



It's Who We Care For.

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Keefe Creek Baptist Church Adopts Byron Health Center Residents for Holiday

Continue Decade Long Tradition Celebrating Thanksgiving a Week Early

Fort Wayne, IN – The residents of Byron Health Center celebrated Thanksgiving a little early again this year thanks to the generosity of the Keefe Creek Baptist Church congregation. What started out in 2000 as a collaborative effort between Carrie Boedeker, Byron Health Center Director of Admissions; Maribeth Wickliffe, Byron Health Center Social Service Specialist and Kathy Prentice, of Keefe Creek Baptist Church, to celebrate a simple Thanksgiving dinner with a few residents who had no immediate family with which to enjoy the Holiday has now become a two-day, family-style feast encompassing all facility residents and staff along with dozens of congregation members. Many Keefe Creek families travel for over an hour to attend the event. Some from as far away as Spencerville, Bluffton or Cecil, OH. Luckily, they are all quite familiar with the Byron Health Center Activity Room. Not only does the annual Thanksgiving celebration take place in the Activity Room, but each week, for just over twenty years, Keefe Creek Baptist Church has celebrated Sunday worship in the same space.

Planning efforts of the Keefe Creek Baptist Church congregation members began several weeks in advance of the event. While some congregation families volunteered to purchase and prepare the food, other families made plans to 'host' a table of residents which then became their adopted family for the evening. The main meal's menu consisted of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, rolls with butter, deviled eggs and a variety of cheese. Several different homemade pies, cookies and other baked goods were then made available for dessert. One family had to make some last-minute changes due to the extremely stormy weather over the recent weekend which left their home without power. In order to fulfill their obligation of preparing the mashed potatoes for the feast, they had to load up the car with over fifty pounds of potatoes and travel to another family of the congregation's home to take advantage of their still-existing power. Even the torment of a tornado could not stop the Thanksgiving preparations.

Still other congregation members, mostly the many talented congregational youth, rehearsed to entertain the gathering with song and instrument. While Prentice synchronized the efforts of preparing and distributing the holiday banquet, Hanna Snyder coordinated both of the evening's many singing and musical recitals. Many individuals and groups showed off their musical talents throughout the evening with singing, piano playing and even the strumming of guitars.

"We are blessed to be a part of this wonderful event and look forward to Thanksgiving each year," said Reverend Mike Lederman, pastor for Keefe Creek Baptist Church. "We are thankful for being together."

Byron Health Center provides physical, mental, emotional and neurological services to meet the needs of young and older adults. Each resident is recognized as an individual with unique needs who seeks and deserves to reach his or her optimal potential. Byron Health Center and Byron Residential Center continue a tradition of over 160 years of serving the long-term health care needs of Indiana residents. Byron Health Center is licensed to provide intermediate and skilled nursing care while Byron Residential Center provides services to individuals who are more independent and are able to live in a residential setting.

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Byron Health Center will be a premier healthcare provider of comprehensive services and outstanding quality care in a state-of-the-art environment for a diverse population.