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# WAY

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# FARM

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# Fairfield shelter has temporarily housed more than 8,000 abused, abandoned and troubled children

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## FAIRFIELD

It all began with \$59 and a prayer.

Twenty-five years later One Way Farm has provided temporary shelter for more than 8,000 abused, abandoned and troubled children and pregnant teens.

"Many of the children — who come from situations so dire, so devoid of hope — are callously referred to as disposable," said founder Barbara Condo. "The staff at One Way Farm works to break the cycle of abuse and disruption, and offer trust and hope to all children in need."

One Way Farm cares for 20 children at a time, and serves as an alternative to confinement and institutionalization.

"With faith in God, my own experience as an abused child, and the help of unpaid people — who have been sent by God — One Way Farm Children's Home is mending the broken minds, bodies and spirits of children," she said.

Condo recently received "The Secret of Living is Giving Award" by the Smith Family Foundation. The award is presented annually to a few "extraordinary givers."

According to the Smith Family Foundation, "It is bestowed on those rare individuals who encourage and nurture our youth by teaching them

the timeless value of servicing others." Condo said the award isn't about personal recognition — it's about recognition for the program she established in 1976, One Way Farm.

"What awards do for you is show that your work is being recognized," she said. "Recognition helps in getting funded, and that is important."

"We are not a United Appeals agency, therefore we rely heavily on generous donations from individuals, corporate sponsors, churches and grants."

Condo has a Rolodex with entries listed not by name, but by the supplies organizations can provide.

"For instance, I have a chicken noodle soup church," she said. "On designated Sundays, members of the church bring in a can of chicken noodle soup and it is donated to One Way Farm. Right now we are looking to have a McDonald's and a Taco Bell church."

Condo grew up in Appalachia, Kentucky before moving to Ohio. She had seven children of her own, but said she always found room for more.

"The limit was 10 children for foster parents," she said. "So I always had 10. My children grew up in a group home, and they are all successful. I think it taught them life skills. I know it did me. We didn't have running water when I was growing up so we had to fetch water each day. We learned to stay in good

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Barbara Condo, Founder, One Way Farm

grasses with the neighbor who lived closest to us with water. It taught us to get along with people. That same principle can be applied to everything you do."

She refers to her style of "healing the hurt" as recipes.

Two hundred and fifty-five flags hang the front of the property were a "recipe" to help children living at the farm deal with the recent terrorist attacks.

Children were so terrified after the terrorist attacks, they left notes on their beds, many with instructions to be buried with them if they died," she said.

"We placed the 255 flags in the front of the building and I told the children, 'We are not going to be part of the fear, we are going to be part of the solution.'"

"Now when they go to school, instead of saying 'I want to find my mother' they say 'I planted 255 flags,'" Condo said she "is a shoulder to cry on, but that's not enough."

"I recently took a young woman to her

mother's funeral. I asked if she could take home a basket of flowers," she said. "I told her the flowers were an extension of something she could hold to. I explained to her that the fresh-cut flowers were like immediate grief — in a couple of days they will die out and are removed."

One Way Farm has two family-style cottages — the Sunrise House for boys and the New Dawn house for girls.

"We have gone from a farm house on 2 acres to two shelters and a barn where animals and children play," she said. "On the 12 acres, there are not only memories made, but minds and bodies are healed. We care for those who somehow in their lives have lost their childhood."

To try and regain a portion of that, One Way Farm is the avenue to fulfilling their dreams."

In 1987, Condo founded Education Unlimited. The goal of the program is to extend its facilities to shelter injured animals of the valley.

"Adopted animals receive a healthy diet, exercise and humane care," she said. "Supervised by adults, children with special emotional needs meet the animals and learn how to care for them."

"Over time the child learns to trust the animal as a true friend. This opens the door for emotional healing and future relationships."

For more information about One Way Farm, call 829-3276.

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