



Since 1916

# Bonnie Brae

Small Victories. Every Day.

Fall 2011

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

The Research Department at Bonnie Brae has a unique and important role here on campus. The department, led by Dr. Kathy Lewis, conducts vital studies (see accompanying article entitled “Three Year Employment Rates”) to track the progress of our students after they leave Bonnie Brae. The research focuses on treatment and long-term outcomes. The Research Department also oversees a steady stream of college interns, for fall, spring and summer semesters. The interns come from many of the Mid-Atlantic States, and receive credit for their work at Bonnie Brae. Dr. Lewis added that the interns learn research skills, and 100% of them have gone on to the graduate school of their choice...quite a nice statistic! The department also oversees the ERS (electronic record system) and helps the staff better manage the treatment and care of our residents. The Research Department consists of Dr. Lewis, Debby Schmitt, Nikki Patel and Diane Guenzel. We have a winning team over in the Turrell Building, no research needed for that stat!



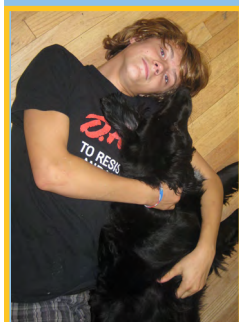
## FIELD OF FLAGS

Driving past Bonnie Brae in September, passersby were greeted by a stunning display of American flags on the front lawn of our campus. The *Field of Flags* marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of September 11, as a tribute to local veterans, first responders, and families who lost loved ones in the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001.

The *Field of Flags* consisted of 3,000 flags, placed 22 inches apart. Stephen Siller “Let Us Do Good” Children’s Foundation, Inc., and the Wells Remy Crowther Charitable Trust provided the funds to purchase the flags. In addition, numerous friends of Bonnie Brae contributed to the flag display by sponsoring a flag. Many visitors stopped to admire the *Field of Flags*, pay tribute, and take photos. Ms. Donna Crane, Bonnie Brae’s Principal, reflected: “*Field of Flags* is a wonderful way to mark the occasion and pay our respects to those who continue to put their lives on the line to protect our community.”

As part of the Bonnie Brae tribute, a ceremony and luncheon were held on September 9th. The lunch was prepared by our Activities of Daily Living (ADL) students under the supervision of Karen Laskey. Members of the Basking Ridge Fire Department, Liberty Corner Fire Department, Liberty Corner First Aid Squad, and local veterans from the Lyons Veterans Hospital attended. Our thanks to Ms. Crane, Coach Melvin, and Ms. Laskey for making the Field of Flags such a moving tribute.

## PET THERAPY BENEFITS BONNIE BRAE STUDENTS



St. Hubert’s Animal Welfare Center, of Madison, has been offering therapy dog visits at Bonnie Brae since 2009. The volunteers from “St. Hubert’s Paws for People Program” visit Bonnie Brae three times each month. Staff clinician Victor Swenson introduced the program to the residents of Metcalf Cottage in 2009, and the program was expanded this year to include students from all three Bonnie Brae schools--New Rec, Pace, and the Main School.

Clinician Erin Reyhan said, “Each time a therapy animal interacts with a student, a positive effect can be seen. The therapy provides a short escape from the difficult reality our students live with, and also allows the students to interact closely with the dog handlers, offering valuable opportunities to work on their own communication and social skills. Additionally, we have been able to reach some of our more difficult students through the affection, support, and love that only a dog can offer.” Thanks to Victor Swenson, Erin Reyhan and Debra Gennaria for all their hard work on this outstanding and valuable project.

## FROM THE C.E.O. CANADA 2011



Powers what kind of country sells milk in a plastic bag? Are you going to help me catch a big fish? Can we eat the fish we catch? What time do we get to Canada? Why can't we stay two weeks in Canada? I am making my final rounds late Friday afternoon before our annual summer vacation in Canada. Our youngest guys are in Metcalf Cottage. They are happy to see me. Immediately they start peppering me with questions.

While most of their questions are about Canada there are also questions about judging the "cleanest cottage contest." Some wise soul before my time had the good idea to have a "cleanest cottage contest" on the weekend before we leave for Canada. Our

Residential Director, Phil Errico, and two of his senior staff members are the judges. The winning cottage receives an extra trip in Canada. Much pent-up pre-vacation anxiety is spent scrubbing, dusting, and mopping. I feel truly blessed not to be a judge. This non-judge status allows me to answer objectively such questions as: what if dirt comes into the cottage after we leave for Canada?; do the judges look under the beds?; and, my favorite question, do the judges have any special snacks that they like?.

The morning of our departure for Canada this year proves to be cool and very wet. Driving into Bonnie Brae we pass through several waves of heavy showers. Not a good omen. Still by the time we arrive on campus, 5:00 a.m., the rain has let up and the energy level can be felt. Everyone is up and ready to go. Vans are packed with a week's worth of supplies. Walking the campus in the pre-dawn dark I bump into the mother of a staff member who has just dropped off her daughter. She is now struggling in the dark to find our main entrance, "how do I get out of here?". "Well you behave yourself, work hard in school" . . . she laughs "no, I mean now." "Well, that's what all of our kids ask." We are off to a good start.

Trailing our cars and vans, thirty-four in all, on the long road trip I am surprised not to discover any one at a rest stop or gas station. Usually I always manage to catch up with a few of our convoy on route. But not today. Is everyone in a greater hurry than usual or is everyone ducking me? The answer awaits at the Canadian border. Almost all of our vehicles have been directed to park at the Canadian border crossing station for further review. I manage to get through without much scrutiny but then stop to provide assistance. After waiting several minutes, together with two other vans that passed through without trouble, I escort several of our guys over to the Border station so that they can use the rest rooms. Following my lead we open many wrong doors and loudly announce that we need to use the restroom. At the same time we make it a point to interact, loudly, with our now rapidly growing impatient peers. This works. The Canadian border authorities soon after relent and we are once again on our way.

*Bill Powers*

William M. Powers, MHA, MPA

*To Be Continued*

### 3 YEAR STUDY

As national unemployment figures continue to rise dramatically, the unemployment rate for Bonnie Brae alumni has increased as well. Our three-year outcome survey conducted in December 2010 revealed that 55% of the boys were employed compared to 75% in 2009 and 74% in 2008.

In response to this pressing need, Bonnie Brae has increased aftercare services. Some of the activities provided include:

- (1) Career Focus, e.g., job searches, job fairs, completing job applications
- (2) Self-Sufficiency, e.g., transportation needs, opening bank accounts;
- (3) Education, e.g., researching schools, completing admissions applications;
- (4) Community Connections, e.g., identifying and participating in local community centers, networking

### Mission Statement

*A haven where young men  
reclaim their potential through  
education and therapy.*

### BONNIE BRAE'S FARMING LEGACY CONTINUES

Bonnie Brae residents have embarked on an exciting sustainability project that harkens back to Bonnie Brae's early days as a working farm of some 360 acres. In collaboration with Joe Guryian of the Rutgers Co-Operative, the Bonnie Brae Tillers started a large garden project on campus in March, growing tomatoes, peppers, collard greens, and onions. Under Mr. Guryian's direction, participants planned and planted the space, installed a drip irrigation system, and worked in the garden throughout the summer. Rain collection barrels were also installed.

The garden harvest was so abundant that students were able to sell vegetables to staff on campus. Bonnie Brae teacher Patricia Gmyrek stated that the boys have worked hard and are pleased with their efforts. She hopes to open the sale of fresh vegetables to the public by next summer.

Bonnie Brae has a long history of farming. Since its founding almost 100 years ago, Bonnie Brae has been housed on farmland, first in Livingston, NJ, and for the past 90 years in Bernards Township. For many years, the organization was known as The Bonnie Brae Farm for Boys, and residents were expected to work the farm to earn their keep.



## BONNIE BRAE ALUMNI REUNION

Bonnie Brae was host to an alumni reunion on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Alumni came back to visit who had been residents here as far back as the 1940's. Although the campus has changed, the visit seemed to bring them right back to the time when they were residents here at the Bonnie Brae Farm for Boys. The alumni spoke lovingly about the "house parents", trips off campus on the Bonnie Brae bus and socializing in the center of Bernardsville. Many alumni spoke of their gratitude for the guidance they received while living at Bonnie Brae, including life skills, education and work ethic. One of the Alumni, Padric Hayes commented "When I go back to the farm, memories start flooding my mind as soon as I turn onto the lane. I still remember the first day coming up the lane. For my era, the farm was perfect. It met our needs and guided us in the right direction. I know for me, without the farm, I would not be here now. My mother once told me long ago that there were two things that saved me, one was the farm, and the other was my wife. It's funny, but both are still with me today. Thanks for all the farm has done and continues to do." In a wonderful gesture, the attending alums presented a generous check to Bonnie Brae. It was heartwarming to see these gentlemen return to campus, as well as hearing about the rich history of the farm.



## NOVARTIS RETURNS TO CAMPUS



Volunteers from the Novartis Pharmaceutical Company visited the Bonnie Brae campus as part of their Community Partnership Day. They did a wonderful job painting the front hallway and entrance to the school. After the painting job was completed, the group enjoyed watching our students play volleyball in the gym, which they had painted a few years before!

## TARTAN CLASSIC TEES - OFF ANOTHER GREAT DAY!

The annual Bonnie Brae Tartan Classic was held on September 19<sup>th</sup> at the Plainfield Country Club in Edison. A group of 102 golfers enjoyed the picture-perfect autumn weather on one of the best golf courses in New Jersey. The evening program featured a live auction, hosted by board member Lou DiGiovanni. Other highlights of the evening included Bill Powers with an update about Bonnie Brae and Malcolm Macpherson Jr. donating back the 50/50 winnings! Thanks to our loyal Tartan Golf Committee; Nancy Larson, Dave Chippendale, Don Bush, Lou DiGiovanni, Jackie Gunn, Rich Juntilla, Reed Kean, Gil Lai, Malcolm Macpherson, Rich Samenfeld, Mike Seely, John Spada, and the talented volunteers from the Telecordia Pioneers. It was a great day of golf and fundraising!



*Bonnie Brae Ambassadors at the Tartan Classic*

## CANADA TRIP – 2011 *Resident Reporter Alex* Zipline Adventure

Roebling II Cottage was very excited to go ziplining. Well, some of us were until we got there. I'm not going to lie. I was a bit frightened by the height of those trees. It was a bit tricky for me at first because there were a lot of rules and regulations. When we got to the park there were sections you had to complete in order to move on. We all had protective safety belts on. You had to first climb up a tree with a rope ladder. It was difficult for some but not me. My staff showed no fear while up on the trees. To me that was some good motivation. While up in the frightening trees my heart was racing. We had to move across logs that were tied to ropes in mid-air. If we wanted to move to the next obstacle you had to complete one first. I barely looked down. When I got to my first zipline I had heard from one of my fellow residents that some kids got scared and couldn't finish. I was thinking "dang, that kinda stinks, this is a lot of fun." I finished my first zipline. It was short but a lot of fun. It felt like one of those times when you are going down in an elevator and your belly starts getting butterflies. I got to one obstacle where there was a skateboard tied to a metal line, and you had to ride on it in order to move on. After I got finished with the skateboard obstacle I saw that you had to jump in the air off the tree and on to a rope that would swing you to your destination. Now I was frightened. I wanted to close my eyes while I jumped but then I would miss the rope so I had to face my fear. After I got my hands on the rope I felt relieved and like I was on my way to glory. I was only two obstacles away from finishing the whole course. I had to face two more ziplines. They were awesome. At the end of the last obstacle I saw my staff and residents and it made me feel good about myself. I finished and showed bravery.





3415 Valley Road  
PO Box 825  
Liberty Corner, NJ 07938-0825

**Bonnie  
Brae**

Since 1916

Small Victories. Every Day.

[www.bonnie-brae.org](http://www.bonnie-brae.org)

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

### February 4, 2012

Tartan Ball  
Fiddler's Elbow, Bedminster, NJ

### June 2, 2012

Scottish Games  
Bonnie Brae Campus, Liberty Corner, NJ

### June 9, 2012

Bonnie Brae Polo Classic  
Fieldview Farm, Pittstown, NJ



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## MCNALLY COTTAGES RENOVATIONS

We are on schedule to re-open the recently renovated Farrow Cottage in McNally on November 14. This home will include three brand new bathrooms, a new eat-in kitchen area with seating for 16 and two ceiling mounted solar tubes bringing in natural sunlight. All of the bedrooms and the living room have been renovated to include new flooring, paint, trim, and doors. The new space provides a bright and airy laundry room complete with a folding and sorting station. Four cottages are being renovated in stages, with the completed renovation finishing up in the spring.

## BONNIE BRAE WINTER APPEAL

*Looking back on a good year...*

It's been a productive year for our students and staff: In 2011, the Brae Builders helped build homes for Habitat for Humanity and our Ambassadors volunteered for a variety of community causes, including the Tunnel to Towers run in NYC in which several students also competed; the Bonnie Brae Knights played for the Jet's Send-Off Rally; the Bonnie Brae Tillers learned about sustainability and planted an abundant organic garden; and students participated in the H'Olympics, where they placed in all events and won the best sportsmanship award. This fall, we undertook a building project to update the McNally Cottages. Long overdue, the renovation will create a more comfortable home for our boys and provide the respite they need for personal space and growth.

*Moving forward with your help*

Your generosity makes these and other vital programs possible. Your gift has an immediate and direct impact on the lives of our boys, helping them become stronger in stature through individual achievement, and stronger in spirit through personal growth. With your help, these young men are on their way to becoming active, independent and productive members of their communities in the future. Please consider a year-end gift to help our boys grow even stronger in 2012.

