

Our  
employees  
are the  
*heart*  
of Hattie Larlham



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*from the cover*

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# FOCUS



# The heart of Hattie Larlham

The legacy of Hattie Larlham began with one courageous and compassionate woman's decision to provide care for her neighbors who needed her most. As a nurse, Hattie Larlham knew that she possessed the skills and dedication to help the infants with profound disabilities whom the traditional medical system had failed. In 1961, the Larlham family welcomed baby Alice into their home and the rest, as they say, is history. Where that farmhouse once stood is now, 61 years later, known as the Center for Children with Disabilities and is home to 124 residents. Now, our employees continue Mrs. Larlham's legacy with the same devotion and love our founder built her life's work upon. Their commitment to providing daily opportunities for comfort, joy and achievement to the 1,400 children and adults with disabilities Hattie Larlham serves is what makes our organization thrive.

Our employees embody Mrs. Larlham's vision for the future and take great pride in delivering our mission. They are truly the heart of Hattie Larlham.



## Hattie Larlham Dove

In 1961, Hattie Larlham chose the dove that is found in our logo - a symbol of peace, love and all-around care.



**Sheena**  
Residential Manager, Central

"Sheena is very dedicated and hardworking. She works tirelessly to make sure her homes have what they need and always sees the good in people while encouraging her staff to do the same. She treats everyone with respect and like family."



**Craig**  
Employment Specialist II

"Craig goes above and beyond for the Employment Services Team. He is willing to take on new services without objection and does amazing work. Our team can count on him consistently."



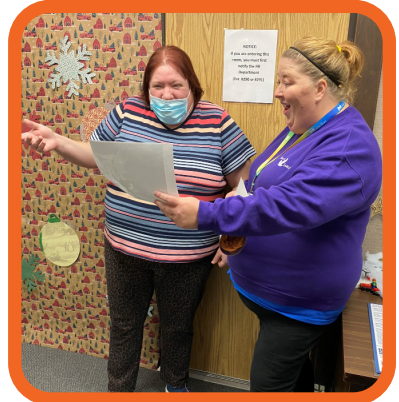
**Melanie**  
Assistant Manager, ICF Oak House

"Melanie brings positivity to every day, even on the countless days she covers shifts and med passes due to short staffing. Melanie is so caring and compassionate. Her empathy carries well beyond the people we serve and her 22 years at Hattie Larlham are immeasurable."



**Nicole**  
Nurse Administrator, Center for Children

"Nicole has demonstrated her dedication and team-first mentality during the nationwide nursing shortage. Not only has she been working with our medical team and serving many hours as a floor nurse, but she has also been taking on several extra duties such as on boarding new nurses and overseeing scheduling. Nicole works tirelessly, never seeks praise and always puts the care of our residents first."



**Maggie**  
Employment Services Manager

"Maggie is always friendly, responsive, knowledgeable, and helpful. Her willingness to take on new assignments facilitates our agency's continued growth which benefits the job seekers in our area. Maggie has a passion for the people we serve and her work has bettered the lives of many. I'm very thankful to be on a team with someone that truly understands our organization's mission."



**Frank**  
Transportation Manager, Central

Frank serves as the Transportation Manager for Central but has willingly traveled to Northeast Ohio to help with the transportation needs there also. Everyone is working short staffed right now, but he willingly stepped up to help to ensure everyone's needs were met."



**Dan**  
Case Manager, Addventures

"Dan models care and concern for participants and staff. He is committed in providing the best input and information to staff and families regarding participant needs. Dan maintains an open door for participants and staff and is always happy to provide help when called upon."



**Camilla**  
Direct Support Professional, ICF Aurora House

"Camilla is always patient and understanding of the needs of the residents and always strives to bring joy to their life. She demonstrates a commitment to providing high-quality services and care to all of the residents and she is very committed to the Hattie Larlham mission."

Intermittent Care Facilities - Cuyahoga and Summit Counties  
 Addventures - Franklin County  
 Employment Services - Medina, Portage, Summit, Stark and Franklin Counties  
 Supported Living - Summit, Delaware and Franklin Counties  
 Center for Children - Portage County



# Forever family



Amy poses with Willow at the Hattie Larlham Center on Adoption Day.

**December 6, 2021 will forever hold a special place in Amy Milligan's heart.** Just over one year ago, Amy's adoption of her daughter, Willow, was finalized and they became the family they'd felt in their hearts for years.

## Meant to be

Amy started as a night nurse at Hattie Larlham in April of 2017 and quickly learned how truly special every resident is. She spent the next year caring for the children and adults who call the Center home and became attached to each one in lasting ways. Amy's bond to Willow, though, was something deeper. Willow is a resident at the Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities and thrives on her residential unit, Sienna Woods. Now six years old, Willow came to the Center when she was just four months old, making her the youngest infant the facility had welcomed in many years. Dedicated to her lifelong goal of becoming a Family Nurse Practitioner, Amy would go on to pursue a career opportunity at Akron Children's Hospital in the spring of 2018 but remained committed to keeping Willow in her life. Now no longer an employee on Willow's care team, Amy had the chance to pursue more permanent ways to be there for Willow. "I knew I wanted to help her. When I left Hattie Larlham, I initially began exploring the options of guardianship or becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for Willow. I knew she needed someone in her corner and with my medical background and close experience with her, I thought I could be that advocate she needed in her life." Amy changed course and began pursuing legal adoption and, though the process was long and quite challenging at times, she knew it would be worth it to finally give Willow the permanent security, safety, and love of a family that she so deserved.

## Silver linings

It's no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic made almost every aspect of daily life more difficult for everyone. Suddenly, every venture outside was a risk and moments of in-person connection were few and far between. Dine-in became carry out only, commutes became a stroll down the hallway, and meetings became video calls. Which is where Amy found her silver lining. For many months, Amy had struggled to fit the required foster and adoption



**"It was hard for me to leave but I needed to pursue my dream of becoming a nurse practitioner. And then I was blessed with Willow. So it's all been a journey and I think God had a plan for us."**

Amy discussed her brief time on the nursing staff at Hattie Larlham and how it ultimately became a life-changing stepping stone.

training classes into her unfathomably busy schedule as a nurse, graduate student and single mother of two teens. Once the pandemic took hold, those in-person evening classes became on-demand virtual trainings. Suddenly, Amy was able to log-in and complete the courses when her schedule allowed- whether it was daybreak after a sixteen-hour hospital shift or a rare moment of calm on a Saturday night. "It really was a blessing in disguise, if you can call it that," she said.

## A name to cherish

Though Amy is no longer an employee at Hattie Larlham, the staff and residents remain near and dear to her. She was quick to mention Willow's two favorite direct care providers, Ashli and Angela, and said that she feels at ease knowing that Willow is receiving the very best care from people who truly know and love her. But it isn't just the staff she feels bonded to. Willow's first roommate at the Center, Navreet, was a sweet girl whom Amy and Willow came to cherish. After Navreet sadly passed away, Amy felt called to honor her life in a special, lasting way. When Willow's adoption was final, her middle name officially became Navreet, which, Amy shared, means *angel*. "She was a special child and when I found out what her name meant, it just felt perfect. Like a sign from God."

## Laughter is the best medicine

Willow is now six but because of her intellectual disabilities, has cognitive functioning closer to a two-year-old. But don't let that fool you, Amy says. Willow is full of quirky spirit and has quite the sense of humor. Disney movies are a must and Willow particularly loves when her favorite characters find themselves in sticky situations. "She's got kind of a warped sense of humor," Amy laughs. "She loves the parts of movies where something crazy or scary is happening. She just laughs and laughs at things most kids might find scary. She's just sassy and fun. She laughs and it brightens your whole day. I love her spunk."

## Celebrating forever

It's been one year since Amy adopted Willow and, together, they've got a lifetime of Christmases, birthdays, and countless more milestones to look forward to. Because of her complex medical needs, Willow will always require the round-the-clock support she receives at Hattie Larlham but distance and a hectic schedule will never keep Amy away. She and her daughter, 14, and son, 17, will continue to visit Willow at every chance they have. And, when Amy can't be there, she trusts the staff at the Center to provide Willow the care that she herself would give. "They're all angels, every one of them. I can't say enough good things about Hattie Larlham, truly."



**Paula Striner (left)** has overseen Willow's care since she arrived at the Center six years ago. Working closely with Amy and Hattie Larlham social services supervisor **Anna White (right)**, she was a true champion for Willow throughout the adoption process. Hers and Anna's compassion for Willow were a true light along the path for the Milligan family. "God bless Anna and Paula both," Amy said. "Without their help, this adoption probably wouldn't have happened."



Angela Piazza (left) and Ashli Manning (right) are Willow's two favorite staff members and they wholeheartedly return the love.

Center for Children  
Portage County





# SUPPORT THAT Matters

How one employee gives purpose to passion.



**“She is professional, hard-working, kind, and a natural leader. It’s hard to find people like that.”**

That’s what Liz Jones, Director of Employment Services at Hattie Larlham, said when asked how one of the newest job coaches at Hattie’s Doggie Day Care was acclimating to her role. Liz was referring to Rebecca Haywood, who joined the Doggie Day Care (DDC) staff in June of this year. It’s clear to Liz, and to anyone who has the pleasure of interacting with Rebecca, that she’s got a huge heart and a bright future ahead of her.

## Lifelong Passion

Rebecca has always been passionate about supporting people who have disabilities. From her time in elementary school when, instead of joining in on social activities with her classmates, Rebecca would dedicate her lunch and recess periods to hanging out with the kids in special education program to present-day where she’s thriving as a job coach and pursuing a college degree to make an even bigger impact in the field of disability support. “I’ve always had a passion for working with people who are different,” Rebecca said. “I am neurodivergent myself and I’ve always felt called to help people with disabilities. I relate to some of their struggles. I want to make sure they feel included and loved.”

## Trainee Spotlight

**JOHN K.**



“Everyone here loves John. He loves doing his tasks and wants to do everyone else’s, too. John is like the sunshine at DDC, we really miss him if he is not here. **John is getting ready to start career exploration next year and I think he would do amazing in community employment. I can’t say enough good things about John!**”

**Gina Sullivan**, Supervisor, Hattie’s Doggie Day Care and Boarding

**Started in:** 2007

**Skills:** processing credit cards & retrieving dogs for pick up

**Favorite dog:** Dobby, corgi

## Talents in Action

Rebecca began her career at Hattie Larlham in 2021 as a job coach in the Summer Youth Work Experience (SYWE) program, which connects high school students to six-week job trial experiences in the community. “I was at a grocery store recently and ran into a student I had coached two years ago. He was working at the store and it was really special to see,” Rebecca said. “I will love to see when a Doggie Day Care trainee gets to move on from the program to community employment. That will be really rewarding.” When the 2022 SYWE session ended, Rebecca joined the DDC team and has been an asset ever since. “I could give you tons of examples of how she’s stepped up to take on various tasks to improve operations at Doggie Day Care,” Liz said. “She is currently in college and will be graduating soon. I sincerely hope we can find a way to keep Rebecca with our organization. She really gets our mission.” As an example of Rebecca’s dedication, Liz went on to share that when it came time to find a photographer for DDC’s annual Santa Paws fundraising event, Rebecca was quick to volunteer her skills. The portraits turned out beautifully and customers were grateful for a special experience.



Two of Rebecca’s Santa Paws portraits with a guest appearance by Rebecca’s own dog, Rosie (right.)

“My ideal career is creating websites and apps for people with disabilities. Accessibility in the digital space is really important and there are so many ways that new apps can make things easier for people with disabilities.” Rebecca is currently developing an app that focuses on task management and hopes it will bring motivation and clarity to those who use it. And if her skills as a tech developer and direct support professional weren’t enough, Rebecca is also an incredibly talented photographer. “Working with the Santa Paws event this year actually gave me the motivation to start my own pet sitting and photography business,” she shared. “Being able to incorporate my passion for photography here at Doggie Day Care, a job that already combines my two loves, supporting people with disabilities and dogs, was such a great experience.”

## Bright Future

Rebecca is in her final year at Kent State University, where she’s pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in emerging media technology and minors in autism spectrum disorder and web design and development.



Pictured left to right: Liz Jones, Rebecca Haywood, Gina Sullivan

**“Rebecca is exceptional.** I could give you tons of examples of how she’s stepped up to take on various tasks to improve Doggie Day Care. She is currently in college and will be graduating soon; I sincerely hope we can find a way to keep her with the organization. **She really gets our mission.**”

**Liz Jones**  
Director of Employment Services

**Hattie’s Doggie Day Care and Boarding** is a social enterprise work training program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. **Learn more:** [hattielarlham.org/ddc](http://hattielarlham.org/ddc)

2778 Greensburg Road, North Canton, OH | 330-899-8565

**Employment Services**  
370+ individuals served across  
Medina, Portage, Summit, Stark and  
Franklin Counties  
**Hattie’s Doggie Day Care**  
Summit County





# Making magic in the classroom and beyond

For **Emily Allen**, and all of the educators and support staff at Dahlberg Gibson, kindness and compassion are the heartbeat that makes every school year special. Dahlberg Gibson Learning Center gives students the extra support they need to learn, grow, and succeed in the classroom and beyond.

An important key to thriving in school is thriving at home. And for that, Dahlberg has an answer. The majority of the families at Dahlberg Gibson are low-income and sometimes struggle to afford essentials like cleaning and hygiene products, food, and school supplies. Emily and the rest of the Dahlberg staff help alleviate some of this burden for families with routine "shopping days." Those essentials are routinely donated by a collection of very generous community partners, including the Mid-Ohio Food Bank, and are used to stock the school's conference room as a makeshift pantry for families. By providing food and household items, the Dahlberg team knows that they're helping set their students up for better performance in school and healthier, happier lives beyond the classroom.



*"I was just thinking about things coming up here at Dahlberg this month. There is so much to be grateful for. As crazy and hectic as the holiday season gets, it's definitely a season of giving and I'm so glad to have such wonderful co-workers at Dahlberg!"*

Emily Allen,  
Director of Dahlberg Gibson Learning Center



## A Dahlberg school year by the NUMBERS

- 7 classrooms
- 21 teaching staff
- 56 students
- 180 lesson plans

and countless reasons to smile!



At Dahlberg, magic moments happen every day. But during the month of December, there's an extra special hum of excitement, possibility, and gratitude that fills the hallways, classrooms, offices and even...the boiler room.

**TJ Plantz** has been a maintenance technician at Dahlberg since the fall of 2020 and has become a beloved, steady presence for students and staff alike. Easy-going and genuinely happy to help in any way asked of him, TJ earned himself a permanent place in the hearts of the Dahlberg crew when he first donned a white beard and red coat in the name of making some holiday magic three years ago.



Pre-pandemic, it was a treasured Dahlberg tradition to hire a Santa Claus to come and visit each classroom, handing out gifts and playing with toys. When COVID restrictions made it impossible to bring an outsider into the school for such an event, TJ quickly stepped up to fill those boots. He said it was a special way for him to give back to the kids and bragged that in his three years of playing Santa, only twice has he been found out as a well-intentioned imposter. During lunch, he sneaks away to the boiler room to suit up and prepare to spread holiday cheer- even if the polyester and fake beard don't give the best ventilation in the steamy room.

**The toys that Santa TJ hands out are part of the magic, too.** They're collected from an array of generous holiday donors who, with input from the Dahlberg teachers, ensure that every child receives something they'll love. And for families who could use a little extra support at the holidays, Emily and her team are there to connect them with programs like Toys for Tots and meal giveaways. "There is so much to be grateful for," she said. "How could Santa continue to visit and gift each child a toy without the support of our awesome donors? And without our easy-going, good-natured Maintenance Tech? Or how could we spread the Christmas joy without the help of Toys for Tots and Mid-Ohio Food Bank? And again, all the support and help Kenny (Dahlberg Assistant Director Kenny Okine) and I receive from this wonderful staff? The employees at Dahlberg have supported more than 18 families- about 45 total children, including students and their siblings with a new wrapped toy this year. I guess I'm just saying as crazy and hectic as the holiday season gets, it's definitely a season of giving and I'm so glad to have such wonderful co-workers at Dahlberg!"



**The Dahlberg Gibson Learning Center** is an early intervention education program that helps students with disabilities and their families learn, grow and thrive.

Learn more: [hattielarham.org/dahlberg](http://hattielarham.org/dahlberg)



Dahlberg Learning Center  
Franklin County





# Forging connections

**Addventures, Hattie Larlham's adult day program in Columbus, has been helping Thomas explore and connect for more than ten years.**

"Years ago, if you would have said to me 'Do you think Thomas would sign up for a yoga class?' I would have absolutely said 'no,'" Tom Reidy shared with a chuckle. Tom's son, Thomas, has been attending Hattie Larlham's Addventures adult day program since 2012 and in that time has enjoyed more experiences and growth than the Reidys could have imagined. Tom went on to say how much Thomas, despite being wheelchair bound, has come to love his yoga class at Addventures. "They incorporate music and movement, and he loves it. He actually gets mad when he has to leave that class early to go to speech therapy."

**Laura Gregory**, manager at Addventures, feels a particular kinship with Thomas because they started at the program at just about the same time over ten years ago. Laura shared that in the time she's known Thomas, she's seen him grow in many ways. He's more adventurous and open to trying new things. He's even done an indoor wall climb in his wheelchair. She says this makes her proud of the program and the positive impact it makes, citing their slogan "inspiring personal growth."

Addventures currently serves 65 members but, in peak times, they have served nearly double that number. "Post-COVID, we're slowly scaling back up," said Laura. "It's a balance of bringing in staff and welcoming back members when they're ready." When they do return, Addventures members will have a whole host of classes and activities to look forward to, including kayaking, boxing, hiking, glass fusing, woodshop, and Thomas' current favorite, *blacksmithing*.

"Thomas *LOVES* his blacksmithing class," Laura shared. "The people at Macabee Metals here in Westerville are amazing. They're extremely knowledgeable and really take their time to help our members enjoy the experience and get hands-on." Blacksmithing, like his yoga class, might seem to be an unlikely hobby for Thomas but Laura, and his parents, know better. "This is a unique place," Tom complimented. "Every quarter they're offering things we never thought Thomas would have the opportunity to do. He really enjoys it. If he wasn't at Addventures, I don't know where he would be. I'm not aware of any other program like it."

Aside from the wide variety of classes that Addventures offers, Tom went on to praise the staff for how deeply they care for Thomas and the other members. "The staff have really been wonderful. From Laura at the top all the way down. Thomas is nonverbal but uses a few signs and gestures. The staff have really worked with him on that and have taken the time to develop communication with him to make sure they understand what he wants and needs."

Addventures helps adults with disabilities connect and explore in Franklin County. The program serves a diverse population, with varying degrees of support needs, interests, backgrounds, and ages. **Learn more: [hattielarlham.org/addventures](http://hattielarlham.org/addventures)**



Thomas gives his signature grin while he tries his hand at blacksmithing.

**"The one thing that stands out about Thomas is how engaged he is in his day. If you work with Thomas for even a short period of time you can tell that he is a young man who has experienced a significant amount of love and attention in his life and it is reflected in his attitude and disposition towards others."**

**Brooks Schumann**,  
Addventures Activities Manager



ABOVE: Thomas enjoys socializing with Addventures friends during a cookie making class.

BELOW: Class leader Eric helps Thomas with his woodworking project.



# in the SPOTLIGHT

**Hattie Larlham employees receive state-level awards for extraordinary service.**

## STEPHANIE BANKS,

an LPN for Hattie Larlham's Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) group living homes, was honored by the Ohio Health Care Association with the **2022 ID/DD Excellence Award** for nursing.

**"Stephanie's contributions in her 19 years at Hattie Larlham could never be counted. Always in a good mood, and ready to attack problems head-on, Steph is a true hero and has found her calling in life."**

Amy Koneval, Home Manager, Hattie Larlham Group Homes



*It takes time, talent and commitment to provide such a high level of care to our Intermediate Care Facility residents and Hattie Larlham is thrilled that these outstanding members of our direct care team have been recognized for their efforts! **Learn more: [hattielarlham.org/ICF](http://hattielarlham.org/ICF)***

## MELANIE HARRIS,

an assistant home manager for Hattie Larlham's Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) group living homes, was recognized as a **2022 Frontline Supervisor of the Year** by the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA.)

**"Melanie has risen to this challenge and is always looking for ways to help staff, and herself, improve; to exceed the standard. Her contributions in her 22 years at Hattie Larlham are immeasurable."**

Okey Ekechi, Program Director, Hattie Larlham Group Homes



Intermediate Care Facilities  
Cuyahoga and Summit Counties  
Addventures  
Franklin County





Your support at our ThriveK: Run & Roll for All Abilities...  
**RAISED OVER \$30,000**



# STATEWIDE IMPACT

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**1,400+**  
individuals served

**10**  
counties

**90+**  
locations



Your support at our Hattie Larlham Golf Classic...  
**RAISED OVER \$110,000**



Your support at Home Run for Hattie...  
**RAISED OVER \$20,000**



Your support at our Bright & Blue Gala...  
**RAISED OVER \$300,000**



Your support on #FiveDollarFriday every month...  
**RAISED OVER \$34,000**



**MAP KEY**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

- **Adult Day Support & Recreation**
  - **Constant Companions** 7 locations
  - **Addventures** 1 location
  - **Franklin County Recreation** 1 location
- **Dahlberg Learning Center** 1 location
- **Employment Services** 370+ individuals served
- **Hattie's Doggie Day Care** 1 location

**RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

- **Community Homes**
  - **Supported Living & Licensed Homes** 70 locations
  - **Intermediate Care Facilities** 5 locations
- **Center for Children with Disabilities** 1 location
- **Shared Living** 12 households



## SUMMARY OF SERVICE BY COUNTY

**FRANKLIN**  
 Addventures  
 Franklin County Recreation  
 Dahlberg Gibson Learning Center  
 Employment Services\*  
 Supported Living & Licensed Homes

**SUMMIT**  
 Constant Companions  
 Hattie's Doggie Day Care & Boarding  
 Employment Services\*  
 Intermediate Care Facilities  
 Supported Living Homes  
 Shared Living

**PORTAGE**  
 Employment Services\*  
 Center for Children  
 Shared Living

**CUYAHOGA**  
 Constant Companions  
 Intermediate Care Facilities

**ASHTABULA, HOLMES & MAHONING**  
 Shared Living

**MEDINA & STARK**  
 Employment Services\*  
 Shared Living

**DELAWARE**  
 Supported Living Homes

\* Numbers in circles denote amount of individuals served

**Your SUPPORT makes an impact.**





A little good goes a long way on  
**FIVE DOLLAR FRIDAY!**

Join us on the last Friday of every month as we rally our communities to make an exceptional impact on **#FiveDollarFriday!**

No donation is too big or too small and our donors, community partners, and corporate sponsors have proven it! This year, our Five Dollar Friday campaign has raised over \$34,000...but we're not done yet!

Before we head into the new year, help spread some holiday cheer on the final Five Dollar Friday of 2022!



Let's be brighter, together.  
[hattielarham.org/FiveDollarFriday](https://hattielarham.org/FiveDollarFriday)

**Save the date! 12.30.2022**



## SPECIAL THANKS to our 2022 partners!

Labatt Brewing Company | Cleveland Monsters | Starbucks  
Hattie Larlham Boards of Directors | Townhall | Leadership Portage County  
Lubrizol | Cleveland Guardians | Stan & Ellen Majkrzak  
Simplex-IT | Target | Tito's Handmade Vodka  
Meijer | Giant Eagle  
*and four generous anonymous donors!*

### Make an even BIGGER impact & join the fun as a **#FiveDollarFriday** corporate partner!

Whether it's through a donation match challenge, fun giveaways, or exciting prize raffles, corporate and community partners make an even bigger impact on Five Dollar Friday. These partnerships not only help raise critical funds for Hattie Larlham, but also allow us the opportunity to promote the companies and individuals in our communities who go that extra step in support of our mission.

Contact Mary Horoszko, Chief Development Officer, to get started: [Mary.Horoszko@hattielarham.org](mailto:Mary.Horoszko@hattielarham.org)

**ABOUT THE AGENCY:** Hattie Larlham is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating opportunities, advancing the community and influencing change for 1,400 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Your contributions allow Hattie Larlham to provide medical, recreational, work training and residential services to children and adults with developmental disabilities in Northeast and Central Ohio.

9772 Diagonal Road Mantua, OH 44255 | 330-274-2272



[hattielarham.org](https://hattielarham.org)

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