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In This Issue ...

- 1. Project STIR – Leadership Training via the Ohio Self Determination Association
- 2. Part VIII in a Series: Improving Processes and Outcomes of the SSA Function
- 3. New Funds Bolster Summer Youth Employment Programs
- 4. Huron, Ottawa Counties Partner to Launch *Bridges to Transition* Program
- 5. LifeBuilders Adult Day Program, Reaching Out to Schools
- 6. Office of Provider Standards and Review (OPSR), Division of Legal & Oversight, 2009 Report
- 7. *Pipeline PostScripts*: Timely News Briefs and Calendar Notes

Project STIR

1. Leadership Training via the Ohio Self Determination Assn.

Traveling from 12 counties in Ohio (*Crawford, Delaware, Erie, Franklin, Hamilton, Huron, Marion, Medina, Richland, Scioto, Seneca and Wyandot*) to the University Plaza Inn in Columbus, 25 self advocates and several of their friends and caregivers participated in 18 hours of self-advocacy training in mid-April, known as *Project STIR* (Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility). The training was organized by the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA).

In addition to the 25 self advocates, OSDA invited the *Center for Development and Learning* at the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, to participate. It was the second year for this collaborative effort.

As a result of completing last year's *Project STIR* 'train-the-trainer' learning opportunity, five self advocacy leaders conducted part of this year's training. According to OSDA Executive Director, Dana Charlton, "...It was clear that they had learned so much, and were eager to pass on their knowledge."

Following this initial training, the twenty new participants then learned by working in small groups, using flip charts to document their discussions and report to the full group at the end of each activity. Everyone had the opportunity to 'use their voice.' Charlton explains,

“Project STIR training is designed to provide individuals with the tools to speak for themselves, mobilize others to advocate with them, and gain leadership experience. And as always, experience for the participants was the key!”



Active participation is a hallmark of OSDA events.
Here, each group prepares to share their knowledge in their own way.

Activities included setting rules to be followed during the training, such as being punctual, and not talking when someone else is talking. The group also identified famous people who have spoken up for themselves, and discussed advocacy concepts including:

- Knowing yourself;
- Listening to others;
- Negotiating with others;
- Problem solving; and,
- Rights and responsibilities.



More fun than ‘Money Follows the Person?’
‘Follow the Money’ was an activity demonstrated before the entire group by a few volunteers, illustrating the positive aspects of individual budgets and self-directed services.

Project STIR participants also prepared a colorfully-charted ‘path’ stretching along one wall, outlining their goals in advocating for desired changes in system supports, and in communities throughout Ohio. In addition, small groups of participants who resided in the same county identified steps to take locally to initiate specific changes. Each individual wrote down steps to take during the next month to speak up for themselves.

Wrapping up their work, the newly-trained group of self advocates decided to meet twice during the next year to follow up on the progress they have made individually ... as a local group working together ... and, as a strategic network of self advocates across Ohio.

For example, participants from Northwest Ohio will use what they have learned by employing policy advocacy as part of a strategic advocacy network known as the *OSDA Center for Public Policy*, funded by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.



A STIRring finale ...

Project STIR participants gather at the end of the April training to congratulate each other on a job well-done, and plan for future opportunities to advocate successfully for themselves and others.

Upcoming OSDA Conference

Opportunities to meet as a strategic network of self advocates are planned as part of the upcoming annual OSDA conference September 20 - 21, as well as in coordination with the self advocate track planned for the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities’ Winter Conference, in December.

More ‘STIRring’

In late April, DODD Director John Martin spoke with members of the OSDA Northwest Center for Public Policy at Tiffin University. This enthusiastic group of participants actively engaged Director Martin, and asked several questions.

Cynthia Morrison, Director of Consumer Advocacy and Supports at Seneca County Board of DD noted, “Director Martin did a great job of connecting with self advocates and discussing barriers in their lives. He answered several questions the participants had, including how the state might

be more helpful to them. It was especially positive to see so many individuals actively involved in the discussion.”



Just one of the crowd – DODD Director John Martin (front row, fourth from right) met with members of OSDA's Northwest Region last month at Tiffin University. According to one participant, “We had so much fun, and asked him a lot of questions.” (He does look a little worn out.)

Commenting on the day in Tiffin, Director Martin added,

“I really enjoyed my time with the self advocates in Tiffin. They were very patient and kind as they helped me understand the barriers they struggle with as they attempt to have greater freedom and control in their everyday lives. It is clear to me that a growing number of people with developmental disabilities are making it a point to learn about how they can access services that they need, and how they can learn more skills that enable greater independence. Talking with groups such as the one in Tiffin is energizing, and helps to keep me focused on what people want and need to live successfully in their communities.”

For more information about the OSDA Center for Public Policy, Project STIR or the Ohio Self Determination Association, check the website at www.ohiosda.org, email OSDA at osda@ohiosda.org, or call (614) 563-0788.



Part VIII in a Series

2. Priority Work – Improve Processes and Outcomes of the Service and Support Administration Function

The DODD has developed a framework to impact specific priority issues in compliance with budgetary constraints. This ‘Priority Work Plan’ is designed to help us work more effectively, in partnership with other system stakeholders, to serve the needs of Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. Here is the eighth in a series of Pipeline articles that highlights these top priority areas.

The Priority Work Plan includes ten areas of concentration, several of which are driven by activities that address and support streamlining services across the state, and reducing the cost of those services. (For details, see [*Pipeline Volume 3 Issue 22*](#), October 28, 2009, The 2010-2011 Workplan: Part I – The Ten Priority Areas.)

Improving the processes and outcomes of the Service and Support Administration (SSA) function is one of the ten priority areas, where work on a number of the 2008 Futures Committee recommendations has come together. Over the years, changes in service delivery, financing, and oversight roles have affected how Service and Support Administrators and provider program managers do their daily work.

Several separate-but-connected projects are underway, led by DODD Deputy Director, Patrick Lanahan, in partnership with County Boards of DD, Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), and Advocacy and Protective Services (APSI), and other stakeholders. In addition, the work of the County Collaborative [*Pipeline Volume 4 Issue 2*](#), January 20, 2010, is part of several efforts affecting this Priority Work Area, including the development of an online Individual Service Plan (ISP), and examining best practices.

Patrick Lanahan notes that individuals and families are spotlighting what is important to them in working with an SSA. He relates,

“When individuals and families talk about having a great SSA or program manager, we are asking, ‘What makes that person so valuable to you?’ And often we hear in response, ‘I can depend on her to keep it all together for my family member, and to solve problems when they come up.’ It’s a commitment to service that’s so appreciated.”

Also key to improving the processes and outcomes of the Service and Support Administration function, DODD Family Advocate, [*Peggy Martin*](#), is working closely with SSA’s throughout the state, gathering their input, and discussing opportunities for inter-county collaboration.

Peggy explains,

“In talking with SSA’s around the state, what I’m hearing is that it’s so important for a Service and Support Administrator to establish a strong relationship with the families served – one that is based on understanding and trust. If the SSA is a supportive *partner*, for example, in working with individuals and families preparing an ISP, the Plan will be a much more realistic and successful guide, and reflect that process of really thinking things through.”

Increasing family involvement and buy-in to the ISP process, and providing information regarding alternative resources and service opportunities in their local communities, is part of the important role played by SSA’s across the state, with an added emphasis on effective management of limited financial resources.

Looking at the work currently underway in this Priority Work Area, Peggy Martin notes that in conversations with Department staff, it’s clear that the DODD is learning a great deal from the field as the work gets underway. For example, Peggy has been visiting counties across the state,

and is most appreciative of the time County Board staff have taken to sit down and talk about issues and ideas. She concludes,

“We’re paying attention to the trends and patterns in the calls I get from individuals and families – and we’ve seen that some issues are more universal than others, and may be managed more easily by a County Board if just a little more information is available. That’s why our online information at [NEW Family Chat](#) and [How to Get Help](#) is constantly being updated and added to. Online and in person, we’re looking at any way we can to assist the SSA’s in their work.”

Having specific educational and operational tools more widely available to support SSA’s and program managers will benefit everyone in Ohio’s developmental disabilities community. In particular, the development of the DODD Cost Projection Tool and online ISP will help to reduce paperwork and improve data collection and retrieval.

It’s a tall order, to be sure, and through the collaborative efforts of the Ohio Superintendents of County Boards, Ohio Provider Resource Association, and Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc., best practices and program management functions are being reviewed with an eye toward applicability both locally and statewide. Funded by the DODD, the work of this stakeholder group is identifying training and other recommendations to support SSA’s and program managers. According to DODD Director John Martin,

“In reality, the Department is looking at any way we can to assist these professionals in their work.”

The expected outcomes from *improving the processes and outcomes of the Service and Support Administration function* also correspond closely to DODD Director John Martin’s Director’s Flexible Performance Agreement, which is a contract with Governor Strickland to develop key measures and targets, and report on results. Each agency within the Governor’s cabinet is responsible for achieving the goals of the Governor’s Leadership Agenda through department performance.

Priority Work, Quarterly Update

An updated report on the progress of the ten DODD Priority Work Areas has been completed, and will be posted on our website at <http://www.dodd.ohio.gov/DODDPriorityWork.htm> tomorrow. The report is in a grid format so that the action steps and work status/progress can be tracked easily for each of the Priorities.

Additional information regarding the scope of DODD Priority Work Areas is available at <http://dodd.ohio.gov/DODDPriorityWork.htm>.



3. New Funds Bolster Summer Youth Employment Options

Approximately \$45 million will be available to County Department of Job and Family Services agencies across the state for a Summer Youth Employment Program, funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) /American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA)

Emergency Funds. These funds will establish or enhance summer youth employment options, and according to the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development,

“These dollars will enable county agencies to enhance existing programs, or begin new programs that enable low income TANF-eligible Ohio youth to gain valuable skills and work experience, and act as a stepping stone on the path to unsubsidized employment.”

The program will operate for three months beginning June 1 through August 31, 2010.

The purpose of this program is two-fold:

- To provide assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their homes or the homes of relatives;
- To end dependence of needy parents on governmental benefits by promoting job preparation, employment, and strong family relationships.

ODJFS explains that agencies can partner with their local county offices to help youth access this program by contacting local county DJFS offices and asking to be added to the potential employer work site list, and by working with eligible individuals who may be interested in the program. TANF-eligible individuals that may be served in this summer program are:

- Youth ages 14-18, as long as the youth is a minor child in a needy family.*
- Youth ages 19- 21, as long as they are in a needy family that also has a minor child.*
- Youth ages 19 -21, who have a minor child and are in a needy family.

** For purposes of this program, a youth also may be a family of one.*

This program will have different requirements than similar past programs, including the TANF summer youth employment program implemented in 2000, and the Workforce Investment Act programs. For example, reimbursements for wages shall not exceed the state minimum wage. And, funding will not be available for other types of activities such as training, transportation, benefits, health insurance, and administration.

For a clickable map (by county) including county DJFS Directors' names, visit

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/cntypro/index.stm>

For information on ODJFS One-Stop Centers: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/wiamap.stm>



Jobs Program

4. Huron, Ottawa Counties Launch ‘Bridges to Transition’

County Boards of Developmental Disabilities in Huron and Ottawa counties have partnered to launch a jobs training program, *Bridges to Transition*, which works with students beginning at age 14 to find successful career paths. The Huron/Ottawa partnership is one of seven *Bridges to Transition* programs, statewide.

According to Kim Linkinhoker, Associate Director of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACBDD), some participating counties are operating the program

as single county enterprises, while others are grouped. Those operating singly are: Wood, Warren, Belmont, and Jefferson. Participating as partners are: Logan/Miami/Champaign; Ottawa/Huron; and, Hocking/Fairfield/Perry.

The *Bridges to Transition* program is a project jointly developed by local County Boards of Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC), with state-wide coordination by the OACBDD.

Linkinhoker continues, "'Bridges' is a great opportunity for the Huron and Ottawa county boards to be an integral part of the school and work transition puzzle. The project provides additional resources and a local focus on making sure young people who finish school move into jobs within their community."

Gretchen Millard, who recently joined Huron/Ottawa *Bridges to Transition* as Program Coordinator, explains further:

"The overall goal of our *Bridges to Transition* program is to enhance career exploration options and increase employment outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities. It's an opportunity for students and families to take a fresh look at what's available in the world of work."

Linkinhoker paints the bigger picture prompting the need for programs such as 'Bridges,' noting, "Often, county boards do not begin employment exploration or training until an individual's final year in high school. *Bridges to Transition* will help coordinate vocational services for students between ages 14 and 22, allowing the individual and their family more time to discuss and explore various career options."

John Schwartz, Adult Services Director with the Huron County Board of DD, elaborates,

"System-wide, it's always been a difficult area – getting individuals and families to think more about options other than the traditional workshop setting. However, programs like 'Bridges' can make that difference, where the whole family is collectively thinking about the person's potential, and what their community might offer. It's really pretty exciting."

Making these strides happen locally in Huron and Ottawa counties, Millard is contacting school districts in both counties to introduce and discuss *Bridges to Transition*. Referrals also will be accepted from parents, guardians, and friends of individuals with developmental disabilities. "We're spreading the word so that people are aware this resource is available to them," stated Millard.

Melinda Slusser, Superintendent of the Ottawa County Board of DD, shared that their organization is excited about offering this opportunity to youth, and added that the Huron County Board leadership staff have been very supportive and enthusiastic in spearheading the program locally. She comments,

"The Huron County staff has been just great to work with. We see this as a long-term commitment to our youth, and are excited about moving ahead with the program."

Huron/Ottawa *Bridges to Transition* currently is organizing a paid summer work experience for students at least 16 years old with at least one year of high school remaining. The 10-week program begins June 14 and is limited to 30 participants from the two counties. *For more information: Gretchen Millard at 419.706.2975; gretchen.millard@rsc.state.oh.us.*



5. LifeBuilders Adult Day Program Reaching Out to Schools

Pipeline had an opportunity to visit Wilder Elementary School in Westerville early this month for an upcoming feature in the Spring issue of *Pipeline Quarterly*. There, we found several individuals from LifeBuilders Adult Day Program mentoring the children in Julie Everhart's special-needs classroom.

The LifeBuilders group presented a puppet show written by one of their own participants – Destiny Hawkins – and acted and directed by several other LifeBuilders members. Following the rousing and music-filled show, the mentoring continued with one-to-one reading activities ... a combination that worked well for all involved.

As mentors and role models, the participants in LifeBuilders Adult Day program had a lot to say about their experiences, and how they could help the children with developmental disabilities in Miss Everhart's classroom.

Read more about it in the next *Pipeline Quarterly*, publishing at the end of June!





*Top left: Destiny Hawkins (at right) reads to a student at Wilder Elementary School.
 Top Right: Bradley Williamson (foreground) 'gives it his all' during the singing portion of the puppet show.
 Above: Miss Everhart's classroom and the LifeBuilders mentors. (Miss Everhart is at the far left)*



6. OPSR Posts 2009 Annual Report Online

The DODD *Office of Provider Standards and Review (OPSR)*, *Division of Legal & Oversight*, has posted its Annual Report for the 2009 calendar year online at [OPSR 2009 Report](#). Each year, the OPSR (formerly known as 'Community Services') prepares this detailed report addressing the following three major reporting areas:

- Licensure
- Provider Compliance
- Accreditation

Within these broad areas of oversight, information is provided on such subjects as: the types of licensure reviews; findings and citations; processes; and, specific actions. OPSR staff members encourage individuals, families, and stakeholders within Ohio's developmental disabilities community to access the [OPSR 2009 Report](#) for a wealth of information in both chart and narrative formats.

*For more information: provider.support@list.dodd.ohio.gov or
<http://dodd.ohio.gov/documents/2009OPSRAnnualReport.pdf>*



7. Pipeline PostScripts – Timely News Briefs & Notes

See also the DODD website calendar. Click on 'Calendar' at the lower bar of the homepage, at https://dodd.ohio.gov/apps/internet/evcs/EVCS_View.aspx

⇒ National Disability Rights Network Releases Updated Report

"School is Not Supposed to Hurt: Investigative Report on Abusive Restraint and Seclusion in Schools" has been published by the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) and is posted at: [http://www.ndrn.org/sr/srjan10/Schoo-%20is-Not-Supposed-to-Hurt-\(NDRN\).pdf](http://www.ndrn.org/sr/srjan10/Schoo-%20is-Not-Supposed-to-Hurt-(NDRN).pdf) .

The report is the result of a year of intense advocacy work, family support, and action by lawmakers to regulate restraint and seclusion in schools. It follows a January 2009 report by the NDRN titled, *School is Not Supposed to Hurt*. The 2009 report revealed that students in every region of the country were being injured, and even killed, by being abusively restrained and secluded in school settings.

When the initial report was released there were no federal laws to prevent or reduce restraint or seclusion of school children, and many states had no laws or policies. During the past year, Congress requested a Government Accountability Office report on restraint and seclusion in schools, held a hearing, and introduced legislation (*HR 4247 and S. 2860*). According to Curtis Decker, NDRN Executive Director, "With continued support from lawmakers and constant pressure at the grassroots level, we look forward to a future where *school no longer hurts*."

Survey

⇒ New ADA Ohio Survey

How do people with disabilities in Ohio rate their community's implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act? ADA-OHIO, in conjunction with the Great Lakes Disability Business Technical Assistance Center, is conducting 'The ADA in Your Community' survey to gather information and answers to this question. Since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, progress has been made as communities remove physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers that hinder people with disabilities. However, there is still a need for improved compliance. This survey asks citizens to identify how they view their community's current implementation, and offer ideas about how accessibility can be improved.

Complete the ADA Survey online: [HTTP://www.TheADASurvey.org](http://www.TheADASurvey.org). Print copies and alternative formats are available on request. *To request the ADA Survey in an alternative format, or for additional information, contact L. Scott Lissner by phone: (614) 292-6207 or e-mail: lissner.2@osu.edu.*

⇒ Very Special Arts Festival

The Wright State University Student Union will host the 28th Annual Miami Valley Very Special Arts (VSA) Festival on May 14 and 15, featuring two days of musical performances, workshops and hands-on arts experiences. From 9:00 a.m. -1:30 p.m. on May 14, and 9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. May 15th, the activities are open to all interested guests with and without disabilities. VSA is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the creative power of people with disabilities through a diverse collection of artistic programming initiatives. Contributing sponsors for the VSA Festival include: Montgomery and Greene County Boards of Developmental Disabilities Services, Wright State University, The Brighter Tomorrow

Foundation, VSArts of Ohio, Gorman-Hewitt-Ayars Foundation, Sinclair Community College, and the Office of Disabilities at Wright State University.

⇒ **Family Caregiver Alliance Posts Health Care Reform Information Online**

http://caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=2397

The National Center on Caregiving at Family Caregiver Alliance has posted new information online about health care reform and its impact on family caregivers. It includes links to resources such as the Campaign for Better Care's "Top Ten Things to Know About Health Care Reform" and Families USA's "State Advocates' To-Do List" for the first 90 days of health care reform implementation.

Reminder

⇒ **Goodwill/Easter Seals Miami Valley – Focus on Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology, including hands-on demonstrations, will be the focus of an event sponsored by Goodwill/Easter Seals Miami Valley on May 27, 2010, from 2:00-7:30 p.m., at Assistive Technology Services, 1133 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd., Suite 370, Dayton, OH 45417.

Two presentations of special interest are the, "How to Train your Dragon (Naturally Speaking adaptive software)" demonstration by Dragon experts at 2:00 p.m., and a workshop titled, "How Assistive Technology can level the playing field for individuals with disabilities." For more information or to register, click **Register Now!**

Reminder

⇒ **Our Choice: Living in the Community – Conference May 26-27**

Our Choice: Living in the Community, a conference for Ohioans with disabilities, their families and advocates will be held May 26-27 at the Hyatt Regency, Columbus. This Annual Event is presented in collaboration with Ohio Olmstead Task Force, Home Choice, CareSource and Ohio Legal Rights Service. For more information and registration visit www.ddc.ohio.gov.

Reminder

⇒ **The Arc of Ohio, Day at Cedar Point**

The Arc of Ohio *Day at Cedar Point* will be Wednesday, May 26. A brochure describing the day's event may be accessed by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.thearcofohio.org/sites/default/files/Cedar%20Point%20Brochure%202010.doc>

A limited number of discount tickets will be available for purchase through The Arc of Ohio, at Cedar Point, before noon on May 26th. *More than 6000 friends of The Arc of Ohio typically attend this event each year!*

⇒ **DODD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**

To report abuse/neglect and other MUI's call toll-free: **1-866-313-6733**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of DD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board

may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember the hotline number is there to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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