



The Newsletter  
of Caracole

# Living

October 2017

## CARACOLE OPPOSES ISSUE 2 - The Ohio Drug Price Relief Act

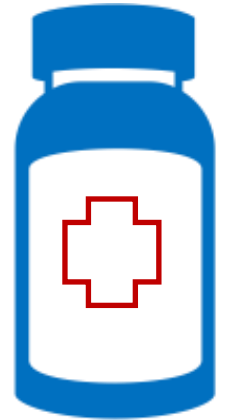
The Ohio Drug Price Relief Act is a state-wide initiative that will appear on the Ohio ballot in November of 2017. The initiative's primary objective is to lower the cost of prescription drugs purchased by the State of Ohio. The State of Ohio purchases pharmaceuticals for the Department of Corrections, Worker's Compensation, Medicaid and other programs. If the measure passes, it would require the State of Ohio to pay no more for prescription drugs than is paid for the same medications by the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA). The State and state entities would be required to negotiate with drug companies.

As a nonprofit providing services for individuals with HIV/AIDS, we agree with the stated intent of this initiative and the necessity to address the cost of prescription drugs, particularly for people with chronic conditions. We consistently engage with multiple partners to assess a variety of proposals to achieve sustainable and affordable prices of prescription drugs for our clients. That said, we have many concerns with this ballot initiative, which are detailed below. In fact, it is possible that should this initiative become law, it could have the exact opposite effect of what it proposes. Prescription drugs could actually become more expensive and difficult to access for consumers.

- It is unclear how the benchmark for the reduced prices, which are assumed to save money, would actually be established. In fact, the actual prices paid by the Veterans Administration (VA) for drugs are not published. Those actual prices are proprietary and can vary from one VA facility to the next.
- Even if the initiative were to save the state money, it contains no mechanism to ensure that those savings are passed along to all consumers. If the State must seek deep price concessions from manufacturers and wholesalers, it is conceivable that these entities will compensate by raising prices for non-target entities (privately insured individuals) and equally conceivable that those increases could be passed along to consumers in the form of higher copays to maintain profits.

- Drug manufacturers have a well-established business model to sustain profitability. If they lose money on more expensive drugs, there is a risk that formularies will be reduced thereby decreasing access to certain drugs.
- It may not be reasonable to assume that large numbers of manufacturers would be willing to negotiate voluntarily with Ohio state entities. Manufacturers are likely to be reluctant to cooperate given the national precedent that could be set regarding state pharmacy programs.

For these reasons, Caracole is opposed to the Ohio Drug Price Relief Act. Moving forward with prescription drug pricing reform, we support a national effort such as the one outlined in the paper *Tackling Drug Costs* by Sean Dickson of the Fair Pricing Coalition and endorsed by the Treatment Action Group. This document outlines recommendations for a broader overhaul of the prescription drug pricing system and ensuring access to medications. The strategies outlined include tightening existing regulations regarding the amount federal and state governments pay for medications, increasing penalties for egregious price increases, expanding pool purchasing power and increasing transparency about drug development and marketing costs. We do not believe a state-by-state effort is an efficient, fair or equitable way to tackle the problem of inflated prescription drug costs therefore Caracole does not support the Ohio Drug Pricing Relief Act. As a provider of services for persons with HIV/AIDS, we wholeheartedly support reform in the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare. We support a comprehensive, national effort aimed at accountability, reform and universal access for all Americans.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR WORLD AIDS DAY 2017

Friday, December 1 marks World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to come together to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. This winter, look out for our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary timeline on Fountain Square in collaboration with the Cincinnati Health Department to commemorate World AIDS Day 2017.

# Letter from Board President



Dear Friends,

As you may know, 2017 marks Caracole's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For those of you who have been standing with us all of these years, you have seen the transformation Caracole has experienced. The early days were difficult - when we were facing many unknowns – the misinformation and fear surrounding HIV, fledgling levels of financial support and clients whose diagnoses were essentially death sentences. But thanks to support from friends like you and the forward-thinking individuals who founded this agency, we persevered. Along with great advancements in

the treatment of HIV, we have continued to provide compassionate and relevant services to those who need us. For those of you who are newer to Caracole, thanks for joining us! We are pleased to have you along for this journey and appreciate your support as we continue to grow and be the expanding, safe space that our name implies. We hope that you enjoy learning a little bit more about the founding of our agency in the article, *The Beginning* featured in this newsletter.

I would also like to call particular attention, especially for those of you who live in Ohio, to our cover article about Issue 2 - The Ohio Drug Price Relief Act. Caracole, along with The Ohio Nurses Association, The Ohio Pharmacists Association, The Ohio Hospital Association and many, many other agencies in the medical field, have taken a stance **against** this deceptive ballot initiative that we will see at the polls on November 7. As an agency with a client base reliant upon prescription drugs, we researched the promises made by Issue 2. After careful review of the facts, Caracole has concluded that, if passed, Issue 2 could drive up health care costs and limit access to medicines for our clients and millions of other Ohioans. If you would like more information about Issue 2, please visit our website, [www.caracole.org](http://www.caracole.org). Thank you for taking the time to learn more about this issue and how it could affect all of us.

As I mentioned earlier, Caracole is able to be the agency it is today because of the community that supports us. We could not do what we do without you – our friends, supporters, volunteers and advocates. We continue to be astounded by the generosity of this community and your continued concern for those living with HIV/AIDS. Although in these last 30 years, much has changed, the most important things – those which truly make this organization what it is, have remained the same. We would not be the Caracole we are today without our unwavering commitment to our mission, our resolve to always put the needs of our clients first and our ability to recognize when change is needed, and to embrace that change in order to best serve those who need us. And we will continue to do exactly that until we are no longer needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen J. Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephen Peterson  
President, Board of Directors

## Client Wish List

We have a designated closet at the Caracole offices that is stocked with personal care and household items that many of us take for granted. Our case managers are able to distribute these items to clients in all of our programs. With our expanding client base, we run out of these supplies very quickly. **Right now, our closet is running very low on the basic personal care and household supplies listed below.**

We would like to ask **YOU** and your book club, office, soccer team, Girl Scout troop, Church/Temple/Mosque, card club - whoever you would like to include - to help us with this pressing need for our clients. These very basic items really do make a huge difference to our clients. If you are interested in organizing a personal care/household items drive to benefit Caracole clients, or if you are able to donate any of these items, please contact Megan Green at 513-619-1483 to make drop off arrangements at our office. We also understand how busy our supporters are and welcome donations of these personal care items via Amazon. You can mail them directly to our Northside office. Don't forget to include your information in the notes so that we can thank you for your generous donation.

- Toilet paper
- Shampoo
- Soap
- Razors
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Feminine hygiene products
- Laundry detergent
- Cleaning products
- Buckets, mops and brooms
- Kitchen items



# Caracole's Party in Plaid Plunges Under the Sea!

2017 marks Caracole's Pearl Anniversary. What better way to commemorate our 30th year than to plunge under the sea (in our finest plaid, that is!)? On August 26, that's exactly what Caracole and 475 of our closest friends did at this year's Party in Plaid Plunges Under the Sea fundraiser. It was a great evening full of fun, we mean fun, plaid-clad mermaids, a pack of Poseidons and more sailors than Fleet Week! Guests said goodbye to summer with amazing food and cocktails by our good friends at Jeff Thomas Catering, marveled at the dance-off performed by DANCEFIX by HBDC, danced the night away with DJ Pillo and snapped up amazing buys at the Jim Obergefell Platter Auction. Not only was the evening incredibly entertaining, but it was a success for Caracole as well! More than \$85,000 was raised to help support Caracole's mission of reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS through housing, care and prevention.

We are grateful to everyone who helped make this evening such a success - our amazing co-chairs John Gillespie and Sean Guilfoile, their hard working committee of volunteers, Master of Ceremonies, Jay Shatz, our generous sponsors, everyone who contributed to the record-setting silent auction, all of our guests and our very special friends and honorees for Party in Plaid Plunges Under the Sea, Sue Butler, Christ Church Cathedral, Mark Haggard and Dan Brown.



**Top Left:** Meghan Ferguson and Curtis Hopson pose for a photo at Caracole's Party in Plaid event. **Top Right:** Steve Sendelbeck, Dan Brown, Mark Haggard and Mike Bauschelt stop right outside the Cincinnati Masonic Center doors before plunging Under the Sea. **Bottom Left:** Party in Plaid co-chairs John Gillespie and Sean Guilfoile along with honoree Sue Butler, Executive Director Linda Seiter and Board President Stephen Peterson speak to the plaid-clad crowd about Caracole's mission. **Bottom Right:** Dean Clevenger, Freeman Durham, Scott Stover and Jeff Schlabach pause for a photo before the dance party begins. Photo credits: Liam O'Connell Photography



Intrepid Caracole staff and volunteers take a breather from unloading the cargo at the beginning of the 2016 Christmas Tree Sale.

## COME "ROCK AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE" WITH US THIS WINTER!



Our good friends at Findlay Market have once again invited Caracole to host our Christmas Tree Sale fundraiser at the Market house.



Caracole Community Investment Coordinator, Megan Green prepares for the sale by practicing her mad tree carrying skills in the off-season. Photo credit: Sarah Adams

Thanks to their kind offer, Caracole will be selling the most fantastic trees in town to support our mission. We know it's early, but mark your calendars now so that you remember to come down to historic Findlay Market and visit us! We'll be on the Elm Street side for all of your Christmas tree needs starting on November 24 and continuing every Saturday and Sunday until Christmas. We will have 4-10 ft. tall Fraser Firs priced between \$15-\$100, White Pine roping for \$10/25 ft. and 20" Fraser Fir wreaths for \$20 with all proceeds benefiting Caracole. If you are interested in volunteering during the weekends OR if you would like to help unload the trees when they arrive on Monday, November 20, please contact Megan Green at [mgreen@caracole.org](mailto:mgreen@caracole.org) or 513-619-1483.

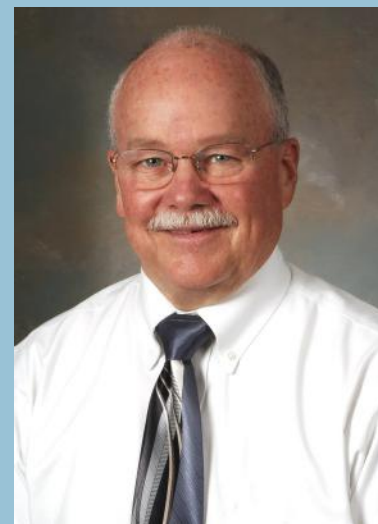
# Peter T. Frame Clinic - Coming Soon

Caracole is pleased to announce that construction is currently underway for The Peter T. Frame Clinic which will be operated by The Cincinnati Health Network (CHN) and will be located at Caracole's Northside office. The clinic will be named after beloved infectious diseases doctor, Dr. Peter Frame. Dr. Frame was the founder of the first Infectious Diseases Center in Cincinnati to treat AIDS patients. He provided compassionate care to countless individuals living with HIV over the years until his retirement in 2008. Dr. Frame served as the president of the CHN Board and as a member of the Caracole Board. The clinic will provide Caracole clients and their families with quality, culturally sensitive and convenient primary medical care. Both Caracole and CHN are very excited about this partnership as it will fill a gap in services and will seamlessly integrate clients' primary care with their specialized HIV care. Kate Bennett, Executive Director of CHN said "Opening this new clinic perfectly fits our mission to embrace and promote the health and wellness of the underserved."

The longstanding collaboration between CHN and Caracole has helped both organizations to eliminate

barriers and increase access to consistent quality care for those most in need in our community.

Hammers and other loud equipment are currently hard at work transforming the space that was previously used by Caracole's Prevention Department. If you visit us soon, please pardon the mess! Once the dust settles this winter, Caracole and CHN will host an Open House to dedicate the space and place a time capsule. Keep your eyes peeled for more information!



Dr. Peter T. Frame

## Assess Your Risk for HIV

**Answer this questionnaire to discover your level of HIV risk.**

1. Have you had sex with multiple partners, or had sex with someone who has had sex with multiple partners?
2. Have you had sex without knowing the HIV status of your partner(s)?
3. Have you shared needles to inject drugs?
4. Have you had sex with someone who has shared needles to inject drugs?
5. Have you at any time been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection like genital warts, genital herpes, gonorrhea or syphilis?
6. Have you had sex with someone whom you know is HIV+?
7. Have you ever had unprotected anal or vaginal sex?
8. Have you ever been exposed to blood or sexual fluids from someone who is HIV+?
9. Have you ever had a transfusion of unscreened blood or medical injections from unsterilized equipment?
10. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the last six months: persistent cold and/or flu, extreme weight loss and fatigue, persistent diarrhea and/or recurring night sweats?

**If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, we recommend that you visit our office or the Hamilton County Health Department for a free, anonymous or confidential HIV test. Caracole's testing hours are Monday-Friday 9am-5pm with extended hours on Wednesday evenings until 8pm. No appointment necessary. The Health Department offers HIV test by appointment only. Please call 513-946-7611 or 513-946-7637 to schedule.**

This questionnaire cannot establish whether or not you have HIV or if you will get HIV in the future. The purpose of this questionnaire is to educate and inform. It is no substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. This questionnaire is provided on the understanding that it does not constitute medical or other professional advice or service. Instead, we encourage you to discuss your particular situation with your own health care provider and schedule an HIV test.



# The Beginning

To mark our 30th anniversary, we would like to share Caracole's origin story with you. Following is an excerpt of *Caracole - The Beginning*, written by Michael Ritchey, the founder of our agency and a man with incredible compassion and foresight.

It all began in February 1986 with an inquiring phone call from a Franciscan friar concerning the feasibility and need for an AIDS home in the Greater Cincinnati area. Since I never dismiss inquiries such as these and I retain a long-standing respect for the Franciscans, we set a meeting for the two friars and me in my office. During the meeting we discussed the Franciscans' work among persons with AIDS in New Orleans and Detroit. In these cities homes for persons with AIDS were already established with local Franciscan Province support. As the friars departed from our hour long discussion, I was given the mission of exploring the concept further among others in the community whom I considered knowledgeable in needs and resource assessment. The friars in turn offered tangible financial support should the idea come to fruition. I was confident in their offer of commitment since Father Jeremy Harrington and Father Jim Van Vurst was Provincial and Vice Provincial of the Province of St. John the Baptist, respectively.

The first thought concerning this AIDS home feasibility study was that it certainly was anything but a one person show. I knew that the process had to involve multiple inputs from diverse levels of "Cincinnati Wisdom." This initial impression was partly due to my immediate understanding of the project's magnitude and my approaching fortieth birthday. Being forty means many things; one of which is that a person need not be able and otherwise prepared to do everything oneself. Therefore I called upon Dr. Wyler, my most trusted advisor on Cincinnati power. (Dr. Wyler was the physician working at the morning STD Clinic at Clement Health Center since September, 1984.) Dr. Wyler and I made a list of the diversity of talents necessary to ascertain if the AIDS home project was feasible (i.e. political, medical, financial, community, hospital, and social service.) Our next step was to attach names to these components through utilization of our own highly subjective criteria. (Actually I'm being rather facetious here.) The selection of individuals was based upon our combined experience and knowledge of the person resources in the Greater Cincinnati community. We needed an honest, wise and practical group of Cincinnatians who would be willing to study the project's feasibility from all aspects including: projected need, scope of service,

funding potential and organizational plan. To this end individuals were asked to participate in what we called an AIDS Home Feasibility Study Group. The letter explicitly stated that this was not a request for financial contribution. However, it was a request for personal time, study and wise reflection from the invitees who would meet every four to six weeks for a six month period. No further commitment beyond this was required.

The process which followed was by all standards remarkable. Eighty percent of invitees pledged their participation, and the first meeting was held in June 1986 at the University Club courtesy of Dr. Wyler. From that point forward interesting ideas flowed, well conceived opinions were revealed, intelligent plans were presented and wise solutions became recommendations. Although I volunteered as conveyer and group secretary, my task became effortless. The interaction and dynamic expression within the group was so challenging that I knew the study mission would be completed effectively. And it was!

At the study group meeting in January 1987 all members voted to initiate plans to establish an AIDS home project in Cincinnati. At this meeting a Board of Directors was formed with all study group members volunteering their membership. Melissa Lanier was elected Board Chairperson. There was already over \$40,000 pledged in project support at that time. Everyone from this meeting requested a task. And frankly I left this meeting with nothing to do....what a warm feeling it was.

By June 1987 Caracole, Inc. was established as a private non-profit corporation; Brad Lutz was hired as resident manager in October; and the first residence for four persons with AIDS opened December, 1987. Everything about Caracole felt good from the very beginning. Repeatedly this goodness was confirmed with everyone involved. Board members who met with potential donor groups to request funding were greeted with openness and willingness to help. We received a call from Ken and Alice Skirtz offering a home for us to rent. The exterior gave the appearance of an ordinary three story frame turn of the century house on the hill however, upon crossing the threshold, each knew that there was nothing ordinary about this house. It was indeed a home.



Caracole Board Members Jim Goetz and Stephen Peterson join Executive Director, Linda Seiter in toasting the agency's 30th Anniversary at a party hosted by Ryan Messer and Jimmy Musuraca-Messer at their lovely home. Photo credit: John Guagenti

The Skirtz's home was next door and they acted more like foster parents than landlords to us and our residents.

Until Caracole I never imagined how freely individuals gave of their goods. News of the project was barely known, and we were inundated with a multitude of furnishings for the home. When I say furnishings, I don't mean chairs with exposed cushion springs. I mean a newly upholstered hid-a-bed couch, beds, art work, unopened new sets of dinnerware, mounds of Tupperware, and the list goes on. Our first moving day probably more closely resembled the landing at Dunkirk. Ten o'clock Saturday morning, nine men, three women, three trucks, a van, and a station wagon loaded with cleaning supplies. Many volunteers spent seemingly countless late night and weekend hours scrubbing, painting, and preparing. When the residents came, goodness continued in so many simple yet valuable ways.

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: Jeff Thomas Catering

Jeff Thomas Catering has been standing with (and providing delicious food for) Caracole since day one. In our 30 years of service, our very good friends at Jeff Thomas Catering have cooked up more than \$110,000 of in-kind support for our agency. That's a LOT of canapés! We are so appreciative of their kind and generous support (and willingness to take our calls when they know we are either asking for a donation or asking if we can add just "a few more" folks the guest total.)



The folks at JTC are true professionals who know how to make an event special. Not only is their food delicious, but the people are top-notch as well. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to the community, Jeff

Thomas Catering! If you're having an event, visit them at [jeffthomascatering.com](http://jeffthomascatering.com)—be sure to ask for the potatoes!



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## GO GREEN...

And help Caracole save money! If you would prefer to receive this newsletter via email, please send us your email address at [oracle@caracole.org](mailto:oracle@caracole.org) or call 513-761-1480

### SHELTER PLUS CARE

serves more than 150 clients, caregivers and children, making it Caracole's largest housing program. It is a rent subsidy program offering a permanent housing solution for homeless individuals and families with an adult member living with HIV/AIDS. Caracole provides case management and supportive services to help these individuals and families find and maintain safe housing, stay together and live as independently as possible.

### PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

is a rent subsidy program that serves HIV+ individuals who are considered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be 'unstably housed.' Similar to Shelter Plus Care, in addition to the rental subsidy, clients in our Permanent Supportive Housing program also receive comprehensive case management and referral services.

### SHORT-TERM RENT, MORTGAGE AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE

is a short-term, needs-based intervention to prevent homelessness and promote housing stability for individuals living with HIV/AIDS in our region. The objective is to assist HIV+ individuals with housing costs and support during HIV-related financial crises.

### PREVENTION & EDUCATION SERVICES

Caracole provides free, anonymous or confidential HIV and Hepatitis C testing as well as education services to at-risk populations.

### MEDICAL CASE MANAGEMENT

As part of our service-enriched programming, intensive case management services are provided to clients in all of Caracole's programs in order to help limit barriers to accessing care and stabilize and improve health and well-being while empowering clients to become independent and live with HIV/AIDS.

### CARACOLE HOUSE

Caracole will reopen Caracole House as a permanent supportive housing program in late 2017. The new Caracole House will be a low barrier, site-based, permanent housing program serving HIV+ chronically homeless and precariously housed clients. The private units will be for single adults and Caracole will provide supportive services for each resident.

### PHARMACY SERVICES

Caracole partners with PharmBlue, a mail-order pharmacy that provides HIV and non-HIV medication to all enrolled clients with a 24/7 pharmacy help center. Through this service established by the 340B Drug Pricing Program, Caracole offers co-pay assistance to all clients enrolled.

**Caracole's mission -  
To reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS through housing,  
prevention and care.**