

Fairhill Friends and Supporters,

Do take a moment to read the Holiday Spirit excerpt below from last Sunday's Plain Dealer. It featured Fairhill and Benjamin Rose, bringing attention to the needs of older adults in our community. If you'd like to support the Senior Guest House and Fairhill in these last days of 2008, please visit our website at <https://payments.auctionpay.com/ver3/?id=w026212> for easy on-line donating or mail a check to Fairhill Center, 12200 Fairhill Road, Cleveland 44120.

THE PLAIN DEALER

HOLIDAY SPIRIT 2008: CARING FOR THE ELDERLY

Fairhill Center provides help for everything from assisted living to companionship for aging baby boomers - Holiday Spirit

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Plain Dealer Reporter

Aging baby boomers face different challenges than their forebears because many live longer.

Living longer comes with new problems. The Benjamin Rose Institute and the Fairhill Center provide different kinds of help for everything from assisted living to companionship. Each is a participant in this year's Plain Dealer Charities Holiday Spirit campaign.

The Benjamin Rose Institute, 11900 Fairhill Road, uses money from an endowment fund, other grants, gifts and fees to help Cleveland-area seniors and their families in a series of programs including adult day care, partial hospitalization, social work, mental health services and a simple program called Senior Companions, for when an older person just needs someone to talk to.

Becky Teter said the Benjamin Rose Institute serves people ages 60 and above, as well as those older than 55 through a mental health program.

"We have a program that helps clients with dementia or memory impairment," she said.

"It's a day program, so the person can be dropped off here, where they can take part in therapeutic activities that stimulate their minds. Also, it's a chance for them to socialize with other people, rather than be cooped up in the houses by themselves."

The Benjamin Rose Institute has a home health-care program that provides nursing services, rehabilitation therapy, even housecleaning and personal grooming for senior citizens.

Betty McKenzie has been getting counseling for depression and health problems.

"When she first came to us a year ago she was anxious and depressed, very concerned about memory problems," Teter said. "She meets with a social worker twice a month to help her cope with her anxiety and the resulting depression. We showed her that she was not losing her memory, which has helped her cope."

McKenzie said she was grateful for the sessions with the social worker for helping her cope.

"I was having a lot of problems," she said. "We talked about ways to make things go easier. I'm not saying things are great, but they have certainly improved."

Another example is Maurice Hall, a 69-year-old Cleveland Heights man who is legally blind and has difficulty getting out to shop or getting to doctor's appointments. The Benjamin Rose Institute handles those things for him.

"I have a social worker who figured out all my scheduling," he said. "We determine when I need to go to the market or see my doctor and she arranges for RTA's special paratransit to pick me up and come back for me. Without her, I don't know what I'd do."

The Fairhill campus has served the Greater Cleveland community for over 78 years. It has become a virtual shopping mall for senior citizens, a place where they can come and explore 25 organizations located at the campus at 12200 Fairhill Road. Though it's near the Benjamin Rose Institute, it is a separate facility.

"Fairhill is a place where families can figure out how to age successfully," said Adaora Nzelibe Schmiedl, Fairhill's director of development and marketing. "We're a 10-acre campus with 25 different organizations present. People can come here and talk about what they need. We can direct them to the agency that can help."

Fairhill's own Senior Guest House offers temporary housing for up to 90 days for adults who have lost their home in a tragedy like flood or fire or had to be removed from the house because of unhealthy problems caused by hoarding.

The Senior Guest House was a lifesaver for Gene and Gertrude Gordon after a storm knocked out electrical power at their Cleveland home on Sept. 17 for seven days. Gene Gordon has respiratory problems that require him to sleep with a respirator and to be hooked up to a respirator three times a day.

"We could not find any agency to help us, then someone recommended Fairhill," said Gertrude Gordon, 67. "They immediately gave us a place to stay and hooked my husband up with the machines he needs to live. Without them, he could have died. They gave us a place to stay, fed us three times a day - they were wonderful."

Gertrude said that when she returned home after several days and saw how damaged her house was, she was overcome and had to be hospitalized.

"It was so awful, I just got overly upset," she said. "They let my husband stay on while I was in the hospital and while our children cleaned up the house."

The couple stayed at the Senior Guest House for four days and said how important it was to have shelter from the storm.

Fairhill also has a set of services to allow grandparents to raise their grandchildren.

In Cuyahoga County, about 11,000 grandparents now raise their grandchildren. About 20 percent of them live in poverty and require public assistance, but subsidized housing for seniors almost always forbids children.

That requirement penalizes many well-meaning grandparents.

Fairhill Center is developing affordable housing that would accommodate grandparents and their young charges.

The development - a \$3.5 million project known as Kinship Village - is expected to open in 2010 in the Fairhill

Road campus.

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