

**Eliza Simmons Bryant**, the daughter of a freed slave, came to Cleveland in 1858 with her mother and brother. Over the next 30 years the Bryant family became well known for their humanitarian efforts on behalf of “people of color.” The family provided others with basic essentials like food, shelter, clothing and guidance. In 1893, at the age of 66, Eliza Bryant became distressed by the fact that Blacks were not eligible for admission to nursing homes because of segregation. Over the next three years she spoke to friends, community groups, church groups and the business community to raise interest and funds for the community’s Black elderly. She recruited volunteers who went door to door to raise money, food and clothing. Because of her dedication, John D. Rockefeller made a financial contribution, which helped to enable the purchase of the first home. Her heroic effort led to the incorporation of “**The Cleveland Home of Aged Colored People**” on September 1, 1896.

Volunteers were a part of the organization prior to its incorporation in 1896. The Lady Board of Managers and the Junior Board (now Auxiliaries I & II) raised money by having dinners, teas and an Annual Ingathering. The Ingathering was an event during which canned goods, flour, clothing and money were contributed to supplement the meager budget. In the early days prior to Social Security, residents paid a one-time fee of **\$300-500 for lifetime care**. Later the Home became a member of Welfare Federation of Cleveland (forerunner of the Federation for Community Planning and, renamed in 2004, The Center for Community Solutions) and received crucially needed support services.

In 1914 a brick home was purchased on Cedar Avenue, where The Home was located until 1967. For over 53 years, this location provided essential services as a 19-bed facility. In 1960 The Home underwent a major reorganization. First its name was changed from the Cleveland Home for Aged Colored People to Eliza Bryant Home for the Aged. An Administrator was hired and the Board was expanded to include Trustees who were representative of the entire Cleveland community. During this same time the Board decided that a larger facility was needed to better meet the needs of the community.

In 1967, the Dorcas Society offered its building located at 1380 Addison Road. **The A.M. McGregor Home** made a donation of \$1.5 million dollars, which enabled the facility to expand and provide care for 47 persons. It was not long before the Addison building became inadequate. The building was old and maintaining it was increasingly expensive. After much deliberation, the Board decided that the Eliza Bryant Home would rebuild in Cleveland’s inner city. In 1985, after an intensive fund raising campaign, the new Eliza Bryant Center was completed at a cost of **5.5 million dollars**. Sources of funding for this ambitious project included the City of Cleveland, the Federal Government, foundations, corporations, the Board and Staff. The largest contribution of \$2 million came from the **Forest City Hospital Foundation**. This donation represented the largest local gift ever made from one Black non-profit organization to another.

One unique factor in Eliza Bryant's success in providing for the elderly is its three hard-working Auxiliaries, which total approximately 100 women. Not only have they helped raise funds to support programs and services, but they have also provided leadership and hold positions on the Board. All of the members of the Auxiliaries give many hours of service and financial support to enhance resident comfort.

- **Auxiliary I** was initially founded as the Lady Board of Managers at the time that the home was opened. In 1948, the name was officially changed to Auxiliary I. They sponsored an annual **Ingathering** and Open House each year. At these events they raised funds and requested food and other items to support the residents. In addition, Auxiliary I helped with purchasing of furniture and equipment as needed.
- **Auxiliary II**, formally known and established as the Junior Board, was organized in 1939. Since its inception, Auxiliary II has sponsored special events to raise funds for the residents and program activities. Working closely with members of the staff, Auxiliary II purchases furniture,

equipment and other resident related needs. For over 25 years, Auxiliary II has sponsored an **Annual Christmas Mart** that attracts approximately 1,000 guests each year.

- **Auxiliary III** is the youngest volunteer group connected with the Eliza Bryant. These women host an annual **Spring Luncheon**. The funds raised are used to purchase personal items for residents, birthday parties each month, and other extras that help make the lives of our residents more pleasant. Every Christmas, Auxiliary III has a party for the residents.

**Centennial Celebration:** In 1996, in celebration of one hundred years of service, the Board launched a capital campaign. It was recognized that the Adult Day Care and Senior Outreach programs were in great need of a larger facility to accommodate the growing needs of local seniors. In addition a decision was made to construct an independent housing complex to complement the continuum of services offered at Eliza Bryant.

In 1999 the **Inez Myers Senior Outreach Center** opened its doors expanding the Village by 17,000 square feet of needed space. Though there were many individual donors, the new expansion was named for a gift provided by Inez Myers. Today the Inez Myers Senior Outreach Center provides services to approximately 50 seniors per day and includes a Primary Health Clinic that provides services to community seniors.

Also in 1999, 60 units of new senior housing opened through a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This complex was named **Eliza Bryant Manor** and has maintained full occupancy since opening. Manor tenants are encouraged to participate in all of EBV's nutrition, cultural and wellness programs.

With the Village's expansion there was a need to increase the number of vehicles in Eliza Bryant's **transportation program**. Through the generosity of both public and private support, new vans were obtained, enabling Eliza Bryant to provide expanded service. With the successful completion of the Senior Outreach Center and Manor, the Board approved a name change to **Eliza Bryant Village** (EBV).

**2002 Annual Strategic Planning:** EBV continued to grow through annual strategic planning conducted at its Board and Staff Retreats. In 2000, two major initiatives were approved by the Board:

- **Nursing Home Expansion:** A decision was made to conduct a capital campaign to raise funds to acquire the former Madonna Hall Nursing Home and to expand EBV's nursing home from 100 to 175 beds. In cooperation with the City of Cleveland, local foundations and other philanthropic support, over \$10 million dollars were secured to begin the expansion project. In June 2003, a dedication ceremony was held and residents and staff from Madonna Hall relocated to the Eliza Bryant Village.
- **2003 Senior Housing Expansion:** In September 2000, Eliza Bryant was awarded a HUD grant for \$3.1 million to construct 44 units of cluster housing for independent seniors. On September 2, 2003, tenants moved into Eliza Bryant's new Garden Estates, which are adjacent to the 60 unit Eliza Bryant Manor, which opened in 1999. All EBV tenants have access to Eliza Bryant's Senior Outreach Center, Transportation Program, Health and Dental Clinic and Nutrition Center.

**2005 Annual Strategic Planning:** At the 2005 annual board and staff retreat, faculty and graduate students from Case Western Reserve University's Mandel Center for Non Profit Organizations began

the development of a three year strategic planning process. A new mission, vision and value statements were approved and are as follows:

**Mission Statement:** Eliza Bryant Village's mission is to provide quality services, outreach programs and a dignified, compassionate and secure environment for seniors.

**Vision Statement:** Eliza Bryant Village is committed to being a premier provider of outstanding healthcare, programs and services along the continuum of care.

**Value Statement:** As one of the oldest nursing care facilities in operation in the United States, Eliza Bryant Village was born out of the compassionate commitment of Eliza Simmons Bryant, the daughter of a freed slave. At its core: concern for the care of the elderly African American community. We continue that culture of community caring, tradition and respect, generation after generation. Our extraordinary facilities, outreach programs, and services are designed to enhance the health and well-being of our community's elders – in an environment that is comfortable, convenient, secure and familiar.

- **2006 Senior Housing Expansion:** In January 2006, EBV received notice of an award in the amount of nearly \$4.3 million to construct an additional 45 units of housing for the elderly under Section 202 Supportive Housing Program. Groundbreaking is planned for 2007.
- **Capital Campaign:** In April 2006, the EBV Board of Trustees and Development Committee launched a capital campaign to raise funds for the renovation/expansion of the twenty-year old skilled care unit and occupational/physical therapy units.
- **110 Years of Service:** September 2006 marked EBV's 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A communications and marketing plan was launched to enhance visibility, fundraising and for recruitment of residents, tenants, program participants and volunteer leadership.

Eliza Bryant Village has experienced tremendous growth and has dramatically repositioned itself to address the growing and changing needs of Cleveland's seniors. From its original location in 1896 on Giddings Avenue, Eliza Bryant Village has evolved into a comprehensive provider of geriatric services including adult day care, transportation, well seniors, community services, senior housing and skilled nursing care. Today, Eliza Bryant Village serves as the largest employer in the Hough neighborhood and employs over 250 full and part-time staff. This could not have happened without the Board's contribution, the tireless dedication of its three Auxiliaries and the financial support from many corporations, foundations, and friends.