

InTouch

A Newsletter
Published By



THE OHIO MASONIC
COMMUNITIES
RESOURCE CENTER

WINTER
2025

Helping a Veteran

Western Reserve Masonic Community resident Ronna Yoho spoke with our Intake Coordinator, Rachel Lancaster, and asked for assistance in finding a foldable electric wheelchair for her husband, Richard. Ronna shared that Richard was having a hard time walking to the woodshop and other activities on campus. After discovering that Richard was a veteran, Rachel was able to contact the Medina County VA and asked if they had funds to help. Unfortunately, the VA was not able to help since Richard did not serve in combat, but they did suggest applying through the Medina County Veteran Memorial Fund, a local nonprofit. The application was submitted mid-July. The Yoho's application was approved, and the electric wheelchair was delivered and assembled by the first week of August. Richard shared he is extremely happy that he is able to continue going down to the woodshop daily and attending events throughout the building.

Pictured right: Mr. Richard Yoho, member of Cortland Lodge #529



Back to School Program a Success!



The back-to-school program was a huge success this year. The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center was able to help 79 children from 21 households with funds for school supplies. Special thanks to Chris Gibbs and his family who collected donations and purchased supplies, enabling us to assemble 34 bags of supplies for families to pick up at Western Reserve Masonic Community.

Pictured left: A sampling of the supplies that Chris Gibbs gathers and donated to the back-to-school program.

Know Your Fall Risk



Winter brings many things, like cherished moments and wonderful memories, but also comes that dreaded inclement weather! While the snow may be pretty, we still have to be able to get out to get necessary things like groceries and medications. The snow and ice are not only dangerous to drivers out on the roads, but they also bring a high incident of falls in older adults. Knowing your risk factors can help you stay safe in the cold weather months.

Every year, 1 in 4 older adults report a fall and 1 in 10 falls cause injury. In fact, it's the leading cause of injury for those 65 and older, and more than 88% of ER visits and hospitalizations for hip fractures were the result of falls. By knowing your fall risk you can significantly reduce the chance of falling.

What you need to know: Many falls can be prevented. During the winter months, watch for ice patches and extreme temperatures, and be cautious when shoveling snow.

While some of these risk factors may seem obvious, it is important to note that falling is not just a result of aging. Knowledge is a key factor and many falls can be prevented. Staying active can help to prevent the risk of falls. Failure to exercise regularly often results in poor muscle tone, decreased strength, and loss of bone mass and flexibility.

Falls can also be the result of clutter. At least one-third of all falls in older adults involve environmental hazards. The most common hazards in the home include tripping over objects on the floor, poor lighting, loose rugs, lack of grab bars or poorly located/mounted grab bars, and unsteady furniture.

By making some of these lifestyle changes, you can lower your chances of falling:

- Begin a regular exercise program
- Make your home safer
- Have your healthcare provider review your medications
- Have your vision checked

Many prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can contribute to falls by reducing mental alertness, offsetting balance, and causing drops in systolic blood pressure while standing. Taking multiple medications may also cause a greater risk of falling.

Age-related vision diseases, such as cataracts and glaucoma, can also increase the risk of falling. Have your vision checked. Vision diseases can alter depth perception, visual acuity, peripheral vision, and susceptibility to glare, which can contribute to falls.

By knowing your fall risk, you can reduce your chance of falling. Stay active-- participating in small group activities at the senior center or council on aging can help! Many senior living communities also offer short-term stay options or winter respite specials that include personalized fitness programs. Whether you need short-term rehabilitation or a break from the weather, a respite stay can eliminate the worries that come with the winter months, offering a lifestyle of independence and social interaction, combined with as much assistance as you need. **If you need help finding a place that offers respite care, or if you need help staying at home, call us at 877-881-1623. We can help!**

Helping Widows in Need



Enjoy these stories of The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center and its volunteers coming to the aid of widows

The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center recently provided critical financial assistance to a Masonic widow who faced significant hardship following an extended hospitalization.

After a lengthy stay in the hospital, the widow returned home to find herself behind on rent and struggling to cover basic living expenses. After she reached out for help, The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center promptly intervened to ensure her housing stability and well-being.

Through its assistance programs, The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center was able to provide funding to cover her past-due rent, allowing her to remain securely in her home during her recovery period. In addition, we were able to offer extra support through gift cards for gas and groceries, helping to alleviate her financial strain of daily expenses.

A group of Masonic volunteers in the 2nd District from Jefferson Lodge #90 got together on a Saturday in July to help a Masonic widow. Struggling with health problems, she can no longer maintain her flower beds and bushes. The volunteers spent the day weeding her flower beds and trimming bushes. She asked if they could maintain them as well. Bobbi Schickler, SW Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator contacted the local Lodge, Hugh L Bates #686, who said they would help her maintain her flower beds and bushes going forward. If you are interested in being a Masonic Volunteer, please contact your local Community Outreach Coordinator.



Bobbi Schickler and Brooke Simonson, of The Ohio Masonic Home Resource Center, and Dan Shirk, of The Ohio Masonic Communities Foundation and volunteer, proudly represent The Ohio Masonic Communities at Grand Council. If you have an event or would like to have a representative come to your Lodge or Chapter to speak, please call us. Through our foundation, donations help make what we do possible. Also pictured is Biscuit! As part of our Connecting Realities memory support program, we offer animatronic pets like Biscuit to provide companionship and help ease feelings of anxiety among our residents. Connecting Realities delivers person-centered care for individuals with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia by meeting them where they are.

Our Volunteer Program is Growing!

With the support of Grand Lodge, the Masonic Volunteer Program has seen significant growth and activity. We just added District 3, under the chairmanship of Ron Nischwitz, as our newest MVP Committee. We are also talking with leadership in District 16 about forming a committee there. We have well over 400 volunteers around the state and are appreciative of all of them. With MVP being part of the Grand Master's Awards this year, there has been increased interest in the program and requests for presentations and volunteer trainings. If you or your spouse are interested in becoming a volunteer in your district, please give us a call and a training can be arranged over the phone, virtually, or in person for a large enough group.

Our volunteers are our eyes and ears out in the Fraternity, letting us know who needs help, who has been sick or in the hospital, or who might be struggling with health, safety, or aging-related needs. We value the partnership with our volunteers and rely on them for information. The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center cannot assist if we aren't aware of the need. If your Lodge has passed the hat or applied for Grand Lodge Charitable Funds, please let us know as we have our Emergency Assistance Program which may be able to help financially. The information we receive from our volunteer partners allows us to reach out to potential clients before they are in crisis.

Some of our volunteers choose to be more hands-on and will help with transportation to Lodge or medical appointments, will make calls or visits to those who are home bound or hospitalized, or will do minor household repairs or help with projects for our clients. But it is ultimately your choice in how you give of your time and talents. If your Lodge or MVP Committee is doing a Christmas delivery to shut ins or widows and need The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center literature or small give-away items to add to what you are providing, please let your local Community Outreach Coordinator know and we can get those items to you with enough notice.



MVP Mike Hasman helping Brother Robert Balas split firewood to help him get through the winter.

For further information about the Masonic Volunteer Program or for a presentation, call DeAnna Kinney at (740) 262-1974 or e-mail dkinney@omcoh.org.

You can also reach out to your district chairman for additional information. If you are already a volunteer, we thank you for your support. We appreciate all you do for your fellow Masons, wives, widows and Eastern Stars!

Across the page is our current list of Masonic Volunteer Committee Chairmen by district.

Thank you all for your added support of The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center and everyone we serve.

MVP COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

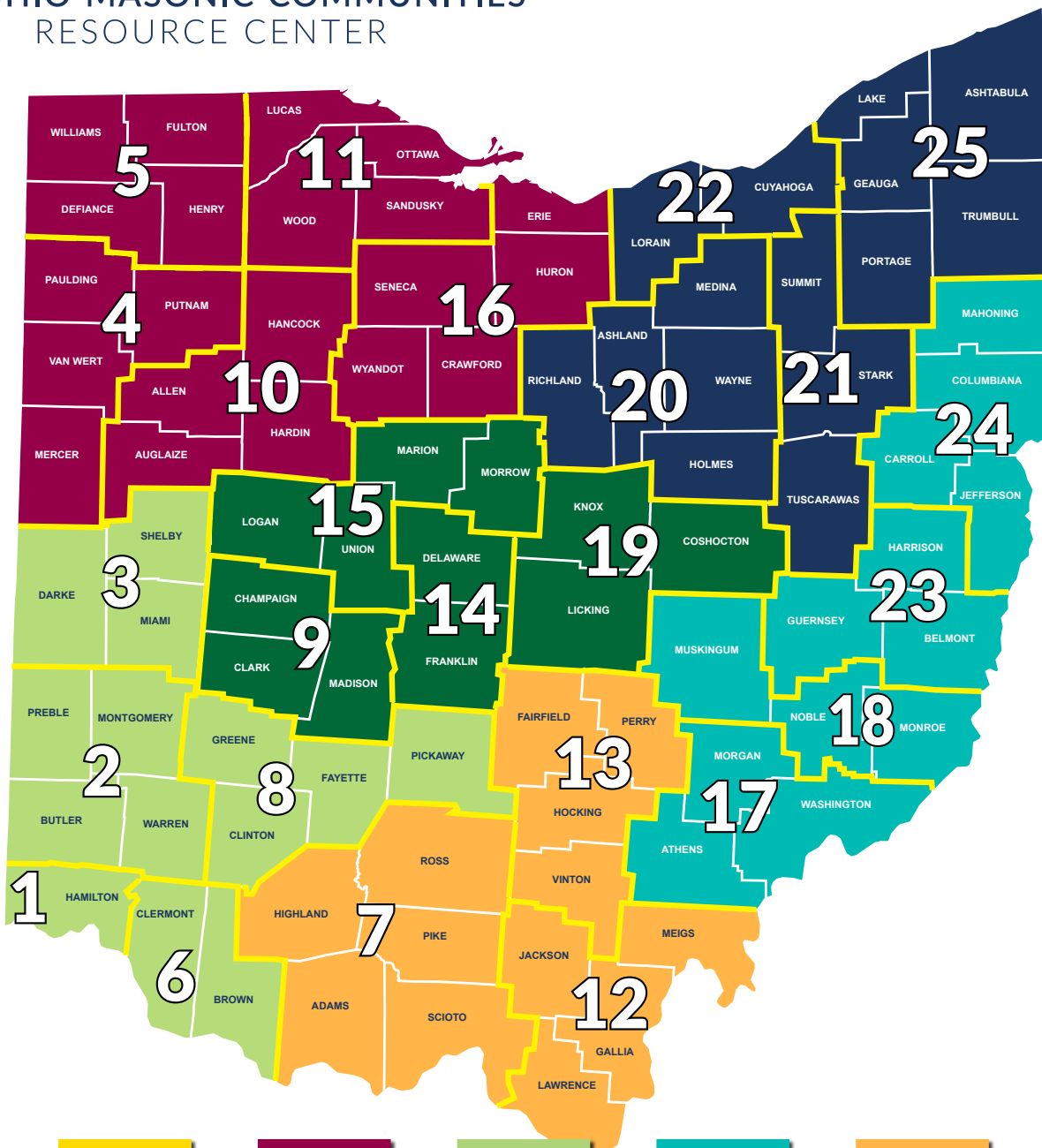
- District 1: Ralph McLemore WOLVE567@earthlink.net
- District 2: Kim Sparks Sparkskima@woh.rr.com
- District 3: Ron Nischwitz RNischwi@aol.com
- District 5: Matthew Gloor Matthewgloor@gmail.com
Jordan Guess Jordan@teamshank.net
- District 6: Jay Rothenbach Rothenbachalbert@gmail.com
- District 7: Jason Throckmorton Jason.throckmorton52@gmail.com
- District 8: Matthew Sandrock msandrock@hotmail.com
- District 9: Becky Cason Rebecca_cason@att.net
- District 10: James Klausing Pastorjimklausing@gmail.com
- District 11: Earl Wells Earlwells@gmail.com
- District 12: Don Stivers Dstivers120@yahoo.com
- District 13: Mike Stasiak Woodguymike@yahoo.com
- District 14: Stacy McClain Mcberts@ameritech.net
- District 15: Larry Lance* Madriverlodge161@gmail.com
*We would also like to sadly acknowledge the loss of our volunteer: Larry Lance from the 15th District. His support was unquestionably appreciated. Larry will be missed by those who knew and loved him.
- District 16: Jeremy Tavenner bluelinesquirrel@yahoo.com
- District 17: Dave Williams Davewilliams33rd@gmail.com
- District 18: Jeff Gallaher Jgallaher189@gmail.com
- District 19: Bobby Dotson Bobbydotson1964@gmail.com
- District 20: Earl Webster Ewebster20@email.com
- District 21: Rick Miller Miller-rick@att.com
- District 22: Kirk and Pam Miller OMC22nd@AOL.com
Wesley Moore wesleydude72@yahoo.com
- District 23: John Lovejoy Jklovejoy@netzero.com
- District 24: Joe Wicker Joseph.a.wicker@gmail.com
- District 25: Rick Antill Rickantill@gmail.com

REGIONAL MAP (MASONIC DISTRICTS)

Main Line:
(877) 881-1623



THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES RESOURCE CENTER



Samantha Loy, MBA-HCM, CDP
Director, OMC Resource Center & NE Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator
(937) 504-4407

Rachel Lancaster
Intake Coordinator
(877) 881-1623
Press 4 for the resource center
M-F 8 am - 4:30 pm

Janaye Guess, MSW, LISW-S
NW Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator
(419) 378-6203

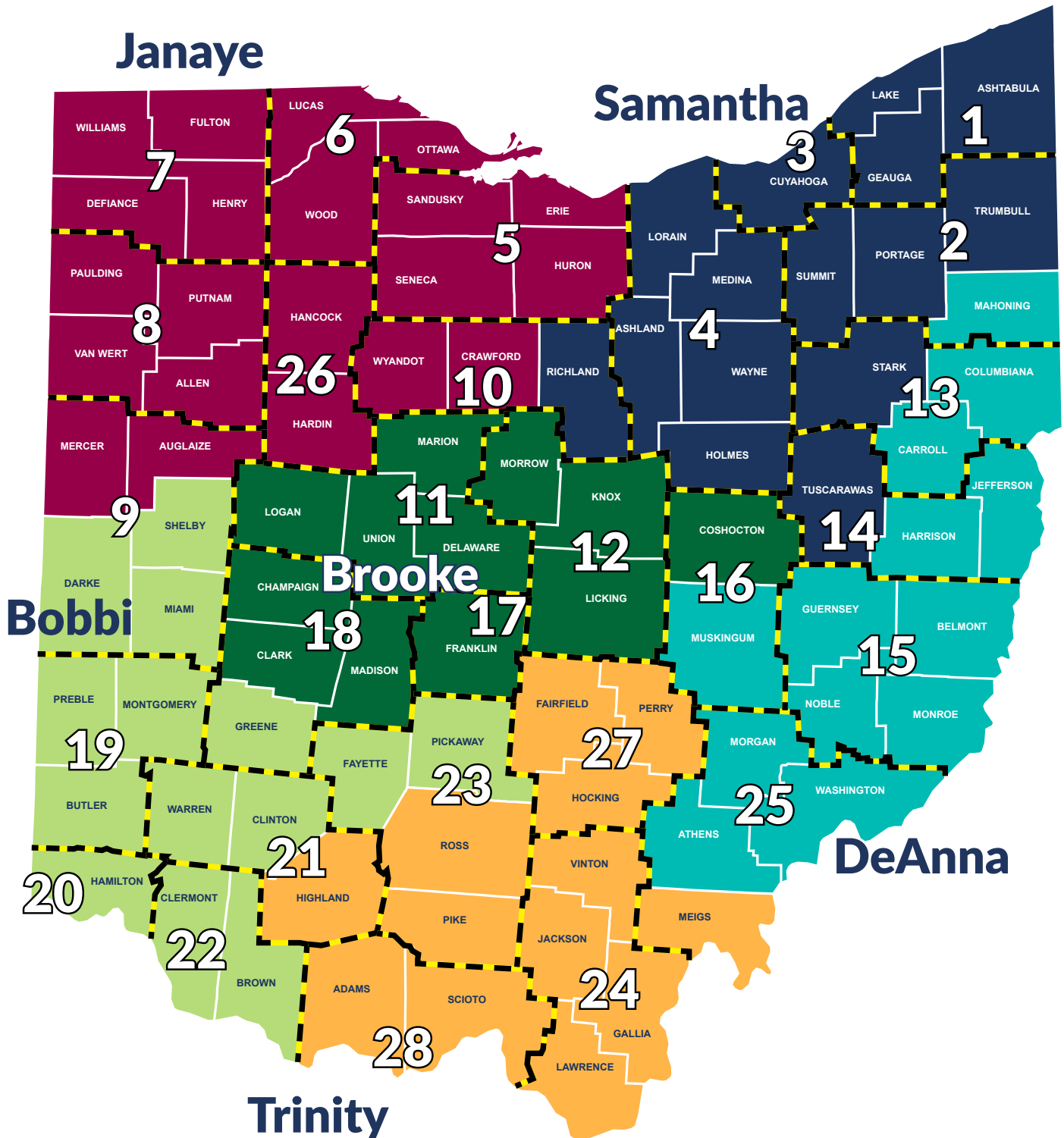
Bobbi Schickler, CSA
Certified Senior Advisor®
SW Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator & Masonic Bereavement Program Coordinator
(513) 567-1100

DeAnna Kinney, LSW
SE Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator & MVP Program Coordinator
(740) 262-1974

Trinity Davidson, BSW
Southern Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator
(740) 970-7903

Brooke Simonson, MSW, LISW-S
Central Ohio Community Outreach Coordinator
(330) 410-7983

EASTERN STAR DISTRICTS





THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES
RESOURCE CENTER

*A subsidiary of
The Ohio Masonic Communities*

2655 W. National Road
Springfield, Ohio 45504
(877) 881-1623
omcresourcecenter.org

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Better Together: Collaborating to Provide Support

When MVP chairman from Lucasville Lodge #465 contacted The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center (OMCRC) in late August, he was looking for assistance for not just a fellow Brother in the Lodge, but the Worshipful Master, Kevin Kennedy. Kevin received a liver transplant nearly 10 years ago and, due to the antirejection medication that he has been on, Kevin was recently diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Kevin was admitted to the hospital in Columbus, Ohio on August 16th where he stayed for a total of 28 days. After finally getting home, he quickly returned to the hospital only 4 days later when he started to run a high fever. During his stay, they administered his first round of chemotherapy treatment. Moving forward, he will be making multiple trips to and from Columbus for doctors' appointments and treatments.

Together, the Lodge, Grand Lodge, and OMCRC have done our best to help Kevin and his wife, Melissa. The Lodge was able to collect donations to help with travel and other expenses. Grand Lodge approved a Grand Lodge Charitable Request to assist with travel and hotel stays to reduce stress and fatigue during the traveling times. OMCRC then stepped in, assisting through the Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) for utility and mortgage assistance. Being able to work together for the same cause creates a wonderful outcome for any client in need.

The Ohio Masonic Communities Resource Center is here to help members of our Masonic family, wherever they may be, find solutions for their financial, social, and clinical needs. We provide a wide variety of resources and services, which contribute to sustaining the health, happiness, and independence of individuals and their families.



If you know anyone that might benefit from a care package or well check, or a family that needs help this Christmas, please let us know. We understand that the holidays are hard for some, and we are here to provide care and support.

HOPE
for the
HOLIDAY



Like us on Facebook to see more of the support we offer!
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