience too!”

In the early 16th century, Martin Luther is said to have decorated a small Christmas tree with candles to show his children how the stars twinkled through the dark night. He told them the burning candles symbolized the starlit heaven—the heaven that watched over Bethlehem on the first Christmas Eve. Our MSSKH human Christmas trees reflect the same light as they watch lovingly over our Special Kids on Christmas Eve and throughout the year. ■



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