

# The Breathing Association



## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Each day at The Breathing Association, we fulfill our mission of helping individuals breathe easier through healthcare services, financial assistance, education, and connection with additional resources.

For more than 112 years, we have been assisting individuals throughout central Ohio. Over the years, we have provided our services where residents live and work, bringing needed health care, outreach services, and assistance to thousands of residents. As times changed, so too did our service model.

Our efforts to reduce barriers to services has resulted in new partnerships, the development of our free lung health mobile unit, and in-home services for those who are infirm.

### Today, our commitment to the community has never been greater.

After a strategic planning process and a review of the needs of the community, we have determined our present location provides numerous barriers, most important, transportation to those who need our services the most.

After several months, we have begun the process of moving our services, so we are more accessible to the individuals we serve. Over the next several months, we will be announcing the great news about our decision to relocate our services, and the impact this move will make on breaking down barriers to services for those most vulnerable in the community.

Thank you for your continued support of our work; we cannot do it without the strategic partnerships, collaborations, and support that you provide.

I look forward to sharing our good news and plans with you in the next few months.

Most Sincerely,

Joanne Spoth  
President & CEO

## Martha Swan

Life happens to the best of us, and Martha Swan was no exception. The backbone of her family, she was the full-time caretaker for her infant grandson while her daughter battled an addiction diagnosis. When you are the backbone of your family, self-care is not a priority.

Yet, Martha was pushing forward.

When we met Martha she was recently unemployed and came into TBA for assistance on her disconnection notices for her gas and electric utilities through HEAP and WCP. However, she received more than the payments on the bills that she was seeking.

During her appointment to get her utilities connected we learned Martha had an opportunity for a new job at OSU's Housekeeping department, but her new job required a pre-employment physical and a TB test. The problem? Martha did not have a doctor or insurance. She was at a crossroads. No physical or TB test? No job. What Martha needed were resources. A way to connect her needs to an agency's resources . . . an open door.

The Breathing Association's Lung Health Clinic was her answer and her next stop. Through the clinic, Martha learned she had hypertension. She then met with the Community Health Worker and was enrolled in the "Central Ohio Pathways Hub" through The Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus. The Pathways were a way to identify her needs and streamline her activities that would end in focused results. Her Breathing Association Community Health Worker was dedicated, and together, they identified goals for Martha: health insurance, a primary care physician, ongoing care for her hypertension, education, and job placement.

It was during her health visit that we learned Martha was not receiving unemployment compensation and we helped her apply for it, and she was approved. She now had income. We continued to roll up our collective sleeves, and Martha received HCAP through Ohio Health, along with a primary care physician. Now, she could get her TB test. But wait! She was not getting weary in well doing, so we assisted her in enrolling in the Career Bridges program at The Godman Guild.

Martha successfully completed the vocational program and became certified as a unit clerk or patient transport assistant any OhioHealth hospital. Her job choices expanded.

Inspired by her mother's turnaround, her daughter is now enrolled in Career Bridges program as well.

Today Martha Swan is breathing a lot easier.

# HEAT the Town

When fall colors turn and the winds are brisk, many of us start thinking of cuddling under warm blankets and gearing up for Christmas carols like "Walking in a Winter Wonderland."

But for others, no heat, no hope equals no winter wonderland. Fall is a harbinger of more problems, not holiday cheer.

Mrs. Jones's headache wasn't allowing her to think of the holidays. Being elderly and owning her own home was stressful. There were maintenance and other needed repairs she couldn't afford. When you don't have a landlord, any repair issues can be costly, especially if you're on a fixed income. In Mrs. Jones's case, her headaches were of a physical and emotional nature. When The Breathing Association (TBA) partnered with Air Conditioner Contractors of Central Ohio's (ACCCO) Heat The Town program in 2016 to bring furnace maintenance and repair to households in Franklin County,



Seventy-nine of those home owners were seniors. Several furnaces needed repairs, and ACCCO did that too. One senior needed a new furnace, and through TBA's Human Service Advocate, it was handled.

ACCCO had sixteen contractor companies who provided forty-seven technicians, twenty-eight tech students, plus their support staff to get the job done. They report each visit to average \$140 (with a free smoke and CO detector) if no additional parts were needed. If repairs were needed, the cost increased to an average of \$300. The Breathing Association's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Winter Crisis Program will begin this year on Friday, November 1, 2019. This is a crisis program. If your electric or gas is shut off, and/or you have received a disconnect notice, are transferring your services to another address, or are brand-new to having a gas bill, this is the program for you.



we didn't know we'd be saving lives—especially Mrs. Jones's.

In 2016, when ACCCO red tagged Mrs. Jones's furnace, she reported to us that she had been experiencing severe headaches. She had no idea she was slowly being carbon monoxide poisoned. She needed intervention, including a new furnace. Mrs. Jones received her new furnace, a smoke, and a CO detector . . . and her headaches went away.

That was the first red tagged (a furnace that is malfunctioning and emitting carbon monoxide) furnace we did in the first year of our partnership. It illustrates how important this service is and remains. This year on Saturday, September 28, 2019, we red tagged seven furnaces. I now think of it as seven lives saved.

**Overall, we provided free heating system cleaning and carbon monoxide checks to 117 homes.**

**WCP can help pay up to \$175 on regulated utilities (AEP, Columbia Gas, and Ohio Edison), \$750 for unregulated utilities (ex., City of Columbus), and \$900 for bulk fuel. As well as assists in furnace repairs of up to \$500.**

It can be easy to get behind in your utility bills when your income meets the WCP Poverty Level of 175 especially when an emergency happens.

This morning, I woke up to a temperature of 46 degrees. I was glad I could turn on my heat, and that I have a furnace that works well. I know that many people can't say the same.

# Breathing Laughter and Other Good Things

For the past several years, a small, sometimes raucous group meets every Thursday morning at the Ohio Health Gerlach Center for Senior Health. They come for their health, education, friendship and socialization, but most of all, they come for laughter!

This program, funded by Franklin County Senior Options, offers "Breathing, Laughter, and Other Good Things," which provides seniors the opportunity to learn tips for better breathing but also incorporates Laughter Yoga and relaxation exercises.

Many of the attendees at this location have an assortment of health issues, including COPD or other breathing disorders. Through the years, many of the groups have experienced other health issues such as surgeries, broken bones, or cardiac conditions, but once they improve, they make their way back to the class.

Each class begins with light stretching exercises and a review of deep breathing exercises . . . Then the fun begins!

Laughter Yoga is based on the theory that laughter really is the best medicine. When we laugh, it has an immediate effect on our body and mind. Laughter uses 25–80 different muscles, including the diaphragm, the main muscle of breathing. It increases oxygen intake and reduces blood pressure. It supports the immune system, suppresses pain, and offers a psychological feeling of wellness. Another amazing fact about laughter is that our brain cannot differentiate between real and artificial laughter. So, we laugh for the health of it.

As mobility for many in the group has become problematic, we have incorporated less strenuous activities and often remain seated for most of the class. Now, along with breathing exercises and laughter, we often sing, blow bubbles, play musical instruments, or share funny anecdotes. Please note that no one in the group has any talent in these areas, which, of course, often leads to more laughter!

We end each class with progressive relaxation exercises. These too benefit our respiratory system. When someone is experiencing shortness of breath, panic often takes control. By mastering deep, relaxed breathing, we are better able to control this situation.

Terry, who has been attending for about six years, states that this class is his favorite outing of the week. He enjoys all aspects of the class but truly loves the relaxation segment. Rairdon, who now uses home oxygen, has learned to control his breathing and also how to use his oxygen equipment correctly. Sandy tells us that she always remembers to utilize deep breathing while getting up from her seat or entering/exiting her car. All participants feel the difference that proper breathing adds to their daily life.

Most adults only utilize the top third of their lungs, and this can have an impact on our daily activities. Often being short of breath is not disease related but merely not breathing fully or efficiently. Older adults often hold their breath, especially when facing a task that may cause shortness of breath.

Once someone has experienced being short of breath, they often become hesitant to be too active. But as activity level decreases, so does muscle tone and energy. It is best to remain as active as possible and learn how to overcome shortness of breath with deep breathing and relaxation exercises.

Along with this class, which is offered free to any senior group in Franklin County, this program also offers support groups for seniors or caregivers affected by COPD and individual, in-home educational visits by our respiratory therapist. You can also schedule a speaker on lung diseases. There is no charge or financial guidelines to participate. If you would like to learn more, schedule a visit or a class, please contact Joyce at 614-437-1521.



## The Vaping Epidemic

Many websites claim that Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and e-cigarettes are safe and or have health benefits that do not contain nicotine. UpToDate, a medical journal, states that the level of nicotine measured by chemical analysis has been found to be inconsistent with manufacturer's package labeling. Cartridges labeled nicotine-free have been found to contain nicotine. Some of these devices found on the internet do not require any age verification. The regulations of these devices are still under litigation, and during this time of litigation, the number of users of these products is climbing. The most commonly cited reasons for using e-cigarettes and ENDS among both youth and young adults are curiosity, flavoring/taste, and low perceived harm compared to other tobacco products. However, with little to no regulation on what chemicals can be used in the vapor oils, it is difficult to ascertain the long-term effects e-cigarettes and ENDS can have. Data demonstrates adolescent use of these devices is associated with the increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. We know that nicotine exposure during adolescence can cause addiction and can harm the developing adolescent brain. E-cigarettes and ENDS are banned for sale to anyone under the age of 21 years of age. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine passed the

state budget bill, which also included a law that will raise the legal age to buy cigarettes, vape pens, and other tobacco products from 18 to 21. Previously, this had only been adopted by a handful of cities within the state.

Visit [www.uptodate.com/home/uptodate-benefits-patients](http://www.uptodate.com/home/uptodate-benefits-patients) or [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco)



*The 2019 September Tobacco Treatment Specialist certification class learns techniques for those wishing to quit their nicotine addiction.*



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