



**WE'RE SPRINGING INTO SPRING —WITH A NEW LOOK!**

Important  
Message

### MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT – ERIC YOUNG

We are in the midst of significant transformation of DD services in Ohio. There are several initiatives and changes being planned and implemented by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) as a result of Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) (Medicaid Waiver) rules and Ohio's proposed Budget Bill. These initiatives and changes are in various stages of negotiation and finalization and we will provide periodic updates to Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD) Stakeholders as they move forward. Below are several major proposals contained in DODD's CMS Transition Plan and Ohio's Budget Bill:

- Independent providers will need to become employees of the individuals/families or a fiscal intermediary agency that individuals/families choose so that legal employer obligations can be met.
- CMS (Medicaid) Rules do not permit a county board of DD to provide both case management and direct services. DODD is requesting CMS to extend the compliance timeline from 2019 to 2024 and the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD (OACB) is lobbying federal legislators and CMS to allow current individuals to continue receiving county board of DD direct services and to allow a county board of DD to provide direct services if there are no other able and willing providers.
- Homemaker Personal Care waiver reimbursement rates are proposed to increase by 6% to increase wages for Private/Non-Profit provider direct-care staff which is aimed at reducing turnover and creating a more stable and competent workforce.
- Nursing Services will be added to the IO Waiver in July 2016.
- CMS Rules require community integration, so sheltered workshop services and segregated day program services will not be reimbursable through any Medicaid waiver beginning in 2016. These will be replaced by integrated community employment, integrated pre-vocational and Integrated day program services with groups of 4 or less.
- DODD will make additional Waivers available to decrease Waiting Lists and to divert admissions from Developmental Centers and Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF). DODD will also continue to reduce the number of individuals living in Developmental Centers (2 of which are closing in 2 years) and large (>8) ICFs.
- A single, merged disability-determination system for both Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) will be created and the Medicaid allowable asset limit will increase from \$1500 to \$2000 to become consistent with SSI.

Follow the link below to review updates from the DODD web-site on topics including, CMS Transition Plan, Strategic Planning Leadership Planning Group, Ohio's 2016-2017 Budget and Independent Providers:

<http://dodd.ohio.gov/OurFuture/Pages/default.aspx>

## ***Comments from our Assistant Superintendent / Director of Educational Services—Dr. Maryalice Turner...***

We hope that you enjoy this bi-monthly newsletter. Our hope is to reach out and provide much more communication with all stakeholders, employees and anyone else who is interested in our work. We value your ideas and ask that you send any recommendations to me at [mturner@athenscbdd.org](mailto:mturner@athenscbdd.org).

I have been listening to each of our employees, through meetings across the agency, hearing ways that we can improve our efficiency, service and fiscal decision making. I am impressed with the number of suggestions that have been provided. We have a dedicated team of people in this agency and our goal is to continue our efforts at improving everything that we do.

I continue to work with our students and educational programs and look forward to our many end of year activities. Over the past school year, we have made many changes at Beacon School to ensure our compliance with Ohio Department of Education's rules and regulations. The staff of Beacon School, which includes our valued Educational Aides, have been flexible, supportive and professional throughout the process. We are most fortunate to have a dedicated team to support the needs of our students!

The ACBDD will be starting our strategic planning process in the next several months. We invite everyone to be a part of our process. We will have focus groups, surveys, and strength-weakness-opportunities and threats analysis. Also, it's been eight years since we've revisited our Mission and Vision Statements, so we will be rethinking our priorities and refreshing the concept of our work. We are in the midst of state and federal change and it is exciting to recreate ourselves and our service by working together for improvements. Our stakeholder voice is most important in ensuring that we are aligned with the needs of Athens County residents.

Thank you to all our staff, agency and community partners, and the residents of Athens County for your continued support as we continue our mission of service.

## **BOARD MEMBER NEWS**

ACBDD Board Member Barbara Lindsay has resigned effective March 24, 2015.

Barbara states, in part: "I am sorry to inform you to I have decided to leave the Board because I am traveling so much that it is no longer possible for me to serve. I have enjoyed serving in Athens County and would have had to leave in another year anyway due to term limitations. I first served on a county board in Ohio back in the late 70's so have been able to clearly see the immense progress made by county boards. I sleep well knowing my daughter receives care from such loving and dedicated people. Athens County is fortunate to have the leadership it now has. I will continue to have each person associated with it in my prayers." Sincerely, Barbara Brown-Lindsay, Ph.D.

***Note: Barb's term ends December 31, 2106. This Board Member position is appointed by the Athens Co. Commissioners. Anyone interested may send an application to them at: 15 S. Court St., Athens OH***

## **This Month's Featured Program—BEACON SCHOOL !**

*Jennifer Trotta, Primary Instructor*—As always the Primary Class is in the midst of many fun and exciting projects. Currently, the students are celebrating the new season through several different activities. In scissor practice, the children have been cutting out different flowers parts for our paper garden. In art the students are painting and crafting several spring themed decorations to share with their families and the school. In reading, we just finished discussing energy and plant growth. We will apply this knowledge by going on a nature walk around the school to look for budding leaves, flowers, and other signs of spring. Another popular subject for our students is math, which includes math circle, along with individual math activities during station time. As they year progresses we are proud to see our students grow and develop different skills. We look forward to seeing what these final few months bring for the Primary Class as each student continues to progress.



*Alania Harper, Physical Therapist*—The Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant are very busy this spring evaluating students for their new IEPs. This is always an exciting time for us, as we get to see how much progress our students have made this school year. We have students who have learned to pedal their tricycles, who can now accompany their families and friends on bike rides. As well as students who have learned to catch a ball, stretch their muscles, increase their endurance to keep up with their peers, and much more! Many of our students have made exceptional progress this school year and it is very rewarding to see their hard work pay off.

*Megan Stack, RN*—Working at Beacon has been the most fulfilling experience of my career as a nurse. We are the only school in Athens County who has a full time nurse, providing around-the-clock care for our students. We also have the privilege of in school visits from a physician with Hopewell Health Center, for select individuals. On countless occasions, I have seen staff work together as a team, to ensure each student's needs are met; mentally, physically, and emotionally. Routinely, the nurse serves as a liaison between parents, guardians, caregivers and physicians, to get important medical needs met, when it may be challenging for parents, guardians, and caregivers to do so on their own.



*Karen Blaine, Intermediate II Instructor*—Intermediate II has been busy exploring science. We have enjoyed conducting experiments, and determining what kind of things sink, and which things float! We have been learning about our environment through Unique Curriculum lessons. Our job skills have improved tremendously, since the beginning of the year. We have a great crew of working people. We are now preparing for our International Food Day, and planning a shopping trip.



## **This Month's Featured Program—BEACON SCHOOL - Page 2**

*Cindy Johnston, Intermediate I Instructor* — The Intermediate One class has been gearing up for Spring. The students have been planting flowers that will be put in our class flower bed. Our class has also had the great opportunity of participating in dance and music therapy classes provided by Ohio University. Our alternate assessments are complete and students have done really well. In gym class students have been practicing and preparing for Special Olympics. Here is a photo of one student enjoying the new horizontal climbing wall with the help of Miss Gloria Whipple. The climbing wall was purchased with grant money.



*Samantha Dunlap, Young Adult Instructor*—We work together as a team at Beacon, and all of our staff really care about our students and want what is best for them. I love interacting with our students, teaching them how to hold a conversation or pay for something at a store. We help them be independent and realize that they can do many things. The Young Adults enjoy working in our greenhouse, planting vegetables and flowers for Mother's Day and preparing for our annual Greenhouse Sale coming up in May. We recently took a field trip to a horse farm at Hocking College. Each student learned how to brush and lead a horse. The Young Adults will continue to plug away this quarter at our Unique Curriculum and Job Skills. The end of the year is getting closer and we are getting ready for the Summer Employment program with Personnel Plus!



*Beth Maccombs, Preschool Instructor*— I have been teaching preschool for 10 years, previously I worked as an Early Intervention Specialist. We have one instructor assistant and 3 educational aides all working together in helping the children be successful. I love watching the children progress, and seeing their faces as they learn a new skill. The self confidence they have in themselves when they gain some independence is priceless. Seeing a child gain the ability to communicate with others is also very rewarding. Preschool is a very important developmental milestone for the children, and the families as well. Parents may have just recently learned their child has a disability or learning impairment, and we are able to be there for them offering them support they may need at a challenging time.



### **Information & Resources**

The Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD) will host a Stakeholders Meeting on April 30, 2015, 6:00-8:00 pm at Beacon School. Agenda topics will include a presentation by Ohio Association of County Board (OACB) Executive Director Bridget Gargan on:

- Ohio Budget Bill
- DDDD Initiatives
- Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) Transition Plan
- Conflict-Free Case Management.

In addition, Steve Kramer, ACBDD Business Manager will discuss waiting lists, waiver costs and their affects on ACBDD financial projections.



### -Mark your Calendars-

- **April 28—ACBDD Board Meeting, 6:00 pm @ Beacon**
- **April 30—ACBDD Stakeholders Meeting, 6-8:00 pm @ Beacon**

### **Staff Notes....**

#### **WELCOME New Hires!!**

**2/9-Julie Jones-Internship Coord., PersonnelPlus**  
**4/6-Barb North-Moss, Habilitation Specialist, PersonnelPlus**

#### **THANK YOU Retirees!!**

**3/1-Teresa Darst, Adult Service Aide, Atco-30 yrs. of service**  
**5/30—Gloria Whipple, Adaptive Phys. Ed Instructor—35 yrs. of service**  
**6/2—Joyce Bowers, Asst. Instructor—21 yrs. of service**

### **CURRENT & RECENT EVENTS**

The **Athens County Community Singers** will perform at the OU School of Music Band Hall on Saturday, May 30, 3:00 p.m. This performance will be in conjunction with the Athens Community Music School Therapy Concert. You are also invited to the pancake breakfast at Applebee's on Saturday, April 11. Tickets will be available at the door, but are also available in advance by contacting Stephanie Morris at [stephanie.h.morris@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.h.morris@gmail.com).

The annual **ACBDD Disability Awareness Festival** was held on March 11 at the Athens Community Center. This year's theme was "**Can Do Like You!**". As always the festival is designed to promote positive perceptions in the community for people with disabilities. Attended by over 200 people, the festival included proclamations by the Athens County Commissioners and Mayor Paul Wiehl, musical and choir performance by the Athens County Community Singers, awards for achievements in providing services, and many other activities. Twenty-five organizations participated by reserving a table at which they presented their services provided by their programs. Thank you to all those who attended and to the many people who volunteered their time and effort to make this event a great success!

The **Japan Exchange Program** is a program we've participated in for more than 25 years. The goal of the program is to enable Japan and the U.S. to exchange ideas about supporting and serving people with disabilities. This program has been an extremely valuable resource for improvements and enhancements to our programs and services. The focus of the Japan Exchange Program has been to send one visitor from Athens and to host one visitor from Japan annually. On March 21 the Japan Exchange Board hosted a fundraiser at Beacon School. All funds raised will be used to send a Beacon student and his mother to Japan for two weeks this summer. The fundraiser included a soup lunch, origami demonstrations, and a silent auction. Almost \$2000 was raised which greatly exceeded all expectations.

**Atco Active** is a new program through Atco, Inc., promoting an active and healthy life style. Atco Active is a community integrated opportunity for everyone to learn about healthy living. Join us for a variety of activities, including free health screenings and assessments, weight loss tracking, gardening classes, exercise opportunities, and monthly evening potlucks where you will learn even more about healthier lifestyles...while helping people with disabilities make new friends and feel more a part of the Athens Co. community. Please join in the fun—contact Autumn Brown at (740)592-6659 or [abrown@athenscbdd.org](mailto:abrown@athenscbdd.org) for more information!

**Passion Works** will be forming an advisory board within the next few months. The focus of the board will be fundraising, increasing our donation dollars and general awareness of Passion Works and the wonderful opportunities we offer! If you are interested on serving on this board, please contact Laurie Gregg at [lgregg@athenscbdd.org](mailto:lgregg@athenscbdd.org).