



THE MILL WHEEL

MAXIMUM INDEPENDENT LIVING

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SPRING, 1986

TENANT PROFILE:

Beatrice Reeves

by Darla Duncan

Beatrice Reeves wasn't always in a wheelchair. She was very active as a young woman. Having quit high school at 16, she worked two jobs and did not think life was all that great. She felt there wasn't really anything special about just being alive and not seeing anything spectacular about a sunset.

When she was 37, Beatrice found out that she had MS (Multiple Sclerosis). She spent the next year allowing her family to coddle and nurse her and accepted total depression as her future.

Speaking to Beatrice today, one gets a different picture. Today, she is strong minded, hopeful, optimistic, resourceful, and planning for an exciting future. She owes a large part of her turnaround in attitude to her mother, a very religious woman.

She began to realize something positive from her disability on an occasion at the hospital where she would make regular visits as a patient. Another patient was an elderly woman in her upper 80's who willed to die. She was despondent and refused to eat. Beatrice seemed to "have a way" with people and the nurses asked her to help them with this woman. The woman responded and Beatrice was on her way to a whole new attitude toward life too. Today she still keeps in touch with the woman who is now in her 90's. *(continued on back)*

PROGRESS CONTINUES ON NEW MIL APARTMENT

Architect and Site Selected

Maximum Independent Living-West (MIL-W), which in October received a HUD loan to build a 40-unit apartment, is moving forward in making this building a reality. The apartment, when completed, will also allow physically disabled people to live independently.

MIL-W has engaged the architectural firm of Kaczmar Architects to design the building. John Roush will be the principal architect on the project. He has done a number of things, including spending a day in a wheelchair and talking to the tenants at the MIL Apartments, to educate himself about the barriers disabled people face. John is optimistic about the project and looks forward to an early groundbreaking.

After an extensive search throughout Parma, MIL-W has located an excellent site. This site is on Ridge Road, just south of Day Drive, adjacent to St. Matthew Lutheran Church. The site is next to a small shopping center and near Parmatown and Parma General Hospital. Rev. Dean Cheek and the members of St. Matthew have been extremely cooperative. They view this project as an extension of their ministry.

MIL-W is now meeting with Parma City officials to work out the details involved in putting up a project like this one. A 1987 opening of the building is anticipated.

MIL tenant Francine Hogan and her daughters Tawana and Nakia enjoy the use of the patio at the University Circle Apartment. A patio party to thank everyone who has made a donation to MIL is tentatively planned for late summer. This party would be a chance



for you to meet the tenants who have benefited from your generosity. To make a tax deductible donation to help the work of Maximum Independent Living, please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope or mail your donation to: Maximum Independent Living, 11607 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. Watch your mailbox in the summer for information on the patio party.

FATHER-DAUGHTER TEAM HELP MIL BOARD

Frank Cotman became a member of the MIL Board "by association." While he was taking his daughter, Kathy, to meetings of the MIL board he became interested in the work of MIL. Since he retired from National Acme, he felt he could become more involved in the lives of his two disabled daughters.

As a member of the Building Committee, he made weekly on-site inspections of the progress of remodeling the old warehouse which was to become the MIL Apartments in University Circle. He admires the results after lack of funds required adjustments to the original plan.

Kathy Cotman is just as industrious as her busy father. Since before MIL was in existence, Kathy has worked on the Board of SIL, which provides information and services to disabled people towards independent living.

MIL was about six months old and Kathy became interested in what the group was doing. She agreed to serve on the Management Committee and later the Board.

In his spare time, Frank sails Lake Erie on his 27-foot Catamaran. He takes his family and loves to go north to Canada and visit such ports as Port Stanley and Rondeau Bay. He is active in the Northeast Yacht Club and has been Commodore three times.

Kathy has a BS in Biology from Kent State and works at Cleveland Clinic as Coordinator of Pathology Data. Kathy is also a member of Advocates for Disabled Ohioans and Disabled Rights Task Force. Her goal is to improve the availability of "accessible" housing for disabled people.



TENANT PROFILE (continued)

She has since received her high school equivalency diploma and a medical secretary with transcription diploma. (Graduated top honors among classmates who were 19 and 20 year olds.) The next step for her education will be college this fall so that she can become a full time occupational therapist for young children or elderly.

Beatrice came to the MIL community through working with a representative of SIL trying to find "accessible" living facilities. She is happy at the MIL apartments at University Circle because of the proximity of the art museum, Garden Center and all the other educational opportunities in the area. Her apartment is perfect for her needs. She loves her kitchen.

As a young girl Bea was interested in art. She now pursues it ardently by trying to reproduce the beautiful sunsets she can see from her window onto canvas. She keeps her hands busy by making all kinds of handcrafted items—crochet, stuffed dolls, and ornamental trees made of fish scales and pearls. She loves plants and has lots of them.

Beatrice is also secretary/treasurer of the MIL Tenant Association. Being the resourceful person she is, she is always looking for new activities for the tenants and ways to get them there. Her current search is for a bus that will accommodate wheelchair riders. The group recently went to the Colony Theatre to see the movie, "The Color Purple." Bea is an "idea" person. It certainly seems to keep her busy!

No matter how busy she is, there seems to be some time for things that are total relaxation—sailing with her family, reading a favorite book, and movies and dinner out. Kathy believes that "a person should live life to the fullest."



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