JACK
(by Jack’s sister, Layne)

My brother has autism.
He is just like any other brother, only completely different.
Most people don’t understand autism, including me.
You never know what the day will bring, it could be great, fun, full of happiness and laughter, like most days.
Or, it could be terrible, the littlest thing could turn into a meltdown.
Like when he can’t find a book or the DVD is scratched - trying not to get hit from the tornado of flying books, papers, glass, ipads...
I love my brother, no matter what.
My brother is smart but he can’t read, write, or even talk.
My brother is strong and athletic and brave, but no one wants him on their team.
My brother is funny and kind but does not have any real friends.
Our family treasures my brother, but society treats him like a burden.

It is easy being his sister.
It is hard being Jack.
Dear Advocates, Friends, and Interested Individuals,

2015 was another successful year of impacting the lives of the individuals we serve. While we did add programs and are serving more individuals, much of the growth this year was focused internally. Bittersweet expanded and enhanced its infrastructure to support the huge programmatic growth that occurred in recent years. We are grateful to be able to serve more individuals with autism and with the focus on the infrastructure, we are confident that the Bittersweet quality of care will be sustained in all programs.

To maintain this highest quality of care, we have focused on defining Bittersweet’s core values; determining and identifying what makes us unique; and developing a one, three, and ten year plan. As part of this process, I am also meeting quarterly with all employees to update them on Bittersweet’s goals and accomplishments.

Bittersweet’s core values are to be RHEAL: treat everyone with Respect; Help first; act with Empathy; Achieve together; and Learn and grow. With these core values in mind, we continue to improve upon our programs. When we reflected on what makes Bittersweet unique and why we are the premier provider of services for adults and adolescents with autism, we realized that it is because Bittersweet strives to help each participant redefine what is possible for them.

In addition to growing and enhancing the infrastructure, many other accomplishments occurred in 2015:

- Opened with full occupancy the “Palmer House” (a home for women with autism)
- Advocated at the state and federal level to ensure a functional budget and to protect the rights of individuals to choose where they live and work
- Began a collaboration with the Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism (GLCA) to develop a program to assist adolescents in successfully transitioning to gainful employment and supporting them to maintain employment
- Developed a social living club for adolescents and adults where participants and mentors explore community experiences in Whitehouse/Pemberville and Betty’s Farm in Lima
- Expanded the Pemberville Transition Program with the addition of staff and students
- Strengthened the program services at Bittersweet in Middletown

We are so grateful for the amazing staff supporting the participants daily, our families and participants who went to Columbus to advocate for Bittersweet, our individual donors (many of you increased your donations in 2015), volunteers, foundations and corporations supporting Bittersweet. Without all of you, the participants would not have been able to succeed in their individual pursuits and explore the new opportunities in their work, education, therapies, and community experiences that have enriched the quality of their lives.

All of this is because of you: the staff, donors, board members, and friends of Bittersweet.

With much gratitude and excitement for 2016,

Vicki Obee
Executive Director
**2015 Revenues (in thousands)**
- Net Service: $6,640
- Program & Activities: $177
- Donations & Grants: $269
- Change in Interest in Supporting Foundation: $82
- Other: $17
- Total: $7,185

**2015 Expenses (in thousands)**
- Habilitation/Waiver Services: $3,916
- Administration: $1,141
- Dietary/Laundry/Housekeeping: $156
- Plant Operations & Utilities: $374
- Payroll Taxes & Fringe Benefits: $861
- Depreciation & Interest: $498
- Other: $210
- Total: $7,156

*These numbers are being reported prior to final audit review.*
2016 GOALS

- Establishing one operating system for all Bittersweet programs and locations

- Collaborating with the Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism in developing Venture Bound (a transition to employment program) and The InSite (an employee assistance program to support employees with autism and their employers)

- Enhancing the social living clubs at Whitehouse/Pemberville and Betty’s Farm in Lima and beginning a social living club at Bittersweet Middletown

- Increasing sales for all of the Bittersweet Gardens’ products

- Creating a staff development program that will increase employee retention while also making sure that all employees joining the Bittersweet team share the Bittersweet core values
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Jorden Alfaro
Shelbi Anderson
Christopher Asplin
Abby Alyon
Ashley Bailey
Rose Barkhimer
Jonathon Bartsch
Jessica Becker Huff
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**Has family member with autism
**DONORS**

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These donors have notified Bittersweet that they have made provisions for Bittersweet in their estate plans. For more information about joining the Bettye Ruth Kay Society, please contact Jodi Farschman, development director, at 419-875-6986 or jfarschman@bittersweetfarms.org.

- Estate of Rita M. Hepfinger*
- Robert and Ann St. Clair
- Marjorie E. Conrad, M.D. Reserve Charitable Trust*
- Vicki Obee

*Deceased

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this report. However, if your name has been incorrectly listed or inadvertently omitted, please contact Jodi Farschman, development director, at 419-875-6986 or jfarschman@bittersweetfarms.org.
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These donors have contributed $5,000 or more over their lifetime, as of December 31, 2015.

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These donors have supported Bittersweet annually for three consecutive years or more, as of December 31, 2015.

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Through their gift of $500 or greater, either in a single gift or accumulated within the year, as of December 31, 2015, Maple Society members have become transformative in the lives of the participants Bittersweet serves.

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