

Letter to the Editor
Thomas P. Royer
Beech Brook President/CEO
April 9, 2020

Once again, I feel the need to respond to the inaccurate information and accusations being circulated about Beech Brook.

First, we are not insensitive to the community regarding the impact of selling our property. We understand that every resident is entitled to their own opinion, and we appreciate those who have expressed their concerns thoughtfully and respectfully. But others continue to circulate misinformation and rewrite Beech Brook's history to suit their own purposes.

We have always appreciated the support from many residents and from the city over the years, and we have tried to be a good partner in return. It is true that as a nonprofit, we do not pay property taxes; however, we were one of the largest, if not the largest, employer in the city for decades, and the city did benefit from our payroll taxes.

It's also true that we needed the services of the Police and Fire Departments for our residential program. They were fantastic partners, who understood the struggles of our kids, and we are forever grateful. It was only in recent years that we worked with older, more seriously troubled children and teens whose behavior led to more calls to the police and fire departments and which became a factor in our decision to discontinue that service - at a great financial loss. But we also responded to concerns from the city by erecting a 10-foot fence around our campus, again at great expense, to minimize calls to our campus..

When we put the property on the market, we were agnostic about its future use. At the time, the Western Reserve Land Conservancy was notified of our intent to sell – before the property was under contract. No one from there contacted me, then or since, to discuss a purchase, despite what has been said.

It has been implied by those who have no understanding about the Wade family's role in our history that they would somehow be horrified by the property sale. The donation of this land, then a farm out in the country, was not a one-time gift but part of their ongoing support. Generations of Wade family members served on the Beech Brook Board for well over 130 years

and were actively involved in every transition, including the sale of the property built by the family in Cleveland in the 1870s. Astute businesspeople themselves, they understood that the organization must change as the needs of children and families changed and to do that, it must remain financially viable. Today we continue to honor that intent by pursuing programs that keep children out of institutions and in families and by making financially responsible decisions.

Finally, I do not ignore people who reach out to me. I have not received any communications or requests for meeting that have gone unanswered. I am willing to speak with anyone about this issue, and I am hoping not to continue this back and forth in the newspaper. Please email me directly at troyer@beechbrook.org, and I assure you that I will respond.