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Volume 4, Issue 22

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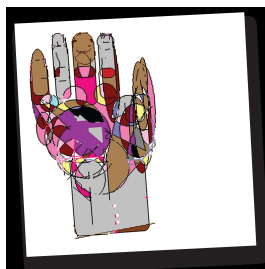
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Note: The Third Annual [Thanksgiving Issue of Pipeline](#) will publish November 23, 2010. In this issue we will highlight a few of the many things for which we, at the DODD, are thankful ... and for which you, our *Pipeline* readers, have told us YOU are thankful. We invite you to submit items for consideration -- Please send to sherry.steinman@dodd.ohio.gov by 11-16-10.

A short paragraph and a photo, if it's appropriate, would be best. Thank you!

Here's what last year's issue included: [Pipeline Volume 3 Issue 24](#), November 24, 2009

Celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month



Poster available to order online at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/index.htm>

“Talent has no boundaries: Workforce diversity includes people with disabilities.”

“When in greeting you touch my hand. What knuckled shutters open? What fear do you unlearn?”

The 2010 National Disability Employment Awareness Month Poster art and poetry was created by Laura Hershey, who has spinal muscular atrophy. Through computer-generated art, she created the figure of a hand using many colors and shapes. The hand reaches out in friendship to dispel the fears and misconceptions often associated with disabilities.

1. Self Empowered Life Funding (SELF) Waiver Submitted to CMS Today

As described in the September 29, 2010 issue of Pipeline ([Pipeline Volume 4 Issue 20](#)) the Self Empowered Life Funding (SELF) waiver, which was named by self advocates at last month's Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) conference, today was submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

CMS is the federal agency that administers Medicare and Medicaid, and regulates the certification of agencies and care facilities for people with developmental disabilities. The review of the proposed new waiver via the application process to CMS is the next step in the waiver approval process.

According to DODD Director John Martin,

"This waiver originated with the 2008 Futures Committee recommendations, and was propelled by strong advocacy and self-advocacy, including many autism advocates, statewide. The development of this unique waiver is a testament to our stakeholders' positive relationships in working together, and demonstrating a willingness to use more contemporary approaches to waiver services in order to further empower Ohioans with developmental disabilities."

Director Martin noted that the work of a core stakeholder 'waiver sustainability group' was instrumental in spearheading the efforts leading to successful completion of the waiver application. This waiver is an extension of the new flexible waiver, proposed in the previous biennium, for 100 children with intensive behavioral needs. It now will serve adults and children, with current predictions estimating at least 500 individuals would be using the waiver the first year it is in effect, and 2000 individuals using the waiver by the third year it is in effect.

The DODD's commitment to serving 100 children with intensive behavioral needs will continue to be state-funded. The new flexible waiver will be self-directed by the people served, which offers individuals freedom to select the package of services that best suits their needs, within a capped budget. The Department hopes to have this waiver in effect during FY 2012.



[During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we share...](#)

2. A Potpourri of Progress, and Work Yet to be Done

Pipeline readers are a wonderful mix of about 3300 individuals, families, County Board staff members and other service providers, and representatives of various government agencies – all across the state and nation. We know there are many exciting employment-related efforts for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, and we understand there is still much yet to be done to improve the employment scene, overall. In this issue of Pipeline we will take a look at this subject from a broad perspective. Thanks to all who have taken the time to contact us via feedback@list.dodd.ohio.gov with your thoughts and information.

PersonnelPlus Hosts Business/Employment Event at Ohio University, Athens 2010 'Building Business Partnerships' Banquet and Recognition Celebration Honors Many

**“ Our Keynote Speaker, Angela Mackey, is the embodiment of the message she brings to us –
‘We control our reality – we do – no one else’. ”
-Doug Mitchell, Director, PersonnelPlus**

PersonnelPlus, the supported employment arm of the Athens County Board of DD hosted a Business/Employee recognition event at Ohio University on October 21, and it was no ordinary evening. A significant occasion for PersonnelPlus, more than the anticipated 300 people attended – including many local business and community leaders, employees with developmental disabilities, transition-age youth, and Ohio University leadership.

Guest speaker Angela Mackey, represented the Walgreens Distribution Center in Anderson, South Carolina, and shared how the Walgreens Corporation has filled 40% (188 of 463) of the Distribution Center's workforce with workers who have disabilities, using new approaches and applied technology. The story of the Walgreens/Anderson Distribution Center has been featured on ABC News, the Lifetime Network, and in *The Wall Street Journal*, among other national media outlets.

**See the Walgreens success story at
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2akb4v2cUQ>**

Mackey noted that the Anderson Distribution Center's original goal a few years ago -- to staff 30% of its workforce with workers who have disabilities -- was met with some doubters who expressed concerns regarding perceived negative affects on the Center's productivity and efficiency. According to Mackey, ...

“This just has not been the case at the Anderson Distribution site! In fact, it is the second-most efficient Walgreens distribution site out of all nineteen.”



**Angela Mackey on persistence during an employment search:
“Once we have the opportunity, well, you'd better watch out!”**

She continues, “Randy Lewis, (Senior Vice President of Distribution and Logistics for the Walgreens Distribution Center in Anderson, SC) knew what he wanted to do – he just didn’t know how to do it. That’s why they hired me! His son has autism, and Randy knew the difficulty involved in getting a job when you are perceived as different.”

Mackey related her educational background, which includes a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and a Master’s Degree in Counseling from Clemson University, and said that she has had her share of trials and tribulations while job-hunting. She noted, “Having cerebral palsy, which affects my speech and how I walk, was not a ‘plus’ when I was interviewing for jobs.”

Her sense of humor came through consistently during the keynote address, along with a slight and sweet Southern drawl that charmed event attendees. She shared,

“Fortunately, I never really hushed-up until they agreed to hire me. I just kept telling them to give me a chance at this job, and now I’ve been there 5 years – and we’ve more than exceeded our goals for hiring and retention.”

Awards and Accolades

The Personnel*Plus* awards ceremony honored several area employers and employees who have helped to make the Athens County area one of the strongest locations in the state for successfully employing people with developmental disabilities (see www.personnelplus.org/).

The Personnel*Plus* Business Advisory Council, and the Personnel*Plus* Advocacy and Advisory Council joined forces to honor individuals and employers who participated in We Go to Work (more at <http://dodd.ohio.gov/WEGotoWorkProjects.htm>) opportunities this year, as well as various community employment options, Summer Youth Training and Employment for transition-age young adults, and other employment partnerships.



The always-enthusiastic Jason Licht ‘tells it like it is’ as he accepts the *David Welsh Award*, honoring entrepreneurial advocacy efforts. Says Jason,

“ Last year, during the testimony for the DODD name change at the Statehouse in Columbus, I made so many trips there I considered having my address changed to ‘Capital Square’! ”

Work yet to be done? ... PersonnelPlus Executive Director Doug Mitchell says, "We always have work yet to be done! Until all the individuals in Athens County who have a developmental disability and want to work in the community have jobs, PersonnelPlus will have work to be done!"

For more information: Doug Mitchell at doug@athenscbmrdd.org ; <http://www.athenscbmrdd.org/>



Lowe's Grows Employment Opportunities in Hancock County

\$250K grant will help train people with disabilities for jobs.



Representatives of national home improvement products retailer Lowe's, along with the National Organization on Disability (NOD) and the Kessler Foundation* were asked to help ring the symbolic 'closing bell' of the New York stock exchange on October 21 – along with Hancock County Board of DD Superintendent Connie Ament, representing a unique partnership and collective commitment to employing people with disabilities. The symbolic gesture is offered to non-profit organizations, according to time-honored selection criteria related to the business environment.

See streaming video link at <http://www.blanchardvalley.org/>
(Note: Connie Ament is directly to the left behind the gentleman in the center.)

As part of the Lowe's commitment, the company currently is working with Hancock County Board of DD's Blanchard Valley Center and the NOD on employment programs for eligible individuals at three of its distribution centers, including Findlay OH, Rockford IL, and Statesville NC. (Note: The Lowe's concept is modeled similarly to Walgreens', noted in above article.)

Mark Stewart, general manager of Lowe's Findlay Distribution Center comments,

"We are honored to be a part of this project. Pursuing the best, most qualified and diverse employees has always been important to Lowe's. This is why Lowe's has created a focus on recruiting and hiring people with disabilities. We understand that everyone has something to contribute."

Jenny Ferguson, Community Employment Manager for the HCBDD explains, "Seeing individuals with disabilities make the decision to work at Lowe's, complete their training, and then become a part of the Lowe's family has been absolutely amazing. This is the most rewarding job I have ever had! We hope it is just the beginning of a future with terrific local opportunities for individuals with disabilities."

In addition to Ferguson, HCBDD hired five full-time Job Coaches to train people on-site, in the community, and recently received word that the agency has earned a \$250,000 Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) grant toward the project. HCBDD works with the RSC to help Hancock County citizens with disabilities find community employment and gain independence, and the grant will specifically assist in these efforts.

HCBDD Superintendent Ament explained that the board already had decided to expand job-coaching efforts prior to learning that it would receive the grant. She noted, "Our board took a leap of faith and decided to fund initial efforts for this program and move forward with it, so we're very pleased that now we have received some additional funding that will help us continue and expand these employment efforts. The additional employment-focused services have proved to be a real blessing to the individuals we're serving."

Guidelines for the grant require that the recipient use the funds to help people find and retain competitive employment. The board learned it was receiving the grant in August, and the funds became available October 1. It is a one-year grant.

Ament explains, "We (Blanchard Valley Center) participate as the service provider that links Lowe's with individuals with disabilities, and provide services including referral, job coaching, and follow up." The customized approach allows job coaches from Blanchard Valley Center to learn the specific requirements and responsibilities of each job. They work side-by-side with trainees at the worksite teaching skills, safety, and appropriate work behavior.

Twenty-five people with developmental disabilities currently are working in the community via HCBDD, and six additional people are now in job training at Lowe's. Recently, the company approached Blanchard Valley Center about hiring another 20 individuals. Ament adds, "These individuals will be learning new skills, becoming more independent, making new friends, and gaining self-confidence."

Meg O'Connell, Director of the National Organization on Disability, notes that NOD chose to partner with Blanchard Valley Center due to its progressive approach in helping people with disabilities identify opportunities to obtain community employment.

The National Organization on Disability has asked the HCBDD to assist in setting standards for other service providers in locations around the nation, due to the success of the Lowe's partnership.



At a recent HCBDD Board Meeting, Matt Reed and Dan Rickard were honored as Employees of the Month at BVI*, and the Lowe's Distribution Center received the Community Star award. (L. to R., back row): Alan Cox, local Lowe's Manager; Mark Stewart, local Lowe's General Manager; **Matt Reed**, BVI participant; Mike Kin, BVI job coach; (next individual obscured); Jenny Ferguson, BVC* Community Employment Manager; Janet Grim, Lowe's Job Coach. (L. to R., front row) John Shumaker, Lowe's team member; Kathy Adkins, Lowe's team member; Amanda Young BVI job coach; **Daniel Rickard**, BVI participant. *(BVI= Blanchard Valley Industries; BVC=Blanchard Valley Center)

About Dan Rickard: Dan said from the beginning that he wants this job so that he can give his son, Jayden, the great life he deserves. Dan is kind, compassionate, respectful, and hard-working.

About Matt Reed: Matt is a light-hearted and kind person who anyone would be proud to work with. It's the little things; like being polite, and showing respect for the people he works with. On his second or third day in the shipping department his trainer, Eric Green, stated, "He's teaching me to work hard. He is an extremely hard worker! I am trying to keep up."

About Lowe's: Lowe's Regional Distribution Center was named the HCBDD's September 'Community Star' due to their outstanding commitment to employing local individuals with disabilities. The entire Lowe's team has embraced and supported employing these individuals from the outset.

Work yet to be done? According to Connie Ament, the Lowe's Outreach Project is significant because it represents a strong commitment by a 'Fortune 500' company to hire individuals with disabilities. The National Organization on Disability has agreed to gather data about the project and will use what is learned to replicate these successful approaches among other Lowe's Distribution Centers, and with other employers. Work yet to be done includes the review and sharing of best practices.

**<http://www.kesslerfoundation.org/>*

Acknowledgements to: The Findlay Courier, October 20, 2010 – "Job Training Program to Get Ringing Endorsement" and to HCBDD's 'The Star' newsletter – Aug.- Sept. 2010 issue.

Contact: Jenny Ferguson, HCBDD, (567) 429-9376.



Jeffco Workshop Completes Largest Order Ever

“Quite honestly, when we invested \$4 million in upgrading the Parks Sytem over the past year, we were investing in our community in a way that we felt all citizens could benefit from and enjoy. The purchase of the needed outdoor furniture through Jeffco was a major part of this, and has been a really positive investment from the outset.”

-Domenick Mucci, Mayor of Steubenville

The Jefferson County Board of DD's Jeffco Workshop Inc. recently completed their largest individual order ever for picnic tables and other lawn furniture. The order was completed for the City of Steubenville and consisted of 25 picnic tables, 8 park benches, and 6 'tete-a-tetes' – which are side-by-side chairs connected by a center table (see photo). The order was completed and delivered during Summer 2010 and was part of a major renovation project upgrading the City of Steubenville's two parks.



The yellow splatter-paint chair is not part of the traditional (white) 'tete-a-tete', but it's pretty cool !
Steubenville Mayor, Domenick Mucci (center, behind yellow chair) stopped by the Jeffco workshop to thank the employees responsible for building dozens of pieces of furniture now gracing the local Parks system. Delivered 'on time and with a smile', the order was the largest single order ever produced by Jeffco.
(Back row, L. to R.): Frank Backel; Mayor Mucci; Everett Skinner; Dustin Smith.
(Seated, L. to R.): Gary Harding; Bill Dandrea.

According to Steubenville Mayor Domenick Mucci, “The city decided last year to invest approximately \$4 million in upgrades at Belleview and Jim Wood parks. After the parks were improved, the city administration and city council were unanimous in the decision to ask the Jeffco Workshop to supply us with the furniture. It was the perfect decision to place this order because of the quality of the work, and the history we have in working collaboratively with Superintendent Mike Mehalik.” He continued,

"Halfway through the order timeframe, the decision was made to increase the furniture order. Mike never hesitated, and the workers came through on time. I can tell you that the citizens of our community really appreciate the furniture. It's an ongoing testament to the work they do at Jeffco."

Jeffco began providing work opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities in 1973 -- the same year they produced and sold their first picnic table. According to Jefferson County Board of DD Superintendent Mike Mehalik, "Over the years, the product line has expanded to include a variety of benches, chairs, gliders, swings, tables, and a line of 'splash-painted' children's furniture. Special orders of other wood products also may be built to customer specifications. Today, approximately 300 pieces are built annually."

He continues, "In the early years of production most of the picnic tables and other lawn furniture were made of pine, and stained. The expected useful life-span of the items was 6-8 years. Today, most items are made of treated lumber and can be expected to last 15-20 years. The production of picnic tables and lawn furniture is, for the most part, non-stop during the spring, summer, and early fall." Mehalik adds,

"Nine individuals and a supervisor are busy five hours each day building and delivering tables within a 40-mile radius of Steubenville. Customers include private citizens, local cities and townships, parks and recreation areas, private lakes, schools, volunteer fire departments, and local businesses. The Jeffco product line is well known in Eastern Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, and the Northern panhandle of West Virginia."
(Jefferson County is on the eastern border of Ohio.)

Marketing Brings More Opportunities

During winter months when production of the picnic tables and lawn furniture slows or stops, these employees become a part of Jeffco's subcontracting department where they work in packaging and small parts assembly for various customers. The employees say they, "... look forward to returning to their 'real jobs' when spring returns!" One such employee is Gary Harding, who has worked at Jeffco since 1983. He highlights his specialty -- "I operate the saw, and make sure we are following safety rules like wearing eye protection and that sort of thing."

Expansion of the market area outside Jefferson County has been accomplished via full-page ads in the *Steubenville Herald Star* and *Weirton Daily Times*, purchasing radio advertising, and by attending Home & Garden Shows in Steubenville, Wheeling WV, and Weirton WV. Today, Jeffco sells as many picnic tables and pieces of lawn furniture in West Virginia and Pennsylvania as they do in Ohio!

Work yet to be done? ... The Jefferson County Board of DD is looking to further expand community employment opportunities in the Steubenville area with private employers, while maintaining a strong business at the Jeffco Workshop. The Jefferson County Board of DD believes both options, sheltered employment and community employment, are important in their efforts to offer a comprehensive array of services for adults with developmental disabilities.



"Instant Replay" Celebrates Grand Opening in Logan County

OK sports fans -- How many times have you wished for an Instant Replay ... and there isn't one?

Wishing and waiting for an instant replay and there isn't one? RTC Employment Services in Logan County has it covered – they've opened "Instant Replay" in Bellefontaine ... a second-hand sporting goods store at 334 E. Columbus Ave., and the first store of its kind in Logan County. The Grand Opening was October 14.

Here, customers can buy used athletic equipment including protective gear, golf clubs, skis, snowboards, trampolines, cleats, bats and balls, exercise equipment, and more. Opening the new retail business will help employees at the Logan County Board of DD's RTC Industries, learn valuable skills. According to Logan County DD staffer, Pam Hickman,

"While shoppers can get a good deal on sporting goods, the primary purpose of us opening the store is to teach individuals employed there the skills necessary to work in a retail environment."

And, Logan County DD Employment Services Director Tonya Reed, adds, "Employees at Instant Replay learn customer service skills including answering customer questions on the telephone, operating the cash register, stocking shelves, and performing custodial work."

Instant Replay employees also were involved in extensively remodeling the area. Seven individuals have been trained to work at the store, and another four are in the process of training. Merchandise is donated by community members, including Logan County Board of DD staff.

Through this experience, RTC participant Kate Hemphill hopes she might be able to get a job working at another retail store in the Logan County area, and participant Bryan Hudson would like to realize his goal of working in a coffee shop.



Instant Replay employee Kate Hemphill notes that what she likes most about working there is seeing and meeting the customers. She especially enjoys cashiering, and balancing the cash drawer at the end of the day.

Work yet to be done? ... The Jefferson County Board of DD is hopeful that the concept of the Instant Replay retail store will be successful in the Logan County community, and is looking forward to learning from the experience and building on concepts like it in the future. In addition, merchandise donations will be encouraged via various marketing efforts.

Contact: Amy Berger, (937) 592-0534 or phickman@logancbdd.org; visit www.logancbdd.org/adults.htm



Ohio Provider Resource Association

3. OPRA Conference Reflects Partnership Approach

“Developmental Disabilities systems in states with mature stakeholder relationships that understand how to work together function much better than those in states where this is not the case.”

-Quote from George Jesien, Ph.D., as shared by DODD Director John Martin

The Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Annual Fall Conference, October 19-20 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin attracted more than 500 professionals in the developmental disabilities community. Each year, the program provides a diverse learning opportunity for service providers, fostering and enabling professional growth and success, and encouraging strong stakeholder partnerships.

“Together We ...”

The two-day conference included several presentations on subjects such as health care reform, remote monitoring, principles and practices of an effective direct support professional, waiver reimbursement, and facilitating and supporting community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. DODD Director John Martin’s presentation focused on progress regarding several projects with which OPRA has partnered, noting that, “Together we have made some very good progress and done some very good work, including managing three sets of budget cuts, and increasing waiver availability by 30%.”

In addition, Director Martin noted that there is still work to be done in the face of a difficult economy. He added, “A casualty of the nationwide financial crisis as it applies to Ohio’s DD community has been a failure to increase wages of Direct Support Professionals. This is something we all continue to struggle with. Our system needs to find ways to improve the environment for these care providers who are so critical to the health and well-being of Ohioans with developmental disabilities.”

Director Martin also shared that among the Priority Work areas the Department is focusing on in tandem with service providers are issues that have been identified via the National Core Indicators (NCI) initiative (see www.dodd.ohio.gov/HotTopics/nci.htm). He stated,

“Perceptions of safety within an individual’s home and neighborhood, as well as understanding issues affecting an individual’s budget are two areas Ohio needs to improve upon. Everyone wants to feel safe, and feel that they have some control and understanding of funds available.”

Awards & Honors

On the second day of the conference, the annual OPRA Appreciation Luncheon, “*Making the Difference*,” honored several groups, individuals, and teams -- in both professional and volunteer roles. Award categories included those for: Direct Support Professionals (8); Frontline Supervisor (8); Outstanding Volunteer (2); Outstanding Team (3); Behind the Scenes (4); and, the Maureen Corcoran Award honoring a PATHS-Credentialed Direct Support Professional (1).



Recognized for her work 'Behind the Scenes.'

Self Advocate and employee of Resident Home Corporation (RHC) in Hamilton County for 36 years, **Linda Kunick** is once again in the spotlight earning an award, proudly displayed.



An Outstanding Team: The **Maintenance Team at Echoing Meadows** includes three members, (L. to R.) **William Bell, Brent Wright and Lisa Grubbs.**

According to their nomination letter, "What especially sets this team apart is the extraordinary job they do with tasks that fall entirely outside their official job descriptions, interacting directly with residents to ensure memorable and positive experiences for all."

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities congratulates all OPRA Honorees!

Special thanks to Missy Craddock and Teri Derry at OPRA -- For more information: www.opra.org



4. OSU Nisonger Center Receives \$2.5 Million Grant

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded The Ohio State University Nisonger Center a five-year, \$2.5 million grant as part of two new federal programs that create opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to attend classes and succeed in higher education.

The Nisonger Center is one of 27 grant recipients through Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. The goal of the pilot project is to develop, test, and refine a statewide model that delivers inclusive post-secondary options -- including participation in college classes, internships, housing, and social experiences -- that result in improved academic, employment, and residential outcomes.

Approximately 100 students ages 18 - 26 who have intellectual disabilities will be served at The Ohio State University, North Central State College, the University of Toledo, and Xavier University. Working with these students at each of these educational facilities will be college students in peer roles, who are majoring in disability-related disciplines. All of the students involved will gain authentic experiences that will enhance their academic, and, ultimately, professional growth.

The multi-site collaborative project will provide transition, employment, and housing services for eligible students, as well as utilize assistive technology and other related resources. The grant-funded project also will convene a statewide planning group including the OSU Nisonger Center and the University of Cincinnati, as well as Ohio's Developmental Disabilities Council, Rehabilitation Services Commission, and Department of Developmental Disabilities, plus representatives from the participating universities, along with consumer advocacy groups.

Project SEARCH

In a related one-year grant, the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) has awarded the OSU Nisonger Center \$69,739 to provide vocational rehabilitation services for young adults with significant disabilities through a post-secondary Project SEARCH model. The Vocational Rehabilitation Public-Private Partnership (VP3) is in alliance with Goodwill Columbus, and an inter-disciplinary team of faculty and graduate students from OSU's School of Allied Medical Professions, and the College of Education and Human Ecology. The grant term began on October 1, 2010.

Six young adults with significant disabilities who are eligible for RSC services will receive intensive and individualized services, including career assessments, internships, job development preparation for regular employment, participation in college academic courses, and participation in health and wellness classes.

According to Margo Vreeburg Izzo, OSU's principal lead for both of the grants, "These two grants will open doors for a diverse group of students who dream about a college experience and will take an important step toward increasing the diversity of our campus."

A Little History

The Nisonger Center, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, is part of The Ohio State University Medical Center and was founded in 1966 to provide assistance to people with disabilities, families, service providers and organizations by promoting inclusion of people with disabilities in education, health, employment, and community settings.

For more information about these and other grants related to transition for people with disabilities, contact Margo Izzo at izzo.1@osu.edu or 614-292-9218.



5. Belmont County Hosts Kathie Snow, ‘Disability is Natural’

**“Awesome change is possible when we think differently about developmental disabilities!”
- Kathie Snow, parent advocate**

How many people learned to “think differently” at two presentations by parent advocate, author, and trainer Kathie Snow, last week at Ohio University Eastern in St. Clairsville? While about 75 individuals and families, educators, and agencies attended a presentation on October 21, and approximately 185 Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities (BCBDD) staff and service providers attended a presentation the following day, the better answer to the question is probably not a number. According to BCBDD hosts, the answer is “Quite a few ... and exponentially, thereafter, as those people shared their thoughts with others!”

Snow is the author and creator of *Disability is Natural*, an online (www.disabilityisnatural.com/) and in-print source for new ways of thinking about developmental disabilities and the people who live with them. For more than 20 years, Kathie Snow has been an outspoken parent-advocate who has challenged individuals with disabilities and their families to, “Never deny a diagnosis, but always deny a negative prognosis.”

She explains that when her son was a young child, the therapy approaches for him were very difficult for him to deal with, and ... “Basically, he hated therapy sessions. The more we pushed, the more upset he’d get, until it became exhausting.” She continues, “My son, who has cerebral palsy and is now 23 years old, has taught me so much ...

“In fact, once we started incorporating therapy and other learning activities incrementally, into regular daily life, he started making progress. I always say that the day we left the typical ‘Disability World’ including more highly-structured or less natural ways of approaching things, was the day our whole family started making progress. Inclusion is the natural state.”

While there were several reasons for hosting the Disability is Natural presentations, Belmont County Board of DD especially was interested in opening the door to new ideas and ways to help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families that they may not otherwise have thought about exploring. Staff from throughout the agency, and attendees from local adult services provider agencies and individual private providers were invited to take a fresh look at their perceptions and expectations.

Kathie Snow shared that early on, as her Disability is Natural philosophy was taking shape, she spoke with many adults who have developmental disabilities to find out how they felt about and defined their quality of life. She explains,

“When I asked adults with disabilities how they felt about their lives as I was looking for guidance when my son was younger, what I heard most often was that they measured their quality of life by their *relationships* and their *experiences*. Relationships and experiences were most important to them – not whether or not they could hold a pencil the same way I do, or drive a car.”



**Leaving her message behind ...
It's all in how you look at things!**

“Electric lights are assistive technology for people who have sight.”

That's Kathie Snow, paraphrasing a presenter who is blind who turned off the lights during a presentation in a packed auditorium to 'level the playing field.'

Belmont County staffer Holly Weatherson summed up the response to the two days of thought-provoking presentations like this: “The most notable comment I received was after Thursday evening’s presentation. A grandmother of a small child with a disability approached me to thank us. She said that she was so grateful to have had the opportunity to hear Kathie’s message. She said that Kathie’s presentation changes everything about the way she plans to approach caring for her grandchild. It’s opened a completely new door.”

Learn more at www.disabilityisnatural.com. Belmont County contact: Pamela McCort, pmccort@bcbdd.org



6. Tuscarawas Co. to Take Ownership, Consolidate Campus

For the first time, the Tuscarawas County Board of Developmental Disabilities (TCBDD) will own the land and buildings used for its programs. County commissioners this month approved a resolution to transfer ownership of the properties from the county to the board. Tuscarawas County is one of the first in Ohio to transfer ownership.

TCBDD Superintendent Natalie Lupi explains, “At the 2010 Spring Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) conference there was a session on legal updates, with Steve Postalakis and Frank Hickman discussing County Board of DD property ownership. We learned that the Ohio Revised Code – specifically RC 307.10 (B) -- permits the Board of Commissioners by resolution to approve the transfer of real property belonging to the county, to a County Board of DD. I took this information to the property committee members of the TCBDD Board and discussed the matter with them. They concurred that we should see if this could be accomplished.” She added,

“Our local Prosecuting Attorney's Office was contacted to discuss the matter and they, too, concurred that it made perfect sense for this to occur. A meeting was held with the County Commissioners, Prosecuting Attorney, and myself to discuss the option of a County Board real estate transfer. It made perfect sense to all parties, and allowed for more efficiency in operations since the properties had been purchased and improved solely by County Board of DD funds.”

Construction of a Service and Support Center on the campus of Starlight School and Workshop at New Philadelphia is on schedule for completion early in 2011. The Center will allow for consolidating all of the agency’s services at a single campus, offering easier access and improved efficiencies. Once the Center is completed, the agency no longer will need to rent space elsewhere in New Philadelphia and can sell the agency’s building on Fair Ave.

The consolidation is expected to result in saving a total of about \$3.3 million over 20 years.

The transfer also is in line with a community survey in 2008, which found that the citizens of Tuscarawas County were not sure where to go if they needed services, in part because the agency was scattered at several locations.

Acknowledgements to the Times Reporter, October 19, 2010.



7. DODD Website Upgrades to Enhance Interaction, Access

As noted by DODD Director John Martin in the most recent *Pipeline Quarterly, Summer 2010*,* our website address at www.dodd.ohio.gov has existed for roughly one year, as the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) ‘name change’ occurred in October 2009. He states, “Within the span of one year, a great deal of work has gone into making the information on the site more accessible by users of adaptive tools and technology, more easily navigated and 'searched' by users, and easier to understand from a general content standpoint.”

Director Martin continues,

“Our success in these endeavors is gauged largely by user feedback, and from the data gained by reviewing information gathered by analytical system tools. We continue to support the improvement of Information Technology Systems as part of our DODD Priority Work.”

More at: <http://www.dodd.ohio.gov/DODDPriorityWork.htm>

Perhaps most exciting is the work now underway to improve our interaction and presence with service providers. The 'provider portal' -- point of entry for service provider information and related forms -- will be relaunched soon, in a more user-friendly format. The revision will streamline many online inquiries and transactions, and allow providers to 'do business with us' in a more user-friendly way.

Feedback from providers throughout the development phase of this site upgrade has been most helpful and encouraging. According to the team working on the 'provider portal' project, the online upgrade is expected to be in place within the next few months.

Also as part of the continuous upgrading and updating of the DODD website, a new art and photo gallery was launched last week, enabling the Department to begin featuring more visual images of events and artists/artwork from around the state. DODD has featured Ohio artists with developmental disabilities on the website's homepage for the past three years, and is now pleased to take this format a step further.

Click On: [More Art & Photo Gallery](#)

During the next several months, we will continue to add more interactive features, and will increase our capacity via newer technology to serve the needs and interests of site users -- including utilization of social media. According to staff within the DODD Office of Policy and Constituent Support,

The increase in online capacity and capability will be gradual, will be consistent with available resources, and will be in line with Ohio Office of Information Technology (OIT) recommendations and guidelines. OIT governs state agency internet policy and standards development, lifecycle investment planning, and privacy and security management.

To provide feedback regarding online resources at www.dodd.ohio.gov, simply click on 'webmaster' at the bottom of the homepage, or send an email to webmaster@list.dodd.ohio.gov. We look forward to hearing from you, and thank you for using our website as a helpful resource.

*Pipeline Quarterly, Summer 2010 at: *Summer 2010  PDF; Contact: webmaster@list.dodd.ohio.gov*



8. Accessibility and Voting on November 2

Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner reminds Ohio voters that Election Day is a day to make our voices heard through our votes. A core message of the currently-running Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign on the subject is to empower voters with disabilities to exercise their right to vote. The ad campaign was funded through federal Health and Human Services dollars, and uses footage from a poll worker training video created to educate more than 45,000 Ohio poll workers on the importance of assisting voters with disabilities. A portion of this funding is designated for education and outreach activities.

Links to all versions of the "I Vote and So Should You" PSA may be accessed at:
<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/PSAs.aspx>

Early voting in Ohio continues through Saturday, October 30. Voters may complete an absentee ballot request form on line at www.avoidtheline.org <<http://www.avoidtheline.org>> , then print, sign, and mail it to the local county board of elections.

Voting absentee in-person also is an option for voters through noon on October 30. This link: <<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/mapsEV.aspx?page=361>> illustrates locations by county.

LRS Voter Hotline

Ohio Legal Rights Service (LRS) was created to protect the rights of Ohioans with disabilities, and that includes protecting the basic right to vote. On November 2, if your voting rights are challenged based on disability, or your polling location is not accessible, call the LRS Voter Hotline between 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. at (614) 466-7264 or 1-800-282-9181; TTY (614) 728-2553 or 1-800-858-3542. Choose option #4 to reach the Voter Hotline.

County Board Levy Issues, Across the State

Here's one last look at ballot issues on November 2 affecting Ohio's developmental disabilities community:

- *Athens*: 1.8 mill Replacement Levy. To generate \$1.65 million annually for eight years.
- *Defiance*: 1.9 mill Replacement Levy. To generate \$200,000 per year. First time on the ballot as a replacement.
- *Mahoning*: 3 mill Renewal Levy. To generate \$11.9 million annually for five years.
- *Medina*: 1.12 mill Replacement Levy. Second attempt.
- *Montgomery*: 6.03 mill Replacement Levy. \$4.5 million new money to offset losses in tangible personal property and CAT tax dollars. (NOTE: Montgomery County operates a Human Services Levy and is a combination of DD, ADAMHS, Children's Services, Elderly support, etc.)
- *Portage*: 1.8 mill Renewal Levy. To generate \$3.9 million for five years.
- *Putnam*: .5 Replacement Levy. To generate \$322,727 each year for 10 years.
- *Vinton*: 2 mill Renewal Levy. For five years.

The Secretary of State website at www.sos.state.oh.us/ contains a wealth of voting information. In particular, see [Voters With Disabilities](#).

On November 3, 2010, a *Pipeline Extra* will carry the results of these important levies. Good luck to all.

9. PostScripts – News Briefs & Calendar Notes

⇒ OACB Annual Fall Conference, December 1-3

The Ohio Association of County Boards Annual Convention will be held December 1 - 3, at the Hilton Easton, Columbus. A variety of tracks will enable participants to attend many interesting and diverse

sessions during each of the three days. More information on the event coming soon at <http://www.oacbmdd.org/>. Contact: Ann Neu, (614) 431-0616 or email: aneu@oacbdd.org.

Note: The Disability Housing Network (DHN) Track is the third option for Wednesday, December 1.

⇒ **Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio sponsors presentation November 19 & 20**

The Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio will present two dynamic nationally-recognized speakers addressing topics that are often viewed as challenging in education today ... inclusive classrooms and behavioral interventions. Patrick Schwarz, Ph.D. and Stacy Taylor, MA, B.C.B.A. will share their wealth of knowledge with teachers, family members and specialists on November 19 & 20. Join us for their powerful presentations and learn how to turn a challenging situation into a successful experience for all. [Click here to learn more.](#)

⇒ **Tenth Annual Ohio SIBS (Special Initiatives by Brothers and Sisters) Conference, Nov. 5-6**

The Ohio SIBS Conference is a great opportunity for siblings to learn about the services and resources their brothers or sisters receive or may be eligible for. The conference also allows adult siblings to meet each other, share their stories, and enjoy being with others who can identify with each others' experiences in growing up. For more information on this November 5-6 Conference at the Columbus Marriott Airport Hotel, go to www.ohiosibs.com.

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

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 ...

Pipeline is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of timely, relevant information affecting stakeholders in the developmental disabilities community. Share comments about *Pipeline* at feedback@list.dodd.ohio.gov, or contact Sherry Steinman, sherry.steinman@dodd.ohio.gov, phone (614) 644-0262. *The DODD values subscriber confidentiality and does not intentionally share subscriber addresses with others. However, in the event of a public records request, the DODD will comply with all applicable Public Records Laws.* To subscribe to *Pipeline* or add a new address, email: join-pipeline@list.dodd.ohio.gov and write SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. To discontinue your subscription to *Pipeline* or remove an old address, email: join-pipeline@list.dodd.ohio.gov and write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. Pipeline is archived at <http://dodd.ohio.gov/publications/pipeline.htm>

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**Department of
Developmental Disabilities**