

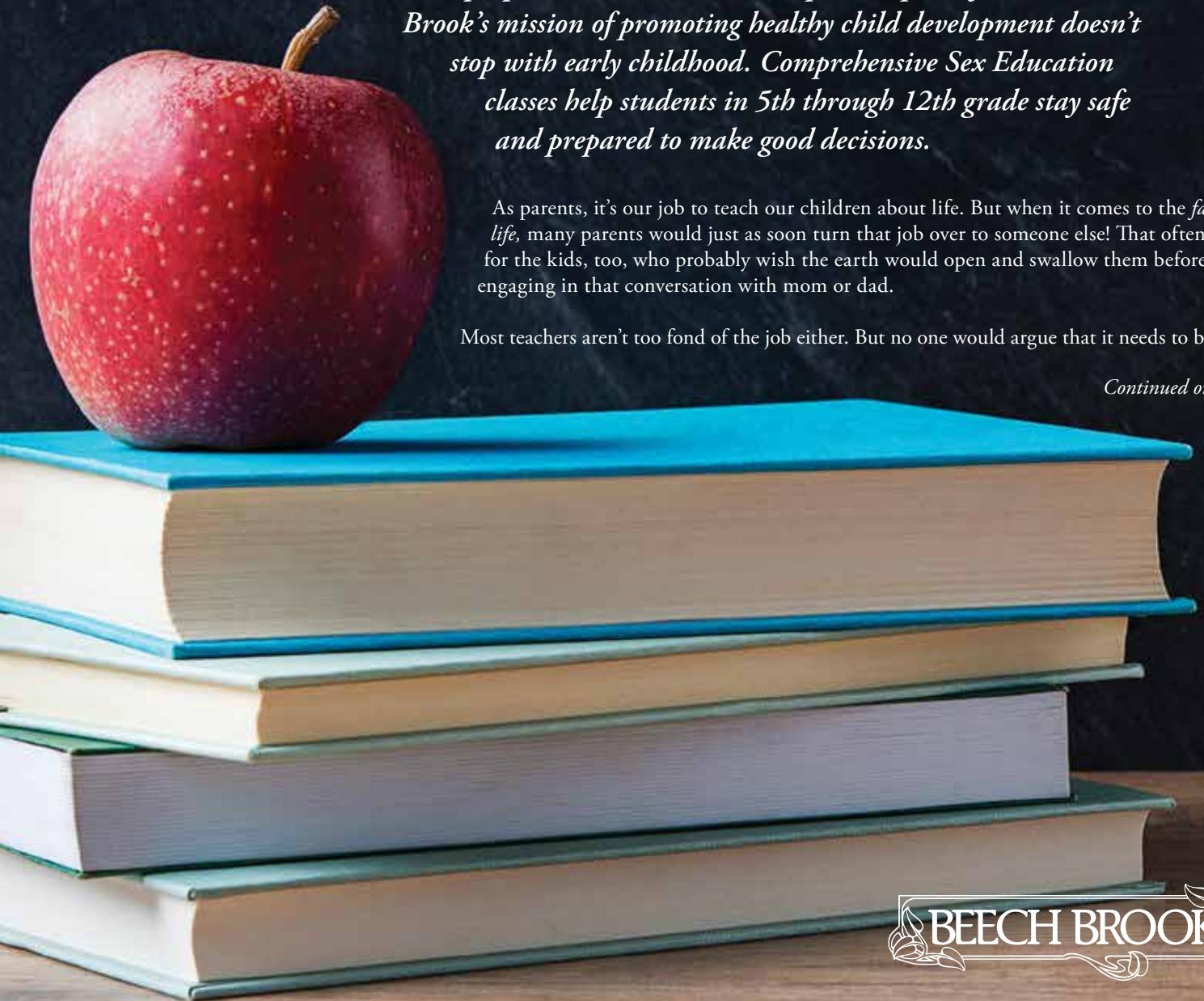
Teaching the Birds and the Bees in today's world

Most people don't know that an important part of Beech Brook's mission of promoting healthy child development doesn't stop with early childhood. Comprehensive Sex Education classes help students in 5th through 12th grade stay safe and prepared to make good decisions.

As parents, it's our job to teach our children about life. But when it comes to the *facts of life*, many parents would just as soon turn that job over to someone else! That often goes for the kids, too, who probably wish the earth would open and swallow them before engaging in that conversation with mom or dad.

Most teachers aren't too fond of the job either. But no one would argue that it needs to be done.

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A Message from Tom Royer, President/CEO



Tom Royer
President and CEO

At the Beech Ball this year — my first as President/CEO — I took the opportunity to share my personal Beech Brook story along with a look back at the organization's history of changing with

the times, as the needs of our community's children and families have changed. I'd like to share this with you now.

There are four things in my life that I am passionate about: my family, Greater Cleveland, Beech Brook and the Cleveland Browns!

I want to tell you a story about where Beech Brook has been, how my story is connected and where Beech Brook is going in the future.

As you all know, Beech Brook is an old organization, founded in 1852 as an orphanage for children whose parents had died during the cholera epidemic. The epidemic ended, and Beech Brook had to reinvent itself — the first of many times over the last 166 years. Sometimes we have been forced to make those changes, and sometimes we have simply decided to change because it was the right thing to do. But we have always changed and always for the better.

After there was no longer a need for orphanages, Beech Brook became a residential treatment facility for emotionally disturbed children. In 1925, Beech Brook moved to our Pepper Pike campus, which was another major change.

By the 1950s, Beech Brook was on the cutting edge of treating emotionally disturbed children and became a nationally known residential treatment center.

And that's when my story and Beech Brook's intertwine.

My grandfather was a coal miner in Pennsylvania and my grandmother was a homemaker who never finished high school when they decided to move to Cleveland to find work and help their family thrive in the mid 1950s. This was a major change that took a great deal of courage. It was not an easy change, but eventually it was a change for the better.

They became house parents for Beech Brook where they lived on campus in one of the old cottages with 10-12 children. I still have their original contract: \$179 per month and one weekend off per month!

In the '70s, Beech Brook started to develop community-based services to help children and families in their own homes and neighborhoods. At the same time, a little boy entered residential treatment and captured the hearts of my aunt, who also worked for Beech Brook as a cottage supervisor, and my uncle. They became his foster parents and eventually adopted my cousin. Beech Brook also launched its first group home in Chagrin Falls, pushing out from our main campus. My grandparents ran it, and I would stay there on weekends with them sometimes. You can see why working at Beech Brook is much more than just a job to me!

In the 1990s, foster care was growing at Beech Brook. Community-based programs were really taking hold. Our school-based program was growing rapidly. Beech Brook was again on the cutting edge, one of the first organizations to deliver family therapy.

The early 90s were an exciting time at Beech Brook! I was hired to work in our small school-based program (which was also an idea introduced by Beech Brook years before). At the same time, we merged with Family Health

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to add prevention and early intervention services to our growing continuum of care. We opened a parenting and drop-in center at the Carl B. Stokes Social Services Mall where we remain the anchor today.

Medicaid was changing and so were we. It was getting harder because the rules were growing more stringent and complex. In response, we began to build our infrastructure and develop standard operating procedures, focused on outcomes and satisfaction with services. It was scary, but also exciting. And the change...again...was for the better. It made *us* better.

By the early 2000s, Beech Brook's volume of community-based work surpassed the work we were doing on campus. We were serving thousands of children and families off campus each year to meet the growing and changing needs of our community. Residential treatment was changing, too. The kids were getting older. More disturbed. Exhibiting more violent behaviors. Cottages were locked down. Fences and gates went up. Playgrounds were surrounded by 10-foot high walls. It didn't feel much like treatment any more. Many of us were spending 80 percent or more of our time addressing serious problems... every single day.

In 2016, as many of you recall, we exited residential treatment to focus our time, energy and resources on *preventing* kids from getting to that level of care. Residential treatment is not a place we want our children to grow up. So, we also changed our mission.

Where is Beech Brook going now? I'm asked this question often, and while I can't say exactly where we will be in the future, I do know the direction.

We can look to the past to help understand where we are going in the future. Beginning in the early 1830s, cholera epidemics killed thousands of citizens in the United States. As many parents died, Beech Brook was there, providing shelter for children left behind. But this did not stem the tide of children needing homes and families. And, unfortunately, for people stricken with cholera, the treatment was often worse than the illness and directly treating cholera was not enough to stop people from dying.

What did work was addressing the root cause of the disease by improving sanitation and creating a clean water supply...in other words, prevention.

Today, Beech Brook is focused not on *treating* but on *preventing* the devastating toll of a new epidemic — abuse, trauma, daily exposure to violence, and the toxic stress of living in poverty — and its lifelong impact on our children, our families...and the future of our community. ***Our common community.***

We are moving upstream.

- We will address the needs of our community by getting closer to the root causes that lead to unsafe neighborhoods, child maltreatment and family dysfunction.

- We are growing our foster care program to *prevent* children from needing residential treatment.
- We are implementing community-based best practices that keep kids in their own homes, so they never have to enter the foster care system.
- We are providing school-based services so children can stay in community schools and achieve. And, we continue to grow our early childhood programs so more children show up at school socially and emotionally ready to learn, and fewer need our school-based services.
- We are rapidly growing prevention and early intervention services like parenting, integrated care, services that support stable housing, and services that help reconnect communities and police departments and foster positive relationships, not adversarial ones.

The world is changing, and we are changing with it. And we are moving forward with courage. Because this, too, will make us better.

So, we will promote healthy child development. We will strengthen children and families' abilities to overcome adversity and enhance family health and stability. Our new mission calls on us to not only address the symptoms of our community's problems, but to actively create better conditions where communities, families and children will THRIVE.

That is where we are going!



Continued from cover

For decades, Beech Brook's sex education programs have been doing just that, providing evidence-based, age-appropriate, balanced information that not only teaches the facts of life but much more: personal safety, healthy decision-making, reproductive health and development; pregnancy and STD prevention; and social and emotional development.

Nicole Borowy-Salamon is the director of Beech Brook's Comprehensive Sex Education programs.

"The kids often present like they know everything," says Borowy-Salamon. "Most are stand-offish and not very engaged at the beginning. But by the end, they're very appreciative. Many express thanks and say that no one had ever told them this before... Students who don't have anyone to talk to or don't feel they can share certain things often come to our teachers with personal questions."

Each student also completes an evaluation, the results of which are analyzed by Case Western Reserve University and prove the effectiveness of the program.

The classes also pave the way for parents to talk more openly with their kids. All parents receive a letter ahead of time and, in some schools, have a chance to attend a parent meeting first.

Each curriculum is designed with the age and developmental levels of the students in mind.

The course for 5th graders, for example, covers bullying, feelings, cyber safety and personal safety. At this age, questions often revolve around physical development and changes, and for the girls, babies, according to teachers Karen Pruitt and Renee Whiteside. Both are trained in all the curriculums, and each has more than ten years' experience.

The younger kids are apprehensive at the beginning, says Pruitt, "but when we see the evaluations, they often say things like 'We thought this was going to be gross but we really learned a lot!'"

Last year more than 650 students in 21 schools benefitted from one of the curriculums offered by Beech Brook:

- **The Art of Personal Living (APL)**, provided to 5th graders, is a program developed by Beech Brook's Family Health Program in the 1940s.
- **Draw the Line** for middle school students
- **Reducing the Risk** for high school students
- **Get Real** which offers two age-appropriate curriculums for middle and high school.

Beech Brook is willing to teach the classes in any school district that is interested, says Program Director Nicole Borowy-Salamon, but a high priority is targeting the eastside inner ring suburbs where teen pregnancy rates are highest. While teen pregnancies have declined in Cuyahoga County, the rate continues to be higher than national standards.

Except for the Art of Personal Living, which school districts pay for themselves, Beech Brook partners with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health to provide programming under the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Adolescent Health. Borowy-Salamon also served on an advisory committee to develop the 216teens website, www.216teens.org, which provides resources and information on pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted infections, relationships and much more.

From the 40's to the present, children continue to learn about themselves as total people — emotional, social and physical. "The Art of Personal Living" is designed for school children of all ages.



Teaching the Art of Personal Living is not new to Beech Brook!

Older kids, on the other hand, tend to think they already know everything.

"The problem is, a lot of their information is wrong," says Whiteside. "They have a lot to learn about protecting themselves. They think they know it all, but they don't understand the emotional part. Girls especially often feel pressured to have sex even though they're not ready."

"A lot of kids are also watching porn. We can tell by the questions they ask that that's where they're getting their information," says Whiteside.

Learning to put safety first

All the curriculums are abstinence-based, meaning they teach abstinence as the only certain way to be safe. But they believe it's vital for the students to know how to protect themselves, no matter what paths they choose.

As part of their chapter on sexually transmitted diseases, for example, they have a dynamic speaker who has been living with HIV for 22 years. You can hear a pin drop during those sessions, both teachers say.

Pruitt and Whiteside agree that social media has had a dramatic impact on the students they've seen in recent years.

"Social media governs their lives," says Whiteside. "We do a whole chapter on that. Kids have no filters. They'll do anything, like provocative poses, just to get more 'likes'."

"I tell them, 'If you don't want your grandma to see it, don't put it on social media!'" she laughs.

Bringing dark secrets to light

There are frequent — and painful — revelations as well. Often you can see when the realization dawns on someone who has experienced abuse, says Whiteside.

"In almost every school, someone reveals they've been sexually abused, or they might describe a situation and ask, 'Was this rape?'"

Not long ago, another girl, 14, revealed that an adult was forcing her to have sex. She asked, "Do I have to do that?"

While the teachers are not licensed counselors, they are trained in trauma and can support the student through the next steps.

And as mandatory reporters, the teachers will work with the child or with whomever the child chooses to make a report to Children's Services.

Everyone leaves the course with resources at hand. For example, a homework assignment may be to identify a health clinic they could use or a helpful person to whom they can confide.

A voice and a choice

One of the most important lessons they teach kids is respect for their bodies and for others and to know they have "a choice and a voice."

"A question came up recently, 'If you've told a person no and they don't stop, what's that?' Girls often don't know they have a choice,



Teachers Karen Pruitt (left) and Renee Whiteside (right) with Program Director Nicole Borowy-Salomon.

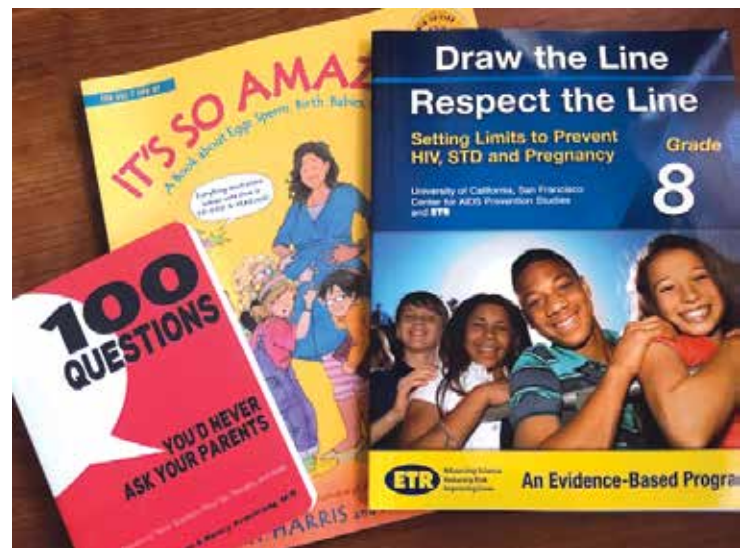
and boys often expect the girls they've been with to say yes," says Whiteside.

The girls don't realize that is a sexual assault, she says.

Looking ahead

It's a safe bet to say the early teachers of the Art of Personal Living in the 1940s couldn't have imagined how the course curriculum would need to change to reflect the influences of today's world. Over the years, the course has changed to reflect the onset of AIDS/HIV, media influences, the internet and now social media.

While currently the agency is teaching only 5th – 12th graders, the course has been



Teachers have access to a wide range of resources to support each curriculum.

modified for children as young as kindergarten in the past. The agency is always looking for additional funding and resources to expand the program so that as many children as possible are empowered to protect themselves and make good choices as they develop.

A festive evening in the Flats!

Against a backdrop of the Cleveland skyline and bridges, about 300 partygoers gathered to be bridgebuilders to hope at Beech Ball 2018.

Thank you to our awesome co-chairs, our generous sponsors and to everyone who bought tickets, tables, raffle tickets, auction packages and more! With your help, Beech Brook raised nearly \$140,000 for the kids and families we serve.

Special thanks to this year's Beacon of Hope Family whose story inspired our guests to pledge more than \$48,000: Timeka and Virgil Clark and son Allen.

Visit www.beechbrook.org to hear how the Clarks found the help they needed in our Intensive Home-Based Treatment Program.



Board Chair Brandon Miller welcomed partygoers and kicked off the program.



Our Co-Chairs: Tracy and Tom Seifert, Jennifer and Doug Pinkerton, and Tracy Crandall. We missed Dave Crandall who was out of town!



Board member Chuck Zellmer and his wife Ann hosted a table of Beech Brook staff so they could learn first-hand about their work with children and families.



Beech Brook President/CEO Tom Royer and wife Nancy enjoy the pre-dinner festivities with guests John Seewald and Michelle Ridella.



No one gets an auction going better than Bob Hale who kept the bidding moving at high speed.



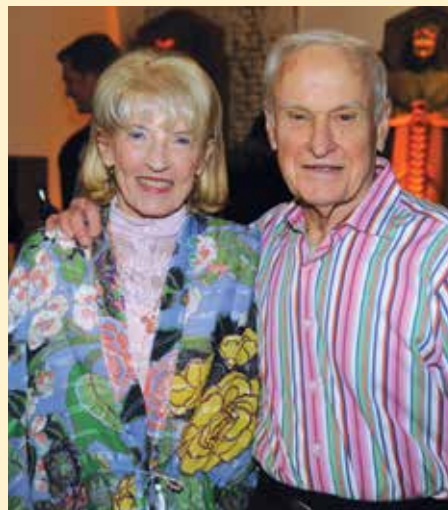
The last call for raffle tickets sent everyone, including Nancy Royer, scrambling to win one of our great items!



Although Timeka Clark wasn't able to attend the Beech Ball, her aunt Dora Steward proved to be a great stand-in at the event. Pictured with Dora are Allen and Virgil Clark. Visit www.beechbrook.org to meet Timeka and hear how the Clarks found the help they needed in our Intensive Home-Based Treatment Program.



Board member Terry Owen and wife Edda had a major impact on the success of the Beech Ball through their company PRADCO, as a Supporting Sponsor, underwriting of the photo booth, donation of valuable auction packages and their personal support for the Beacon of Hope.



A Beech Ball without Kathy and Jim Pender's support just wouldn't be the same!

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Beech Brook's Mission

Helping children and families thrive by promoting healthy child development, strengthening the ability to overcome adversity, and enhancing family health and stability.

216.831.2255

www.beechbrook.org

Beech Brook is a contract agency of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County.

The recipe for a perfect summer evening...

a rooftop bar...our city skyline... cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Just add friends who care about kids and families to make it complete!

Please be our guest at a kickoff event for **The Friends of Beech Brook** and celebrate summer on the beautiful Azure Rooftop Lounge at The 9.

The only price of admission: Your enthusiasm and creative thinking about how we can work together to support Beech Brook's mission of helping children and families thrive!

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

5:30-8 p.m.

**Metropolitan at the 9
2017 E. 9th St., Cleveland**

RSVP by June 19 to aschneider@beechbrook.org
or 216.831.2255, ext. 2286

