Two-Legged Alley Cats

There was a time in Wheeling’s developing years that many neighborhoods were identified by their ethnicity. Our dad grew up in the mostly German enclave of homes that lay along both sides of South Wheeling. In particular, his home sat along the former Valley Medical Center property, the old Mount Nittany Sanitarium. He often spoke of walking home from St. Alphonsus School and peering over the scaffolding to see what they had accomplished each day. As soon as they left for the day, we crawled in and around the scaffolding to see what they had accomplished. Little did they know that these little feisty creatures would join to the family on that same street. He also realized his first taste of home-brewed beer in that alley. The garages and outbuildings in the alley served as mini-breweries for the self-madecraft beer lovers. The alley was a busy place. When my parents moved their growing family to the Woodland area, it was a world much different from that of our dad’s upbringing. But the alley held secrets and was there and still are many alleys in the Wheeling neighborhood.

Our family’s garage was at the far end of the yard and faced the alley, and so we spent a good deal of time exploring the “back side” of our neighbors. On many a summer day, we would pull the barbecue down from the garage, open the large door and cook burgers on the grill in the alley. We would sit there for hours with a transistor radio, the family dogs and several curious kids for company. It must have reminded my dad of his childhood spent in the alleys.

A portion of the alley behind our neighborhood became a union of garages, sheds and even a few barns lost over from the area’s original orchards. A few of those trees were still lucky enough to still see brain applies on their property. A few of those barns were within reaching distance of the Wheeling Valley and we often dodged the deer and pigpen storks to grab a few pieces of fruit. This is the location of the alley behind our Hamilton Street home. Our family house was built of bricks. It made for a bumpy ride on our bicycles. When I was a young teen, I made my oldest brother and sister waltz up and down the alley. Early in the springs, I was a young teenager, with hair down to my shoulders, an old abandoned mail box that I had tacked to our garage. It became our little hideaway where we sometimes packed a bag lunch and enjoyed a day of riding bicycles. In that same alley, we would sometimes take in the summer swimming in a hot day. It was also a place where my dad knew that as soon as they left for the day, we crawled in and around the scaffolding to see what they had accomplished.

Two-Legged Alley Cats

Cats, Two-Legged

GETTING LIFE BACK ON TRACK

Life Healing through Movement

WHEELING — It’s 10 a.m. on a Friday morning in mid-January at the Youth Services Systems Helinski Shelter for girls. Three teens in sweatpants and T-shirts stand in their sock feet in the middle of a small conference room-turn-tumed-dance studio, facing a 15-inch flatscreen monitor.

The long table and chairs have been pushed to the walls to make room for them to stretch, spiral and shimmy into Jay-Z during their hour-long session with Miss Cheryl from Oglebay Institute School of Dance.

It takes a while for Miss Cheryl to appear on the small screen, as she and the Helinski shelter staff work to make the elusive Zoom connection — “Can you read the link?” It’s asking for a password.

“You shouldn’t need a password.” “Can you hear me now?” “Can you see me?”

Once the connection is made, the girls can see Miss Cheryl — a.k.a. Cheryl Pompeo, Oglebay Institute School of Dance director — but she can only see them from the waist down. “It’s part of the shelter’s rules to protect the identity of the girls at the emergency residential facility run by YSS.”

Healing through Movement

This is the second dance class in a year-long series of weekly classes Pompeo will lead for Youth Services Systems. The program is possible through a grant from RSP and received from the Women’s Giving Circle, a group of local women who pooled their resources through the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley and use them to support projects and programs that benefit women and girls.

The initiative’s goal is to introduce dance to girls who otherwise might not have the opportunity, providing them with physical exercise and a creative outlet that can improve mental health and aid in healing from trauma.

“They rewire the brain, how they think about themselves. It teaches the brain a different path from left to right,” Pompeo said. “I really believe when anybody is in a situation that is highly stressful, music and movement get the endorphins going... It contributes to the healing process.”

During the first class earlier this week, Maryo Scott, longtime Helinski Shelter director, joined the girls in some of the stretches and attempted some of the dance steps herself.

“It was fun,” Scott said. “We all laughed. It’s great exercise, and it’s good for them to be working together as a group. The class allows them to learn something new, which I always encourage. It introduces them to more opportunities,” Scott said.

Sock Hop

During the second dance class, the teens are taking a while to loosen up, most likely because someone is there taking pictures and asking them questions — that link, or phone call, hands stuffed in pockets. But after 20 minutes of stretching and 10 meter reviewing the steps of the week before, they are smiling and interacting with each other. Pompeo, who doesn’t know the names of everybody is in a situation that is highly stressful, or maybe they never had the chance. You never know, they could be the next Missy Copeland or Janet Jackson.”

Each dance class ends with a time of relaxation during which Pompeo teaches them breathing and mindfulness techniques they can use throughout their week whenever they encounter difficult emotions or situations.

“Try it in a nice place. You can be wherever you want to be,” Scott said.

Favorite Day

Scott is grateful to the Women’s Giving Circle and Oglebay Institute for caring about teens who often get overlooked in society.

“Cheryl is great with our kids, even though she couldn’t even see them! She is encouraging and patient. I really think the girls are enjoying it,” Scott said.

As more girls join the class, the plan is for staff to set up the Zoom on the larger TV in the shelter living room so everyone has room to stretch and move. Scott said, the teens and the staff are looking forward to it.

“I have them all hyped up about it,” Scott said. “Fridays are everyone’s favorite day!”

Oglebay Institute Gives Helinski Shelter Girls Chance to Dance

Cheryl Pompeo, Oglebay Institute School of Dance Director, teaches a dance to a group of teen girls at the Youth Services System Helinski Shelter in Wheeling.
Supporting Social Acceptance of Disabilities

WHEELING — Jan. 20 was recognized as the International Day of Acceptance. It is dedicated to the social acceptance of disabilities and honors people with disabilities. Annie Hopkins, founder of 3E Love and creator of the International Symbol of Acceptance, said, “3E Love represents the organization’s call to ‘empower, educate, empower,’ society and empow- er those with disabilities with the confidence who you are; a person who is empow- ered to create a difference in the world and not be held back by society. You are not living... you are existing.” This one day calls us to embrace all abilities, to take the edge out of any aspect of political, social, or educational nature.

International Day of Acceptance takes those effects... one further step by prioritizing social accep- tance in an effort to change perception of disability.

In a recent public ser- vice announcement, An- nie said, “Disability is not in- herent to a person but the ability to be different may be different but still... that person’s physical or men- tal condition. We all have limitations.”

Williams added, “Dis- abilities are driven by pur- pose: to change the way the world defines and... to make sure everyone is... of Acceptance, a wheelchair-heart logo created by An- nie Hopkins.”

A young boy proudly displays the International Symbol of Acceptance.

A young boy proudly displays the International Symbol of Acceptance.

3E Love has sent a straight shot and a wheelchair to convey a message of love and acceptance for people with disabilities.

After Annie unexpec- tedly passed away on Jan. 20, 2020, her brother and 3E Love cofounder, Ste- vie Hopkins, helped to honor her memory with a celebration of her life and the symbol she cre- ated. 3E Love has since be- come the International Day of Acceptance and continues to be embraced by people of all abilities around the world.

To quote 3E Love, “Tell the world you em- brace who you are; a person who is empow- ered to create a difference in the world and not be held back by society. You are not living... you are existing.”

The resolution also promotes an understand- ing of disability issues and support for people with disabilities. Additionally, the goal is that people need to integrate people with disabilities into every aspect of political, social, and educational nature.

One part of National Easterseals mission, we serve as part of the continuum of services that make it possible for our clients to be independent.

We work to educate the community and encour- age awareness, under- standing, and respect for people of all abilities. As a part of National Easterseals mission, we serve as an arm of the assertive, direct consumer, helping to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

One day calls us to... change perception of disability.

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A young boy proudly displays the International Symbol of Acceptance.
United Way Helps Provide Meals to Local Residents

WHEELING — United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley has launched a food insecurity grant in partnership with Southwestern Energy.

“Southwestern Energy is a strong community partner and we are grateful to support them as they continue to fulfill their mission of providing essential food to those in need,” said Amy Dobkin, community relations manager for Southwestern Energy.

This grant will fund programs addressing these concerns so that they have the funding to provide for more families,” Dobkin said.

“As families continue to face hardships and challenges in our region, Southwestern Energy is grateful to partner with the United Way to administer grants to address these issues our community members are facing,” Jessica Rine, executive director of the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley, said.

“Ohio University Continues Investment in Student Success

ATHENS, Ohio — One key element of Ohio University’s Student Success Initiative has been the identification of critical resources to ensure the greatest number of students can effectively reach their potential.

“Under the leadership of President M. Duane Nellis and Executive Vice President and Provost Elizabeth Sayrs, efforts have been made to identify supports and barriers to student success across our campuses,” President Nellis said.

“The University has made a strong commitment to providing an affordable, high-quality education to our students and their families,” President Nellis said.

“We fully recognize that our students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and experiences that require varied approaches to ensure they thrive. Our goal is to provide a world-class education that helps each and every student meet their educational goals,” Sayrs said.

In an effort to leverage the successes of career engagement, central advising support, and experiential learning work underway at OHIO, the University announced that the Career and Leadership Development Center, Alumni Student Advising Center, and Experiential Learning have been aligned within the Office of the Provost, under the leadership of Assistant Vice Provost Jen Murphy.

“Under Jen’s leadership, we have already made great strides in our efforts to increase opportunities for student success,” Murphy said. “By bringing together resources to support curricular and co-curricular planning and experiences we will be better positioned to support all facets of a student’s education, including their post-graduation success.”

Murphy was originally charged with implementation of the Ohio Guarantees Graduation Plan. The OGU+ Graduation Plan provides individual student plans that map out academic, experiential learning, and career milestones aimed to support achievement of equitable outcomes for all undergraduate students.

Several Thursday Music Club Activities Canceled

WHEELING — The Thursday Music Club has canceled monthly luncheon meetings through May 5.

Members said hopefully by May, everyone will be vaccinated and healthy. More information will follow in April. Call Judy Steyman at 304-242-5432 for more information.

Ohio University Continues Investment in Student Success

With this grant, Ohio University aims to support students who have already made great strides in our efforts to increase opportunities for student success,” Murphy said. “By bringing together resources to support curricular and co-curricular planning and experiences we will be better positioned to support all facets of a student’s education, including their post-graduation success.”

Murphy was originally charged with implementation of the Ohio Guarantees Graduation Plan in Fall 2020. The OGU+ Graduation Plan provides individual student plans that map out academic, experiential learning, and career milestones aimed to support achievement of equitable outcomes for all undergraduate students.
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Add a photo for an extra $10

Includes headline, First Day logo and 5 lines. Additional lines $0.63 each.

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To the Ohio County Commission (OCC) seeks a dynamic, progressive, and innovative leader to serve as its next fulltime County Administrator. This position is critical to helping the Ohio County Commission grow and provide long term sustainability for Ohio County by being mission and vision focused through achieving results. This role will report to and take direction from the Ohio County Commission.

This position requires a pro-active and positive leader who is an excellent communicator (both written and verbal), anticipate well, is data driven and solution oriented, great at building relationships, and can provide work-life balance. The Ohio County Commission is a small county, but is a great place to work.

Position Requirements:

• Bachelor’s degree in Public Administration, Business, or related field is required. A Master’s degree is a plus.
• Experience with Public Administration or planning is strongly preferred.
• Previous experience in county or state-level public administration (including project management) is required.
• Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, and the ability to work with diverse groups of people.
• Strong ability to lead, organize, and manage complex projects.
• Strong leadership skills, with the ability to motivate and inspire others.
• Strong problem-solving skills, with the ability to identify and solve complex problems.
• Strong analytical skills, with the ability to analyze data and make informed decisions.
• Strong financial management skills, with the ability to manage budgets and financial reports.
• Strong project management skills, with the ability to manage and complete projects on time and within budget.
• Strong decision-making skills, with the ability to make sound decisions in a timely manner.
• Strong ability to work independently, with a high level of self-motivation.
• Strong ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks.
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