

Dear Friends,

At the time this newsletter was intended to be circulated, Jim's message (below) was timely. It is, in fact, still most appropriate as Governor Inslee calls for a second special legislative session to get lawmakers across the chasm that has prevented them from agreement on the 2015-2017 state operating budget. Read on and don't stop contacting your legislators. See page 3 to learn how we've faired.

Message from FoF President, Jim Hardman

(Message penned several weeks ago)

The 2015 legislature is nearing the end of the session. Please remember to let your representatives, senator, and the governor know **what Fircrest means to you** and your family. Do this by phone email or old fashion letter. Time is running do it now.

In my last message I wrote about how **our tax system hurts** service systems on which Fircrest residents rely. If you agree please encourage those same officials to advance a **more stable and more fair** system of taxation than what we currently have.

Since the crash of the national economy our State has suffered with **insufficient income** to pay **for programs mandated** for state support by our state's constitution. You no doubt are aware that the State Supreme Court has ordered the State to pay for primary education as its "paramount" duty as it says we must in our constitution. **Fircrest**, as a Residential Habilitation Center, is also subject to a similar **constitutional duty at Article 13** which says the state must **"support"** and **"foster"** RHCs.

For the past six or so years RHCs have been told to **"do more with less"**. Unfortunately we cannot support RHCs with a **slogan**. When our constitution says **"support"** it **refers to money**, not empty rhetoric. Where it says **"foster"** in means **promote development** and is not a mere platitude [see Webster's dictionary].

Since the 'do more with less' slogan became the **desperate plan, services have suffered**. Lakeland Village has been cited for poor service and Fircrest is the subject of some severe audit findings.

The lesson is not that RHCs are a bad idea. **The bad idea** is that severe funding **cuts** can be made up with a **silly slogan**. If we could do more with less in the real world we would give away all we have so we would do great. We'd have smaller buses so they could haul more people and fewer roads so they would be less crowded. We'd exercise less to get in better shape. We'd read less to be more educated. **Hooray! It's so simple!**

Well it didn't work for RHCs either. **Less actually gets you less**. Less money for services gets us fewer services, slogans notwithstanding.

The Supreme Court has found that the **constitution is not aspirational**. It is not a list of what should happen in ideal circumstances. Its mandates are **mandatory**. Is this a surprise?

We can make it easier for our elected officials to do the right things by encouraging them to do so. [see first two paragraphs above].

Sincerely, J.R. Hardman J.D., CPG Pres. FoF

MEETING HIGHLIGHTSMinutes available by request; cbbraley@q.com◆ **Annual membership Meeting November 22, 2014**

A nice turn out of members and families honored last year's Outstanding Service Award recipients; Maria Walsh –retiring treasurer and Cheryl Felak– program innovator and outreach activist. New board member Gordon Ellison-Osolin was elected to the board of directors and slate of officers and board members was approved . See bottom of this page for the current board roster.*

◆ **Board Meeting of January 10th, 2014**

FoF agreed to mail a legislative Bulletin to all Action DD members asking them to invite their representatives to the February 3, '15 Action DD meeting to garner their support our bills. We supplied a hand out card for wide distribution in Olympia.

◆ **Membership Meeting of February 14, 2015**

Dr. Singh gave the group a extensive report and answered many questions.

Group discussed the need for Human Rights/Client Protection committees to address the problem of accompanying client medical packets not getting to the correct medical attendants when resident is admitted to hospital.

◆ **Board Meeting of March 14, 2015**

The March meeting opened with tribute and toast to Dr. Singh, who announced her retirement at the end of March. See page 4.

Motion to fund “ Feed the Builders” of three new raised garden beds was approved. Funds will come from FoF Client programs support budget . Motion was approved to use Sallee Grant Funds to purchase equipment and initial supplies for the Green Houses being provided by the state. Funds from the grant will be designated for the Art/Garden Therapy programs.

◆ **Membership Meeting of April 11, 2015**

Jeff Flesner, Acting Superintendent , replacing retiring Dr. Singh, introduced himself to our group and fielded many questions. Proposal to fund new equipment for Sensory & Calming Therapy rooms from the remaining Sallee Grant funds was approved. See p 6.

◆ **Board Meeting of May 16,2015**

By-Law review committee volunteered to make recommendations for much needed updating. Michael Johnson presented an outline of steps we can take to address CMS admissions [to RHCs] violations, by our state. Cost proposal was requested.

WI-FI ad hoc committee presented their research on having campus wide service. See recommendation on page 4. Board preauthorized a specified amount from the Therapy Garden Grant to be used to replace irrigation system.

***Board approved the nominations of Dr. Kent Questad & Launi Whedon to the board of Directors. Welcome!**

FRIENDS OF FIRCREST REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE 2015

All meetings, Board & Membership, unless otherwise notified, are held on Saturdays at 1pm in the Staff Training room of the ATP (Adult Training Program) Building, # 88- N.E. corner Fircrest Campus.

All are welcome to any of the FoF meetings.

Next Board/ Membership Meetings

JUNE 13, SEPT. 12, OCT. 10, NOV. 14 -Annual meeting and elections

NO MEETINGS IN JULY, AUGUST, DECEMBER UNLESS NEEDED.

Home Unit Representatives:

**Third Tuesday of the month at 1 PM
Fircrest, Admin Bldg. Baker or Cascade
Rooms.**

Ad Hoc Meetings:

Called as needed. Locations vary

Officers:

*President: Jim Hardman, J.D.,
C.P.G*

Vice President: Paul Strand

Secretary: Candace B. Braley

Treasurer: Candace B. Braley

Directors:

Terri Anderson

Betty Cantrell, RN, BSN

Saskia Davis, RN

Maureen Durkan, RN

Gordon Ellison-Osolin

*Kristin Ellison-Osolin, M .Div.
Rev.*

Liz Patterson

Kent Questad, Ph.D.

Launi Whedon

Cynthia Willman, O.T.

Emeritus: Dot Brenchley,

Jo Bousman, Ruth Durkan,

Alice Hardman, MSW, C.P.G.

Jean Huntley, Phil Scheier

Advisory:

Michael Johnson J.D., C.P.G.

Maria Walsh, Janet Way

LEGISLATIVE NEWS: 2015Visit actiondd.org for MORE INFORMATION**SB 5243 – A Bill to halt the downsizing of YVS (Yakima Valley School) and add more respite and crisis beds and services for the community at YVS**

Sponsored by Sen. Jim Honeyford and Rep. Norm Johnson it has been a roller coaster ride throughout this session. It passed out of the Ways and Means committee to the Senate Floor at the 11th hour only to be hit with another amendment. With great diligence, by our supporters and Action DD, the bill passed the Senate.

In the House, however, the Bill faced unfriendly opposition from Rep. Ruth Keigi, Chair of the Early Learning and Human Services Committee. In spite of the hurdle in the House, Sen. Honeyford was able to get operational dollars for respite and crisis care in the Senate Version of the Operating Budget for YVS.

It isn't over yet, but there is reason to be optimistic. Action DD Lobbyist, Rick Jensen reminds us that any bill introduced in the 'long session' is still in action in the ensuing short session. ***So we'll be back!***

LV RHC Update

Lakeland Village Nursing Facility (NF) has been under close scrutiny by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS). This issue began with the movement of residents from the ICF to the NF without the proper assessments being done. You may have heard that there were some 60,000 issues found with Lakeland. Please know that in this early finding each client without proper assessment resulted in a single black mark against LV. The number of clients involved multiplied by the number of days the issue went uncorrected – Sample: 27 clients x 365 days resulted in 7,855 uncorrected issues.

After months of federal and state surveyor/auditor visits a Decertification Notice was sent to Lakeland Village Nursing Facility in early March. Surveyors/auditors continued to inspect LV and found that there had been sufficient corrections to withdraw the Decertification. Now CMS & the State are looking at the ICF-Intermediate Care Facility at Lakeland Village.

It is very possible that a hard look (audits & surveys) will be taken at all the RHCs in Washington State.

Terri Anderson

WinchesterWillie@comcast.net

425.788.4529

***Please take time to thank the legislators who have worked so hard for our RHCs.
Senators Honeyford, Keiser, King, Conway, Chase & Schoesler as well as
Rep. Frank Chopp.***

Federal law would allow SSI recipients to have more than \$2,000 in savings, but State must approve program.

In December, Congress passed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. This allows individuals with disabilities who receive SSI and other government benefits to save beyond the \$2,000 resource limit, now in place, without risking loss of benefits.

To make these accounts available in Washington State, [House Bill 2063](#) must be passed. Because of confusion between ABLE and the DD Endowment Trust, the Washington State DD Council has prepared a simple fact sheet showing a side-by-side comparison between the two programs.

Visit ActionDD.org to get the details on all legislative news.

FoF Representatives to attend the**VOR Annual Conference June 6-10 and Washington Initiative**

FoF members Terri & Bill Anderson will be attending the conference. Terri is our state VOR Coordinator, together with her side kick, Bill, who has all the fiscal RHC facts in his head, will be attending and meeting with our Members of Congress and their staff to educate and convey the importance of residential choices and other needed programs. FoF provides a small stipend toward expenses to our advocates representing and speaking for our loved ones. Washington DC is expensive. We thank them for their personal contribution of energy, time and out of pocket money.

Your dues and donations help with their hard work in DC.

CAMPUS NEWS

Dr. Singh retires after 30 years with Fircrest -24 as Superintendent

It's difficult to find a way to give tribute to a reluctant honoree. Dr. Singh was invited to our meeting at which she was to be acknowledged upon announcement of her retirement. With absolute parameters she accepted.....no party, no gifts, no really! We were delighted that she came to the meeting not knowing we had a hand crafted thank you card with messages from the board and FoF members, her name etched on the FoF Awards Plaque listing those who have provided outstanding service for the benefit of Fircrest Residents...all presented with a toast in flutes of sparkling cider and.... oops a cake.! .Not a party cake -a *thank you cake*.

Her leadership style, as FoF was present to it, was one of quiet humility, reserve and perseverance in the face of pressures from the powers that be as well as the stresses of managing a major facility. She managed on two fronts- as superintendent *and* medical director.

Always gracious and professional when frustrated & impatient parents and guardians confronted her with complaints and criticisms. We expected a great deal from this woman. We may have not always agreed with her decisions, but she was, at heart a sympathetic advocate.

The end result is that Fircrest is still a surviving RHC with many positive things going forward - thanks to her maintaining a standard of high quality services during some very difficult times.

We thank her for allowing us to show our gratitude for her years watching over our loved ones at Fircrest and wish her health and joy in what ever she and her family decide to pursue.

A message she imparted to us was that the partnership between Friends of Fircrest and Administration has been a positive interaction which has improved the campus in many ways.

Her last day was March 31st. Visit the friendsoffircrest.org web site for photos of the event.

Leadership Changes at Fircrest

Jeff Flesner is stepping in as Active Superintendent. He is no stranger to Fircrest. You may recall he was our emcee at the Therapy Garden dedication. Former financial director at Fircrest he knows the ins and outs of the operation. We welcome him and look forward to his taking over the position left by Dr. Singh. He will certainly hear from us! Hope he is prepared for FOF!

Megan DeSmet, new Assistant Superintendent, has served as PAT director at both Rainier School and FHM Center. She attended our April HUR meeting to get acquainted with parents and guardians.

Position most needed now is for a new Medical Director. Dr. Singh acted as both Super and Medical Director. This position is crucial and is required by law for SNF (PAT N).

Other staff news: Dr. Okos is serving part time from his retirement. It is good to have his presence on campus and selfishly we hope he never fully retires.

Staff has been hired to catch up with backload of assessment documentation work and are making progress.

Because of budget limits for Full Time Employees positions are hires on a non-permanent status. Requests for additional FTE's were made by Dr. Singh.

Home Unit Representatives News

The May meeting focused on contents of a mini parent guide book to Fircrest. This book will be assembled and paid for by FoF for all parents & guardians of Fircrest residents. We wanted to coordinate the publication with administration, but it became apparent that they had neither the time nor interest to devote to it. So we will give it a go and try for Fall distribution.

ATP staff expressed an interest in developing a "Hot House" program for ATP participants. The Hot Houses are installed next to the ATP buildings at south east end of the campus. Plans to construct garden benches is underway. The Hot Houses were paid for by DSHS. FoF and the Sallee Grant has funded start up materials.

Fun Fest Planning will be addressed at the next HUR meeting. Your support is needed. Join us June 16th.

Terri Anderson: winchesterwillie@comcast.net or Betty Cantrell: cantrell_e@comcast.net (Chairs)

MORE CAMPUS NEWS

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE FIRCREST RESIDENTS

There are Fircrest residents who do not have a guardian. Would you be willing to serve? Guardianship is a legal relationship and involves the Court system. There are duties and responsibilities which must be taken seriously but it is an opportunity to do some considerable good for someone who lives at Fircrest.

Not every resident at Fircrest has family able to speak for them or to consider the pros and cons of treatment options in order to give or withhold consents. Residents benefit from someone in their corner independent from state influences. Many believe that the mere existence of a guardian engenders more careful considerations in facilities by care providers. Your knowledge about Fircrest makes you especially valuable. It also will provide you with additional learning opportunities that will aid you in advocating for your own loved one.

If you are interested please contact Friends of Fircrest president J.R. Hardman by email or phone: jamesrhardman@gmail.com TEL. 206 367 6116 or Fircrest Psychologist Katia Ramirez at [206-361-3471](tel:206-361-3471).

Jim Hardman

Shannon Tootill Spent Her Last Days at Fircrest

Resident's Obituary submitted by Chaplain Kristen Ellison-Oslin

Shannon Tootill was borne to An and David Tootill November 15, 1993. She was extraordinary from the beginning. Golden haired and blue-eyed, she had a singular beauty and early on was addressed as "Princess".

She came from Provail Supported Living in Bellevue before coming to Fircrest to receive hospice services on unit 317/18. I met her then. She was seated between two staff and didn't seem ill on sight. She was calm when I met her, but later jumped up and quite ran into the next room staff right there with her.

Shannon Ann Tootill, passed from complications of MPSIII (Sanfilippo Syndrome) on December 17, 2014. She is survived by her parents, An and David, and her younger brother, Eric.

Her printed obituary reads, "Although her illness consumed her in the end, Shannon was always a fighter and valiantly resisted her condition. She was a smart and beautiful girl with a dazzling smile. She loved movies, music, jigsaw puzzles, bedtime stories, the cat she named Harry Potter. She found joy in swimming, dancing, trips with her family, the beach, and her friends at school. She had such an energy and zest for life we thought she would have much longer." All who met her would agree. Doctors sent her to us [Fircrest] deeming that she certainly had less than 6 months to live. 500+ days later she showed no signs of leaving. She turned to go so fast, we were stunned.

Her parents wrote, "Shannon charmed the people she met, including the many wonderful caregivers who provided love and support that enhanced her quality of life, even as her condition stole her abilities. We'd like to thank her teachers: the Mercer Island School District teachers who truly went above and beyond for her; those at CHILD school, who did so much to make her middle years happy ones; and those at Fircrest, who made her last days so comfortable."

Well, we thank you for allowing us to be a part of Shannon's life. Yes, she charmed us as well.

If you would like to celebrate Shannon's life, please donate to the National MPS Society (mppsociety.org; PO 14686, Durham NC 27709) in her name. - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/seattletimes/obituary.aspx?pid=173531636#sthash.qIG7QdZW.dpuf>

Friends of Fircrest send their belated condolences to Shannon's family & friends.

Wi-Fi access may be provided for Fircrest residents who qualify

FoF ad hoc committee, assigned to look into getting campus access for those residents who would benefit from the communication technology, has learned that there is justification for parents/guardians to request Wi-Fi availability [currently available for ICF residents] be included as an "Active Treatment". Parents or guardians who feel this is a beneficial, need to contact their HPA and be specific with their request....*person may need to communicate with family via Skype or Face Time program or it may be required for their school program as Active Treatment.*

Since "Active Treatment" is not a CMS requirement in the NF, the care team would need to assess the cost effectiveness for Wi-Fi airtime as appropriate for each client.

It boils down to this question: If the person has a communication deficit or some other deficit that could be addressed with adaptive equipment, could it be helped by "airtime" access in their home unit?

Parents/Guardians may request Wi-Fi access as part of their resident's Active Treatment program. Contact your HPA. For further questions contact Fircrest Speech Therapy staff.

FIRCREST ART/GARDEN PROGRAMS ARE *G R O W I N G*..... from on line FoF news

Watch our gardens “produce”....

The Fircrest Campus will be experiencing a growth spurt. Two new Greenhouses and walkways have been installed. “Just Garden” has erected 3 new raised beds to enhance the new garden/nutrition programs being put in place at ATP. Spearheading this project will be Katia Ramirez, Psychologist and the Dietary/Nutrition Staff at Fircrest.

“Just Garden” volunteers were on Campus on Saturday, March 21st for “the build”. Along with the actual construction they will also be filling the beds with earth from the Cedar Grove soils Company.

The Sallee Grant that Friends of Fircrest was awarded last year will provide additional money to help purchase seeds, plants and other items needed for the Greenhouses & beds.

If anyone has access to coffee grounds from Starbucks, Tully's or an Espresso Stand, we can use them for the Worm Project at Art/Nutrition/ ATP Programs. Coffee grounds are used in the worm beds. Worms are a form of nutrition and compost odor control.



Fircrest Resident-Worm Farmer -in Training

On January 12th, Fircrest Art Group members accompanied Albert as he made his first worm delivery to Sky Nursery. In preparation, Albert with his staff, Kelly, had counted out 500 premium worms.

The staff at Sky Nursery warmly welcomed Fircrest Clients and Sky's Director, Emily, provided an informative demonstration on worms and worm care to our group. Albert added his worms to their receiving worm bed and Emily promptly handed him his cash payment.

Albert was quite pleased to go visit their café and order his favorite beverage. He smiled, and said “happy” and continued to express his happiness throughout that day. The following morning; he could still be heard laughing.

Albert and the Art Group, with the assistance of our talented Carpenter Dan, made the first worm bed in June. In December, Monroe Correctional Complex built a commercial state of the art worm bin for Albert.

Over the course of this year Albert has been building his skills, and pride as he cares for his worm bins.

Currently Monroe Correctional Complex is building a second customized worm bin for the Fircrest program and is sending more worms.

We now have a second client in training with Albert. Albert continues to make regular deliveries to Sky Nursery. Please be sure to tell the folks at Sky Nursery “hello and thank you for supporting Fircrest”.



Albert delivers worms to Sky Nursery

Worms For Sale:

500 for \$25.00, 150 for \$10.00, 50 for \$5.00

You may contact Fircrest, to place garden worm orders or for questions: Katia Ramirez PsyD: katia.ramirez@dshs.wa.gov

New Sensory Equipment ordered for Therapy Rooms

The freshly painted “Active” and “Calming” Sensory rooms in the 500 building -lower level, are being equipped, respectively, with new sensory items. Requests from Fircrest Therapy staff for the new equipment was approved by all attending the April 11, FoF meeting and was made possible with the funds from the Sallee Grant that was awarded to FoF in 2013.

The rooms will be available to Fircrest residents and respite clients as part of their treatment plans. Hopefully all the equipment has arrived and in place. Request a tour.

Next on the staff wish list is an interactive aroma panel and bean bag chair.

All these items are important for the care and treatment of our residents.

The Grant Funds have been all put to good use. To reapply for funds we need a grant writer...Anyone experienced? Contact Jim Hardman.

Membership Renewal Time.....A little later this year..

Dear Friends of Fircrest,

We usually do our annual membership renewals in the winter. However we kept focus on legislative activities. So you haven't heard from us since a legislative bulletin was sent in February.

We are doing quarterly newsletters with in between announcements or bulletins as needed.

Please visit our web site, which is now **friendsoffircrest.org** (old domain was fircrestfriends.org) to keep up with Fircrest news and **ActionDD.org** to keep up with legislative and other pertinent information and interesting links.

As you recall, we tried to get members to receive our newsletter electronically, but unfortunately we discovered only a small percentage of those who signed up were going to our site. So we are back to snail mail newsletters, at least for the time being.

Once again we are grateful for your ongoing financial support. Your annual dues keep us keeping on and fighting the never ending battles to keep RHCs as vital care options.

Please update your information by sending us the form below. Consider a membership for family or friends who share your concerns for the 4% of the population of ID/DD folks needing RHC levels care and for the rest who need a different level of care such as in Community or home based programs. We advocate for quality care wherever it is delivered. Help us continue to fulfill our mission. **Thank you!**

Please come to our combined board and membership meetings. Your ideas are important. Meeting dates are on page 2

Friends of Fircrest 2015 Membership Renewal & Donation Form

NAME: _____ LEGISLATIVE DIST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TEL: _____ E-MAIL: _____ CELL: _____

PLEASE SIGN ME UP TO GET FoF Newsletters, Bulletins & announcements

ANNUAL DUES: \$25.00 FAMILY ___ \$15.00 INDIVIDUAL ___ ADDITIONAL DONATION \$ _____

Check Total: \$ _____

Please make check to Friends of Fircrest

Kindly indicate on your check how much you are dedicating for membership if additional donation is included with a single check. Your donations are tax deductible. Be sure to keep a record. Questions? Contact Candace at 206 5271125 cbbraley@q.com

Thank you for mailing this form with your dues /donations and comments to:

Friends of Fircrest Attn. FoF Treasurer,

c/o Fircrest School RHC, 15230 15th Avenue NE, Shoreline, WA 98155

Comments:



c/o Fircrest School, RHC
15230 15th. Ave. N. E.
Shoreline, WA 98155

Friends of Fircrest Mission Statement

FRIENDS OF FIRCREST IS A VOLUNTEER 501(C) (3), NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHT TO QUALITY LIV-
ING AND CARE CHOICES FOR ALL CITIZENS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (ID/DD)

Fircrest Residents, in the Adult Training Program, earn wages for preparing this newsletter for mailing.

Save the Date:

- SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 11:30- 2:30 "FUN IN THE SUN" CARNIVAL -
SPONSORED BY PAL'S CLUB IN THE FIRCREST ACTIVITIES BUILDING GYMNASIUM
Everyone is welcome to this inclusive event for friends and family with special needs.
BBQ lunch, music live performance & games. Questions & RSVP by June 6: palsclubs@gmail.com
SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1pm FRIENDS OF FIRCREST GENERAL MEETING - ATP Room
Building # 88
TUESDAY, June 16, 1 pm HOME UNIT REPRESENTATIVES MEETING Cascade or
Baker Rm. Admin Building
SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 10am-3pm ACTIONDD MEETING AT YVS -Visit ActionDD.org
THURSDAY JULY 23 10:30-3:00 FUNFEST 2015 - WATCH FOR DETAILS *

Reminder: there are no FoF Meetings in July or August (ad hoc meetings only. All FoF meetings
are now to be combined Board and Membership meetings monthly as scheduled.

*FUN-FEST 2015 This annual campus festival is put on with the tremendous effort of
the Fircrest Recreational Staff. This is an event for all Fircrest families, friends & staff to
celebrate together. So please arrange to take the time to attend- play hooky! (Please
note, Fircrest staff, schedule meetings so you can partake). Come watch the parade then join
us on the campus commons for games & live music. Stop by the FoF hospitality tent for bever-
ages, refreshments, treats and party favors. And do stay for the complementary BBQ lunch
provided for all home units, staff and guests. Then watch staff get soaked in the dunk tank.
Great fun! Bring picnic blanket, sun screen and meet other parents, families, staff and friends!
This is our yearly gathering. Do keep the day dedicated for Fun Fest at Fircrest!
Our attendance shows staff that their hard work is appreciated.