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DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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The Athens **NEWS**
SPECIAL EDITION
2018



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ACBDD / Celebrate CommUNITY

Celebrate

COMMUNITY

By Kevin Davis, Ed.D.
Superintendent, ACBDD

March has been designated Development Disability Awareness Month, which focuses on people's abilities and similarities rather than differences. It also encourages everyone to welcome people with developmental disabilities into their communities.

In 2017, county Boards of Developmental Disabilities across Ohio celebrated their 50th anniversary of providing quality services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities.

In Athens County, the Athens County Board of DD (ACBDD) celebrated this 50th an-

ACBDD and Athens County “Celebrate CommUNITY” for this year’s DD Awareness Month

niversary with a great year of successes in supporting people with disabilities. A few of the high points included:

- Passing a vital levy
- Receiving the highest level of state accreditation possible
- Relocated PersonnelPlus to a professional office space in The Market on State
- Completing major renovations to Beacon School

- Launching a new partnership with Ohio University’s Kids on Campus for summer programming
- Transitioning Passion Works successfully
- Earning the highest level of CARF accreditation possible

These accomplishments would not be possible without the involvement and support of our Athens County community. As a way to recognize the importance of our community, the theme for 2018’s DD Awareness Month will be “Celebrate CommUNITY.”

We do a number of activities to commemorate this important month. This Special Edition insert in *The Athens NEWS* has been one of our most popular activities over the past eight years. It helps us keep the community in-

formed and educated on what we do and why we do it. We hosted the area’s (and possibly the state’s) first-ever “March on Court Street” for disability awareness. We will accompany individuals we serve as they travel up to Columbus for the annual Advocacy Day at the Statehouse. Lastly, we will host our annual Developmental Disability Awareness Festival.

The ACBDD’s annual Developmental Disability Awareness Festival is one of our favorite nights of the year. It will be Tuesday, March 20, at the Athens Community Center from 6-8 p.m. We hope you will join us as we “Celebrate CommUNITY.” This is a night to recognize all of our providers and partners who support the more than 600 individuals throughout Athens County, as well as to raise awareness about the challenges and barriers to success individuals with disabilities encounter, even in Athens.

The upcoming year will bring challenges; we know that. But as we have demonstrated, the ACBDD is now and will always be there to ensure that people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the ongoing quality care and support they need.

Help us “Celebrate CommUNITY.” Welcome someone with a disability into your commUNITY.



The Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities and its superintendent. From left: Dr. Leonard Allen; Pam Bond, board secretary; Dr. Jason Jolley; Margaret Hutzel, board vice president; Michelle Oestrike; Sherri Oliver; Margaret Demko, board president; Dr. Kevin Davis, superintendent.

Cover photos: Clockwise from top left: 1) Daniel Burton beams with his own hand-made signs during the area’s first-ever “March on Court Street” for Disability Awareness. 2) Dar Whitlatch poses in his home in The Plains. 3) A little rain didn’t dampen Glenda Murray’s enthusiasm for the area’s first-ever “March on Court Street” for Disability Awareness. She came prepared dressed in a poncho. 4) Deedra Semones, Texas Roadhouse Managing Partner, poses with Dale at the restaurant during one of his recent shifts. 5) Beacon students Justin McCormick, Gabby Moulton and Brooke Love enjoy the playground on a recent school day. 6) Beacon teacher Ciara Jenkins, along with students Karman Jenkins and Ronnie Riley, spend some time on one of Beacon’s new playgrounds. 7) From left to right, Dale White and his son Pete White take a breather with Lillian Stamm during the 2017 community Halloween Party, co-hosted by the PersonnelPlus Advocacy and Advisory Council and ATCO Leaders. 8) Emily Demko and Dr. Kevin Davis, ACBDD superintendent, pose next to the newly refinished Pete the Cat. Pete had seen some wear and tear, but a little paint and care got him looking good as new. Photos provided by ACBDD.

What's the function of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities?

A better question might be what doesn't this local board do? Its work reaches into every corner of the community

The Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD) assists eligible Athens County children and adults who have developmental disabilities such as autism, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, epilepsy, and other conditions that are manifested before the age of 22.

The ACBDD is legally mandated to assure the health, safety and welfare of eligible Athens County residents who have developmental disabilities. We are also obligated to provide an array of services necessary to meet individu-

als' needs by facilitating learning and growth. The mission of the ACBDD is to enhance the quality of life for individuals by encouraging integration and independence, fostering partnerships, and advocating for individual rights.

ACBDD programs:

- Early Intervention
- Beacon School
- ATCO Adult Services
- Employment Option (PersonnelPlus)
- Transportation Services
- Service and Support Administration (case management, securing housing and in-home staffing)

The ACBDD also distributes funding to the following agencies and provides in-home staffing, transportation and day-program services to individuals with developmental disabilities:

- Buckeye Community Services (BCS)
- Caregiver Homes of Ohio

- Echoing Meadows/Community Connections
- Expanding Your Horizons
- Goodwill
- Havar/Building Bridges
- Interim Health Care
- Passion Works Studio
- Radcliff Health Care Services

- ResCare
- RHDD/Alternatives
- Sech-Kar/Studio
- SOAR

In addition, funding is provided to more than 40 independent providers for in-home staff support.



A rainy Saturday morning didn't stop the area's first-ever "March on Court Street" for Disability Awareness on March 3. Photo by Dennis E. Powell.

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Services include:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| » Allergy and Immunology | » Lab Services | » Podiatry |
| » Anesthesiology | » Low-Dose CT | » Sleep Medicine |
| » Audiology | » Nephrology | » Sports Medicine |
| » Cancer Care | » Obstetrics/Gynecology | » Surgical Services |
| » Chiropractic Care | » Ophthalmology | » Therapy Services |
| » Ear, Nose and Throat | » Orthopedics | » Urgent Care |
| » Endocrinology | » Pain Management | |
| » Family Practice | » Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine | |
| » Gastroenterology | » Pharmacy | |
| » Heart and Vascular Care | » Plastic Surgery | |
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ATCO's transition in final year of three-year process

This year marks the final year of ATCO, the long-standing adult services program operated by the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

A new rule from the federal Center for Medicaid Services states county boards can no longer operate services in which they also monitor for quality and compliance. CMS now considers this a conflict of interest.

Since 2016, when this process began in Athens County, we have been identifying great ways to ensure everyone who has been attending ATCO finds new opportunities in the community. This can mean selecting another day habilitation program, finding employment in the community, volunteering, or another creative activity. We also work diligently to track and evaluate options.

Individuals along with their support team use transition portfolios as their tracking tool. We make sure individuals and their staff supports compare and contrast the choices available, by making notes to share in their transition planning meetings. ATCO staff, other county board staff and providers of service make sure individuals impacted understand the transition process and the choices available to them. This also will support families and guardians to help make good decisions and choices that will be about what makes the person happy, safe, and will help them achieve their hopes, dreams and outcomes for a good life.

As people move toward making new choices, the county board team is focused on ensuring private day habilitation providers are



Led by ATCO Transition Manager Autumn Brown, ACBDD has hosted several public forums specifically on the ATCO transition. The purpose of these forums is to share updates with the community on our progress, how individuals will be impacted and to answer questions.

supported and ready to provide quality services that are integrated and developed around person-centered approaches.

ATCO Transition Manager

As we map out the future of adult day services together, there will be a focus of

promoting person-centered planning, community access and community employment options. Stakeholders, who include the Athens County Board of DD staff, people served, the community, families, guardians and advocates must work hard to ensure people with developmental disabilities have access and

supports in their lives. Key areas are creating opportunities to develop individual abilities, making stronger community connections, improving earnings and employment benefits, improving health, enhancing quality of life, increasing self-esteem, expanding natural supports and many more needs.

The Athens County Board of DD staff is working to educate and introduce many new opportunities that promote employment and community integrations, and identify the best means for each individual to enhance his or her life with new choices and experiences. This is not a process we rush. It is about identifying concerns, interests and goals, supporting individuals and their families as needed, through a thoughtful and person-centered process.

In life, we all face changes we don't always want. This is no different. But by ACBDD staff working closely with individuals and community partners and with a shared person-centered approach that incorporates Employment First initiatives, we have been making positive strides through this transition.



Autumn Brown

Learning center in Albany serves young people with autism, Asperger syndrome and other conditions

Haugland Learning Center has quickly realized that Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities is a collaborative partner that provides support and continuity between home and school. They strive to understand effective systems and strategies put in place for students at school and work with the families to see this generalization in other environments. ACBDD advocates for the needs of the students by helping to obtain resources that increase accessibility, opportunities and overall quality of life.

Haugland Learning Center (HLC) serves the educational and behavioral needs of children and young adults with autism, Asperger syndrome and other developmental disabilities in the state of Ohio. HLC provides an environment that promotes academic, social and emotional growth for all individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Success is achieved by using effective instructional methods based on the science of applied behavior analysis, as well as the use of positive reinforcement as the tool for behavior change.

In Mid-January 2018, HLC opened a school in Albany

(5196 Washington Road) accepting students from kindergarten through 12th grade (including those with behaviors of concern). The accreditation needed to address our preschool population is anticipated to be in place for the 2018-2019 school year.

In addition to home-based programs, a range of other services may be provided to students and families. These services include: speech therapy, home respite, ABA behavioral consulting, mental-health services such as counseling and supportive treatment, and psychological services through our sister companies.

Students with an autism, Asperger's or PDD-NOS diagnosis are eligible to receive the Autism Scholarship from the Ohio Department of Education, which can be used to pay for educational services at Haugland, as well as a four-week summer program. Students with other exceptionalities may qualify for the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship, which can also be used to pay for services at Haugland.

For more information go to: hauglandlearningcenter.com or call 614-420-4917.



Festival to celebrate locals with disabilities & the staffers who assist them

It's that time of year again. March brings Developmental Disability Awareness Month and the annual Awareness Festival. Hosted by the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD), the Developmental Disability Awareness Festival is a celebration and recognition of the many individuals with disabilities throughout the community and the professionals who assist them.

The festival takes place from 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20, at the Athens Community Center. The evening will highlight interactive displays from a variety of organizations that provide services to people with disabilities in Athens County.

In recognition of this year's theme – "Celebrate CommUNITY" – we are changing the format to focus exclusively on our community

partners. By foregoing the formal program, this will allow more time and space for our partners to showcase the good work they do and to better connect with individuals in the community. We strongly believe this new format will be beneficial to both our partners and to the attendees.

Developmental Disability Awareness Month is a time when we celebrate our differences, recognize the challenges the people we assist face on a daily bases, and reaffirm our commitment to working as a community to best meet their needs. During any month (but especially this month), we encourage everyone to acquaint themselves with someone who has a developmental disability and to remember that the ACBDD will always be here to help everyone to make those connections.

We hope to see you on March 20.

2018 DISABILITY AWARENESS FESTIVAL



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ATCO Idol 2018 offers an inclusive experience

ACBDD's ATCO Idol, a once-small karaoke-style performance that has grown and evolved over the years, is changing once again. ATCO Idol is becoming a fully integrated musical experience, where individuals with developmental disabilities join forces with local musicians to create a unique performance at Stuart's Opera House April 6, 2018.

ATCO Idol started eight years ago and originally featured performances exclusively by individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. The 2016 event took a giant leap forward in creating a more inclusive experience. By hosting it at Stuart's Opera House, it provided access for the whole community to come and enjoy the performances. We had a great outpouring of community support for over 20 performers.

This year's new format will create a more integrated experience for those with and without disabilities. We are looking for local musicians to partner in these performances. This is one more step toward helping to make Athens County a more inclusive community. What may start as a musical pairing could easily evolve into a lasting friendship, which would help fulfill part of the mission of ACBDD of enhancing the quality of life for the individuals we assist and creating/finding inclusive opportunities within the community.

Any local musicians interested in being part of this event should contact Leslie Perry or Chris Biester – lperry@athenscbdd.org or (740) 592-6659.



Participants from ATCO Idol 2016 stand on stage at Stuart's Opera House for their finale.



We support and appreciate the services provided by the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

The Sech-Kar Co. works with the ACBDD providing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the many wonderful events and activities in Athens County.

The Sech-Kar Co. provides residential and transportation services for people with varied abilities throughout Athens County and Southeast Ohio. The Sech-Kar Co. also operates three Adult Day Programs in Athens County, as well as others in Hocking, Morgan, and Perry Counties. We concentrate on helping people to become engaged in their community through volunteering, working, and participating in the many activities that we all enjoy.



TJ does a great job volunteering at the library. He also helps to clean both the Quaker Meeting House in Chauncey and The Plains Fire Station.



Cassie providing volunteer assistance at a local nursing home.



Irene helping to socialize Khaleesi, a rabbit which was successfully adopted out.



Justin has become a Certified Rabbit Therapist and visits area children's library programs and Head Start programs with his rabbits.



Nancy visiting the railroad station.

For information about job opportunities or any services provided by The Sech-Kar Co., please visit www.ts-kc.com or call 740-753-9993.



ATCO transition leads to exciting changes for adults

The transition of ATCO is leading to exciting changes in how adult services are provided in Athens County, as well as an equally exciting transformation in the lives of adults served by the ACBDD.

The ACBDD will transform and support a new model of providing adult day services in Athens County. This means it soon will not directly provide the service. ACBDD's role will change solely to supporting and monitoring the services provided by other private agencies throughout the county. This will include providing more training for providers, community integration support, and monitoring for quality assurance.

These changes will lead to more highly trained provider staff, increased community partnerships, and new and improved supports to agency providers of adult day services in Athens County. Ultimately, this transformation will lead to improved services for adults in Athens County.

The transition of ATCO also has led to individual transformations and the blossoming of the people being assisted. As these individuals explore their own future transition, they have branched out and tried new things – employment, volunteering and other new interests. Increasing self-advocacy education has assisted people in feeling confident in speaking up about their choices.

Everyone currently served by ATCO has been exploring lots of new options and are on their path to transition, all to be finalized by the end of 2018.

For example, **Dar Whitlach** has branched out and connected with many community partners such as Passion Works, Team Heart and Sole, and also the F.A.N.s network (Friends, Allies and Neighbors). Dar has even moved into a new home with support staff where he can be much more independent and have more access to our community. As one of his outcomes, Dar is enjoying yoga and basketball at the Athens Community Center, as he is working hard to become healthier and more physically active in his life.

Pam Cline has received a variety of county board services. Those services have included assistance with getting a job in the community, moving into her own apartment, and returning to ATCO to find activities with friends and in the community when she retired. Pam joined in on visits arranged by ATCO volunteering at The Laurels, helping seniors living at the facility participate in activities that were fun and engaging. She has taken her volunteering experience beyond ATCO and is independently



Brian McCulloch poses with Doug Mitchel, Director of ACBDD's Employment Options Division.

pursuing volunteer experiences. Her transition plan puts special emphasis on volunteering in the community and spending time with a new day habilitation program to replace her time at ATCO.

Pam also spends time at Passion Works Art Studio, which she can continue now that Passion Works has been transitioned into its own free-standing private day habilitation program and art studio.

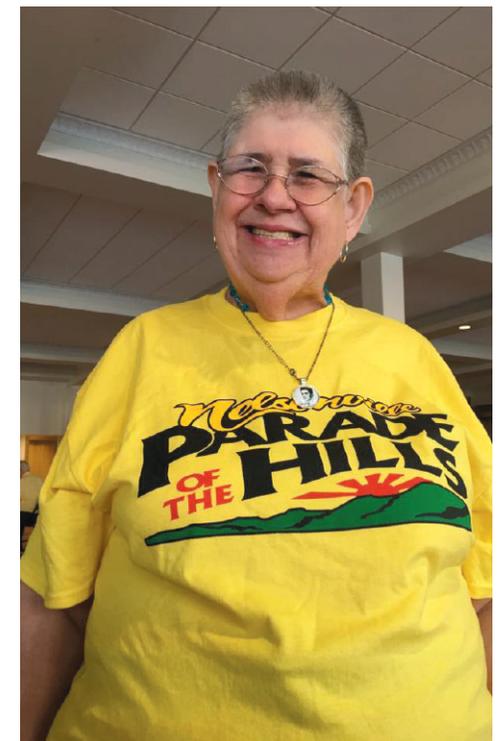
Brian McCulloch is also blossoming and branching out. He has always been outspoken and social. But working through his transition from ATCO, he has gained the confidence and initiative to pursue many new endeavors.



Dar Whitlach.

Brian had never been interested in having a job before, but now he is receiving employment services through *PersonnelPlus*, which is maximizing his options for community employment.

Brian always has been interested in training staff and making presentations. Now he has taken that interest to a new level and developing new ideas to make group presentations. He has trained staff on the details of his own person-centered service plan. He has also assisted training county board staff at the annual in-service day. In December of 2017, Brian presented his own training to *PersonnelPlus* staff in order to increase their awareness on people with disabilities. He enjoys speaking



Pam Cline volunteering at Parade of the Hills.

on his own disability and how it impacts him, as well as showing others that beyond his disability he has a full and inclusive life with a family that supports him and empowers him to become all he can.

Through Brian's transition from ATCO, he has ramped up his partnership with others in the community. He has become a member of Team Heart and Sole, yoga classes, Athens County Community Singers, meditation, and ATCO Idol, to name a few. Brian's sunny disposition and his inviting personality make others feel valued and connected, and he has many connections through his love for music. He often can be found enjoying Open Mic night at Casa Cantina, the Nelsonville Music Festival, and performing with the Athens County Community Singers around town.

Brian is quick to tell you that transitioning from ATCO makes him and others nervous. But he is increasing his connections with all the parts of the community that will enable him to receive quality adult services in the future that are person-centered.

"Since I have been working on my transition from ATCO, I have met more people, visited more places, and tried more new things than ever before," he said. "I look forward to continuing to explore my future and seeing how many new connections I can make."



ACBDD Transportation Dept. covers a lot of ground

The ACBDD Transportation Department operates five regular bus routes and two van routes throughout the 500 square miles of Athens County.

The fleet, which traveled approximately 207,430 miles in 2017, consists of seven buses, 10 vans, four cars and a pickup truck.

The total mileage can be broken down to include 17,174 miles for Community Inclusion; 42,406 miles for Community Employment; 14,503 miles for Service and Support Administration; and 16,000 miles for Facility\ Transportation Supervision. A total of 117,347 miles of bus and van transportation were delivered to transport 37 adults and 32 school-age individuals from all over Athens County to Beacon School, ATCO, Passion Works and PersonnelPlus or to area job sites, allowing them to maintain successful employment within our community.

ACBDD continues to partner with Hocking, Athens, the Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP), and Ohio DD Council to provide transportation through Athens On Demand Transit (AODT). AODT provided 3,480 rides to the DD population in Athens County in 2017. Athens On Demand Transit provided a total of 9,764 rides to individuals in Athens County in 2017.



After a recent board meeting, Robert Withem, ACBDD's Director of Transportation and Facilities, poses with board member Dr. Jason Jolley and board president Margaret Demko next to the agency's new school bus.

DD Facilities Department has a big job as well

ACBDD dept. operates and maintains 61,700 square feet of buildings

The Facilities Department for the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities operates and maintains 61,700 square feet of buildings, plus the grounds.

The largest facility is Beacon School, which was constructed in 1979 and contains 30,000 square feet of space.

The second largest facility is ATCO, at 19,000 square feet. That space was purchased and renovated for the ATCO workshop in the late '70s.

The current Bus Garage was constructed in 2001 and altered to include the SSA Department in 2003, containing 6,200 square feet. Because the SSA department continues to grow due to increased enrollment for our services, we have split the department. A portion of the department is now located in a 4,400-square-foot space in The Plains.

Employment Options, our newest division that includes PersonnelPlus, has 2,100 square

feet of leased space at The Market on State.

As well as operations and maintenance of the facilities, the Facilities Department maintains the grounds at each location. This involves clearing snow and ice from the sidewalks and parking lots, along with grooming the lawns around these facilities.

Not only do we provide for the physical needs of the facilities, we also are responsible for providing security lockdown capabilities in each location. Especially in light of the recent violence occurring in public places, it is important that we do our part to prepare. The agency has installed video surveillance

and two remote-operated doors at Beacon, ATCO and the Bus Garage/SSA Department. Given the population we serve, we must take extra care to ensure everyone's safety. We serve many individuals who use mobility devices. While the use of these devices can slow the lock-down process and make evacuation challenging, employees work diligently to develop safety procedures to aid in this task. We perform drills regularly to ensure staff is familiar with each step of the process. ACBDD is confident it will keep its clients and staff safe as it continues to evaluate and improve systems and procedures.

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Dreams in sight with PersonnelPlus Employment Services

Dale is a young man who never views life through the lens of his disability. He is known to frequently say, "You don't know till you try." Dale went to the Ohio State School for the Blind and graduated in 2014. From there, Dale lost no time starting to look for a job. During that process, Dale began volunteering at a nursing home where, to this day, he amazes the residents with how he can navigate the halls and remember peoples' names.

After about a year of looking for a job and trying out different jobs in the community, Dale landed a position as an office assistant at an insurance agency. A couple of weeks into the job, both Dale and the employer felt that it wasn't the best fit for Dale. So they parted amicably. It happens. However, Dale did not let this deter him from his goal of securing a job.

"When you don't succeed, you try again," he said.

For two more years, Dale continued searching for a job with the assistance of staff from PersonnelPlus. All the while, he did not lose sight of his dream.

While looking for a job, Dale became a member of the PersonnelPlus Advocacy and Advisory Council (PPAAC), the employment advocacy group of the Athens County Board of DD. In the spring of 2017, as a council member, Dale volunteered to set up fundraising opportunities for the PPAAC. While he was out scouting places to do fundraisers, he was introduced to the manager at Texas Roadhouse. This would prove to be an important moment in Dale's job hunt. Shortly after this, a PPAAC staff member and a PersonnelPlus Job Developer met with the Texas Roadhouse manager and scheduled an interview for Dale. At the interview, Dale was offered a position as a greeter, which he excitedly accepted. His first day of work was July 7, 2017.

This seemed like the end of a successful story for Dale, but it was just the beginning. Living in a small rural town, he found that

transportation quickly became an issue. The transportation option Dale used occasionally throughout the week had limited availability and didn't run late enough to take him home from work. This left Dale with what appeared to be only one option at the time, which was to take a cab.

The cost of transportation for Dale to get to and from work at that point was \$11-\$12 per day on weekdays and \$18 per day on the weekend. This was anywhere from a quarter to half of his gross income for the day, depending on his shift. Dale kept this up for a while, because he valued his job and was proud of the work he was doing. Eventually, however, this started to take a toll on his finances.

In a discussion with his team through the Athens County Board of DD, the option of the City Transit came up. Originally, Dale wasn't interested because he thought he would have to transfer busses while in route. He also thought they didn't have an option to get him home after work. PersonnelPlus staff talked with the City Transit and discovered Dale could take one bus route to and from work, and the Transit would pick him up directly at his home. Dale was thrilled!

Through some practice with PersonnelPlus and a lot of perseverance on his end, Dale learned to use the Transit successfully. This dropped his transportation costs down to \$70 for the whole year.

This didn't solve all his problems. His bus route gets him to work an hour ahead of his shift, and he will still have to use a cab on occasion. However, Dale is proud of how he worked through the challenges his disability presents every day. Now he says he's eagerly waiting for the day when he can get a driverless car and a service dog.

Dale has become an icon at Texas Roadhouse. He is the first face many see when they walk in those doors. Since he started in July of 2017, many customers know him by name and greet him. He even had an Ohio state senator



Deedra Semones, Texas Roadhouse managing partner, poses with Dale at the restaurant during one of his recent shifts.

comment to him at the 50th anniversary party for Ohio County Boards in Columbus that he had been to the Athens Texas Roadhouse and was greeted by Dale. The senator said Dale did a great job.

Even though Dale is excited to have a job, he remains humble through it all. He can often be heard telling people how blessed he is to

have this job as well as offering words of encouragement to others who want to find a job. Recently, Dale had someone come in and job shadow him at work. During the job shadow, Dale was asked what skills are needed in this job and he replied, "Happiness. Always smile, because you are the face of the business." And smile he does!

PersonnelPlus continues to help individuals find dream job

PersonnelPlus is a part of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities Employment Options Division. Staff there believe strongly in the Employment First initiative, which is the idea that every working-age adult with developmental disabilities must have the opportunity to explore his/her career options and seek jobs that fit his/her skills and interests.

Community employment brings many benefits. For example, it brings greater independence and wealth-building potential. It improves self-esteem and personal satisfaction. Employers and co-workers benefit through more diversity and a broader range of capable employees available. Society at

large benefits when all citizens are able to participate in and contribute to their communities in all the ways they can. Many individuals with disabilities have proven time and time again they are capable of reaching these outcomes with the appropriate supports in place.

Carrie is the perfect example.

She is a friendly and outgoing young woman with a contagious smile. Her friendly, fun-loving nature brightens any room. Carrie's energy and enthusiasm are part of what made working with her to find a job so much fun. She never gave up and knew exactly what she wanted to do.

Carrie applied for employment services with Opportunities

for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and then chose PersonnelPlus as her employment service in May of 2017.

Once our staff at PersonnelPlus met with her to begin her employment services, we learned she was already employed for part of the week at Goodwill, where she does a variety of tasks such as hanging, straightening, sorting and sizing clothes donated to the store. But she wanted more work. She wanted her dream job. When we asked about her job goal or her dream job, she confidently stated that she wanted to fold pizza boxes.

Carrie began meeting at the PersonnelPlus office once a week for two hours to begin looking for a job. With assistance

Continued on next page



**Growing Our Businesses,
Enhancing Our Community,
Keeping It Local**

ATHENSCHAMBER.COM



The **Athens Area Chamber of Commerce** celebrates **Disabilities Awareness Month** and applauds our area businesses that realize the merit of hiring dependable employees through partnerships with **PersonnelPlus**. We are proud of our business community's inclusive workforce because gainful employment is a rite of passage for all.



Carrie folds one of the 550 pizza boxes she completes during her three-hour shift.

Carrie and her job...

Continued from page 9

from staff, she completed and submitted applications online and in person. Eventually, she applied to every pizza restaurant in the city of Athens. This continued until the end of September, when a **PersonnelPlus** Job Trainer met with Sam, the manager at Papa John's. That meeting resulted in an interview for Carrie at the pizza restaurant on Oct. 3, 2017.

Both a **PersonnelPlus** Job Trainer and Job Developer accompanied Carrie to the interview. It went very well. So well, in fact, that Sam offered Carrie the job, which would have her working for a few hours on Fridays folding pizza boxes in preparation for the weekend. Carrie landed her dream job. She was thrilled. The rest of her week she planned to continue working with Goodwill.

Carrie's first day of employment at Papa John's was on Oct. 13, 2017. She was transported by **PersonnelPlus** staff and accompanied by a Job Trainer. Carrie quickly caught on to folding the boxes and was able to fold 250 boxes in her first three-hour shift. The following week, she completed 300 boxes, with minimal direction from the Job Trainer. The next week, Carrie completed 350 pizza boxes in her three-hour shift.

She enjoys having the number she completed that day written down so she can show her staff what she accomplished. Who doesn't like to see his or her own progress?

By December, the job-coaching services provided to Carrie by **PersonnelPlus** staff

At this time, Carrie is completing 550 boxes in her three-hour shift on Friday. It took a community approach for Carrie to succeed.

began to fade as she grew more comfortable on the job. Her home staff started providing transportation to and from work. Carrie continued to do well and needed minimal supports. After speaking to Carrie and the manager, we decided that she was doing so well that the on-site services provided by **PersonnelPlus** were no longer needed.

This meant she was successfully employed in the community for 90 days and her case could be closed through OOD. Although her case was closed, **PersonnelPlus** will continue to provide what's called Follow-Along services, which means the agency will check in once a month to ensure her continued success at her job.

At this time, Carrie is completing 550 boxes in her three-hour shift on Friday. It took a community approach for Carrie to succeed. We are very proud of Carrie and feel privileged to have been a part of helping her reach her job goal and landing her dream job.



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ACBDD / Celebrate CommUNITY

Athens County Board of DD settles into new employment office at mall

The Athens County Board's Employment Options Division opened its new office at The Market on State in 2017. The office houses all of the County Board's employment services. These include: School-to-Work Transition Services, PersonnelPlus Employment Services and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Contract Services Unit.

"The new location provides a very visible location that is easy for business customers as well as job seekers to access for employment services," said Doug Mitchell, Employment Options director.

Mitchell noted that the location is inviting and has attracted many mall shoppers just passing by to stop and ask questions, which may lead to receiving employment services. Likewise, new partnerships have developed due to the location, such as the local U.S. Air Force Recruiting Office. TSgt Jonathan Chan utilizes the agency's resources as additional options he can make available when appropriate.

PersonnelPlus filled the largest number of jobs in its nearly 35-year history. Thirty-four positions were filled by PersonnelPlus in 2017. Shawna Stump of Shawna Stump State Farm Insurance has been a long-time business partner.

"It is a great place to find employees who are loyal," Stump said. "They want to work; they come in early; they stay until they're supposed to; they're good people who want to do a job."

For more information as to how PersonnelPlus can assist with employment or how area businesses can request qualified and reliable employees, please contact the office at 740-592-3416.

2018 Disability Awareness Festival



Tuesday, March 20th 2018 6:00-8:00 PM
ATHENS COMMUNITY CENTER
701 E. STATE ST ATHENS, OH 45701

We would love to have families and friends join us. We are also looking for organization and businesses to set up a free table display and activity during the fest. In honor of this year's theme – Celebrate CommUNITY – we are changing the format this year to focus exclusively on our partners. We encourage interactive exhibits that best educate the community about the important work of our partners.

For more information contact
Mark Cullison
Tel. (740) 592-6659 Ext. 215
Email: mcullison@athenscbdd.org

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SSA supports uplifting community connections

The Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities is likely the least well known department in the organization, even though it's one of the largest.

Staff in this department quietly go about the business of helping individuals with developmental disabilities connect to their community – through school, employment, housing, recreation, and other ways that are meaningful to the individual.

Often, people with developmental disabilities are overlooked or excluded from opportunities to participate as full citizens in the community. The Athens County Board of DD and the SSA work hard to advocate and create opportunities for individuals and their families to be included and valued members of the Athens County community.

Each individual goes through a process called Discovery. This leads to a service plan unique to that individual that's focused on how to help him or her achieve special goals and dreams while assuring continued health and safety. Each individual's Service and Support Specialist (SSS) is actively involved in the process and assists to develop and monitor Individualized Service Plans (ISP), which are specifically tailored to assure that the individual's needs are being met. Plans are developed to assure the person is getting the opportunity to enhance his or her life and to have control over decisions that affect him or her.

The Service and Support Specialist will meet with the individual and his or her circle of support – the people who know the individual best and can help develop the appropriate supports. Sometimes community supports are identified that connect the individual to services, organizations or individuals in the community that can help support the individual at little or no cost. At other times, the team will work to identify a paid provider that is chosen by the individual to support him or her in ways to assure that they have full access to the community. Individuals enjoy a variety of opportunities for community participation including employment, recreation, worship, shopping and dining.

Here are a few examples of what the SSA division does:

Justin

Justin is one good example. He is a 20-year-old New Marshfield resident. He receives services through the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities. He lives with his grandmother and grandfather, whom he calls Mom and Dad. He started services with the County Board three years ago, needing support to improve his self-control. He also had



Justin is learning wood-working.

police involvement to deal with conduct issues and poor decisions. His Service and Support Specialist worked with Justin and his team to connect him with Sech-Kar, the F.A.N.s program, and various other community activities. Since that time a couple years ago, Justin made dramatic improvements.

With the support of his team, Justin has completed a CPR/First Aid Certificate and earned a Rabbit Therapy License. He is a volunteer at the New Marshfield Fire Department, volunteers at the Rabbit Rescue with Sech-Kar at its Elm Rock location in Nelsonville and also at Rabbit Rescue. He is also learning to be a woodworker at Sech-Kar Station. He won the Sech-Kar volunteer of the year award. He continues to be a part of the F.A.N.s program, regularly plays basketball at the Athens Community Center, and is making lots of new friends.

"Basketball has helped me relax and be around people without feeling like I'm ready to explode and helps control my anger," he said.

Justin has gained confidence and realized his potential. He has been able to do all of this because he is hard working. He has also received strengths-based supports from his SSA Tim Jones and his support staff from Sech-Kar, April Coventry and David Herold. By focusing on what Justin could do and helping him set attainable outcomes, Justin began focusing on what made him a "cool" person. In the future, Justin wants to learn more about maintenance and is exploring opportunities to volunteer with a maintenance person. He also has been referred to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) to try to find a job. By providing these supports, his team believes that Justin will be able to gain more and more independence in



Raven, center, goes out to eat with his staff from SOAR.

his life, and live a community-focused and happy life that he wants to live.

Raven

Raven was born in Massachusetts. At the age of 4, he was placed in a residential care facility because of severe autism and behavior challenges. When his mother and sisters moved to Athens County, he was transferred to the Gallipolis Developmental Center (GDC). His mother always dreamed her son would have the opportunity to live outside of an institution. Last year, her dream came true. On the recommendation of GDC, Raven moved to a home in Athens. He has a support team beyond his family that includes SOAR (Southern Ohio Adventures Recreation), a provider of service for people with developmental disabilities; his Service and Support Administrator, Beth Graham; and the Athens County Board's Behavior Specialist, David Sincoff. His services are funded through what's called a Medicaid waiver, to which the Athens County Board contributes approximately 40 percent of the cost of his care (the remaining costs are covered by the state). Raven receives educational services from the Haugland Learning Center in Albany.

Through the hard work and dedication of his team, Raven, now 18, has the chance to live in the community for the first time. While his transition has had challenges, Raven has had opportunities he never experienced before. Dinner at McDonald's and shopping at Kroger are things most of us take for granted. For Raven, this is an unexplored world and a chance for him to try new things and explore his community. His home has been modified with the assistance of the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority to meet his needs and help keep him



Grant takes part in an activity during Kids on Campus at Beacon Summer Camp.

safe. As his staff from SOAR has gotten to know him better, they have learned his signs as he works to communicate with them. He enjoys riding in the car and swimming at the pool at Beacon School. He is looking forward to better weather and a chance to get outside at a park or playground.

Most importantly, Raven's move to the community has allowed him to live closer to his family. His mother is able to visit and interact with him far more often than when he lived in an institution. She is also now able to be a part of the progress he is making.

"It really makes my heart happy to see Raven out and about in the community and everyone on Raven's team working so hard to not only care for his needs but to really allow him to live," she said.

Grant

Last summer for the first time, the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities partnered with Ohio University Kids on Campus to host a five-week fully integrated summer camp at Beacon School. This created a summer camp experience for children who may have not been able to attend a summer camp otherwise.

One family was able to apply and send four children to the Beacon School site for Kids on Campus Summer Camps. Grant, Asa, Sienna and Addison DeForest were excited to participate. Through the hard work of the Transportation Department, the Board was able to transport all of the children to and from camp. This was a huge help for many families, including the DeForests.

The Athens County Board supported 42

ACBDD's Early Intervention Program

The Athens County Early Intervention team provides services to children birth to 3 who are experiencing developmental delays or have a diagnosed handicapping condition. Our developmental specialists work with an interdisciplinary team that includes a physical therapist, speech therapist and early childhood mental-health professionals. Together we support child learning and development across all daily routines and activities in the home, daycare, or other community settings. Below is one example of the impact the program can have, from the family's perspective.

Logan's Story (by his mom, Erica Williams)

Logan Archer was born on Nov. 28, 2016, full term but 10 days prior to our anticipated due date. We learned of his diagnosis of Down's syndrome, also commonly known as Trisomy 21, during my second trimester. We also learned that he had a heart defect called Atrial Ventricular Septal Defect (AVSD), which lead us to open heart surgery when he was seven months old. At birth, we discovered that Logan had Syndactyly of the hands and feet - 3 fused fingers on each hand and 2 fused toes on each foot. This led to yet another surgery during the first year of his life.

Down Syndrome is a genetic disorder that causes physical and cognitive delays that can range from mild to moderate. It was very important to us that Logan received as much support as possible right away, as the first years are the most critical for development. A family member who works for Help Me Grow suggested we apply to see if we qualified for assistance. Help Me Grow connected us with the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention Program. Because of Logan's diagnosis, he was automatically eligible for services, and we began working with Early Intervention when he was three months old.

The Early Intervention Program provides home-based services, which conveniently allow us to work with Logan in an environment where he is most comfortable and with objects and toys that we already have around the house. They have been very flexible when scheduling visits and are more than willing to accommodate our full-time work schedules by



Brandon, Erica and Logan Williams pose during a recent photo shoot.

meeting in the evenings. We are so grateful for this flexibility as it doesn't require us to miss work on a regular basis.

Jodi Mitchell, our Developmental Specialist; Adrienne Nagy, our Physical Therapist; and Katy Linscott, our Speech Therapist, help us set up short-term and long-term goals for Logan to keep us and his development on track. Our main goals for the first year were focused on a variety of tasks, such as rolling over, sitting in seated position, crawling, and overall improvement of muscle tone. They introduce different techniques and new approaches that we can incorporate in our daily routines. Jodi connected us with Family Support Services, which provides financial assistance to families based on income. If there is something we need to help with Logan's development, Jodi, Adrienne, and Katy are great at making recommendations that we can purchase through the Family Support Services program.

The Early Intervention Program has been a real blessing for us in many ways. So far, Logan has been progressing with his goals in a timely manner, meeting most milestones without too much delay.

Our therapists and developmental specialist seem to genuinely care about our son's success and about our family's happiness. They are always willing to listen to our concerns and fears, and they are there to celebrate with us when Logan meets milestones, no matter how big or small. I am so grateful for the Early Intervention Program and for all of their support.



Working at the Holiday Inn Express.

PersonnelPlus partners with ODD on summer job program

Need Cash? Each summer, PersonnelPlus partners with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities to provide work experience for area high-school students.

During this five-week program, students spend 20 hours the first week in the classroom learning about money management, setting up a bank account, and skills to pay the bills. They talk about work-site etiquette and the dos and don'ts at work. After this educational week is completed, they work at a job site for 20 hours each week over the next four weeks. The students work with a PersonnelPlus job coach at each site. This allows students to earn a paycheck while gaining experience for future jobs.

Throughout the program, students gain new skills, step out of their comfort zone to try new things, make new friends and gain confidence in social situations. Most importantly, they walk away with a sense of accomplishment, empowerment, and a little extra money in their pockets. A majority of students use this money to contribute to their households buying groceries, buying school clothes or helping with household bills.

With contributions from the Civitan, Athens Lions Club, Walmart, Kroger, Brennan's Café, and Donato's, we were able to provide a healthy lunch each work day to the students. Boxed lunches were served starting last year after staff realized many students

were coming to work hungry, with no food at home and no way to pack a lunch. That year, we as a staff brought in fresh fruit and other breakfast items such as PB&J, bagels, and muffins.

However, we knew from the year before we needed a better plan. The students last year loved the lunches, and we still kept PB&J around just in case someone needed a sandwich before breakfast.

Last year, PersonnelPlus partnered with Hugh White (formerly Taylor Motors), Athens High School, The Laurels, Sweet Arts Bakery, Sandlot Baseball and Memory Gardens to create safe, productive work sites. At these sites, we were able to provide job tasks including janitorial, car detailing, working with the elderly, yard work, baking, and customer service.

"The dealership was pleased to partner with PersonnelPlus to prepare new workers for the Athens County work force," said Heath Clemons of Hugh White.

He also said that the added work they were able to accomplish with the students there was an asset during some of their busier months.

This year's first session will run from June 4, 2018, until July 6, 2018. The second session will be July 9, 2018, to August 10, 2018. For more information on this year's summer youth program, please contact PersonnelPlus at 740-592-3416.

A tale of a rewarding career choice in the DD field

By Garry Hashman

I was in my late 20's when I began to learn that I had a special quality. If it was only a notion then, it was solidified recently upon the death of a friend. I need to clarify the term special. I'm not unique; however, my importance was pointed out to me by an individual I worked with directly for over a decade. My service to him pales in comparison to the lessons I learned about the truths of life and about myself.

My first day working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) was overwhelming. How could I do all these personal tasks for someone else? I didn't have children. I didn't know how to care for someone else. I was worried I wouldn't be able to understand the people I'd have to work with. Most of all, I was afraid that I was going to do or say something that was dumb.

Then I met Harry.

He's a well-known artist and local celebrity. Everyone who met him loved him, and with good reason. He was endlessly caring for others despite his own disability. Over the next year or so, I found out that all of my concerns were justified. I didn't know how to care for someone, had difficulty understanding him, and I made some pretty dumb mistakes. Harry was there to mentor me the whole way. Every time I made a mistake, he would correct me in the most caring and loving way possible.

Harry had issues with verbal communication, but he would use associative words to convey his needs and wants. "Banana" was hard for him to say, so he replaced it with "Monkey. Ooot, ooot." Where substitute words failed, gestures and body language would prevail. His condition made it necessary for him to use a wheelchair, and he used his difficulties as inspiration to become an advocate for himself and others. He campaigned for more accessibility for individuals like himself. His patience was his greatest attribute. He never



Harry at the wheel with Garry Hashman at his side.

got frustrated, no matter the time it took to deal with the issue at hand. Together we would figure out the problem, and then together we could celebrate our accomplishment.

A year or two in, I had worked most of my rookie-ness out. By this time Harry and I had started growing close. My daughter was born, and Harry was the first person we visited after leaving the hospital. I would take him on the three-hour trek to visit his family a few times a year. During the holidays when he was unable to visit his family, he would spend time with mine. My daughter took to calling him "Uncle

Harry" and asking to visit so they could watch "Spongebob" together. In time, Harry and I became family. Brothers.

Some years later, I moved from working residentially to an Adult Day site. This is when Harry taught me I was special. He always made me responsible for training his new DSPs. His middle of the evening issues were often resolved with a phone call to me. Though I no longer worked in the home with him, he asked that I be the one to transport him to see his family. "Garry knows" was his normal explanation for me being his go to person. I was

trusted to do the things for him that he wanted done right. He accepted me into his innermost circle. I was special.

More years passed and not unlike other relationships our paths took different directions. We didn't spend as much time together. Occasional "old friend" visits and storytelling with his current staff replaced overnights and daily interactions. Together we would reminisce about vacations we shared, friends we had made, and catch up on each other's lives and family. Then I got word that he wasn't well.

The drive to his funeral services was the same we took every time he would visit his family. As I drove, I reminisced and I cried. I gathered myself by the time I reached the funeral home, and found a seat near the back to collect my thoughts. My coworkers asked me if I would speak on behalf of our company and I agreed. I had already decided I needed to do so for myself.

I addressed the room from the lectern. My tears flowed and I choked on words. I recounted tales and tried to interject humor to lighten the weight of grief in the room. I paused again to collect myself before closing: "The people in this room are among some of the luckiest people in the world. Of the billions of people in the world, we are the few who had the chance to have a real relationship with Harry. There is a sadness that we no longer get to make memories with him, but there is joy that he felt us deserving to be let into his life."

Through Harry, I learned many things. Communication is more than the use of words. Your shortcomings should serve as an inspiration to better your life and the lives of those around you. Have patience when teaching, allowing people the time to succeed. Most important to me, though, was that I was special enough to be called his friend.

Garry Hashman now works as the Director of Hocking Hills Day Activity Center in Logan.

RHDD provides essential services to people with disabilities

Residential Homes for the Developmentally Disabled provides services such as Residential, Adult Day Array, Transportation, Employment Supports, and much more.

We strive to promote independence in home and in the commUNITY.

As a CARF-accredited provider, RHDD is certified to provide employment supports through both DODD Employment First and OOD Traditional Vendor services. Our division of supported employment, Creative Employment Solutions, makes it possible for a person to take his or her first step on a path toward employment with resources such as community-based assessments, job development, job coaching, retention services and much more. For more information about how we

can help you start your job search, please contact Nicole Smith at nsmith@rhdd.org.

RHDD Residential Services makes it possible for many people with a developmental disability to live and thrive in their communities. Our caring and committed staff works closely with people to determine their wants and needs so that we can help create a home that is safe and inviting. RHDD staff assists with a wide variety of supports including bathing, grocery shopping, medical appointments, transportation, budgeting and much more.

For more information on Residential Services, contact Amy Thompson at athompson@rhdd.org.

RHDD's Adult Day Services program is called Alternatives.

Alternatives has been providing community inclusion opportunities and recreation activities in the Athens area since 2012. The focus of Alternatives is based solely on the interests and ideas of the people we serve. We provide creative outlets for community involvement, pre-employment training, artistic expression, and more. RHDD also provides transportation services for those who need help getting around in their community. If you have questions about Alternatives or transportation services, feel free to contact Amanda Cox at acox@rhdd.org.

RHDD is a close family of people who share a common goal: to provide only the highest-quality services for people who have a developmental disability. It is our passion and mission. Visit our website at www.rhdd.org.

Echoing Hills of Southeast Ohio (formally Echoing Meadows Residential Center) has moved. We have been very busy and are excited to announce that we now have 3 smaller (ICF) intermittent care facilities. The new homes are University Estates, Altamonte, and Harner Road Group Homes all located here in Athens County. We also provide waiver services for several homes here in Athens. Below are some quotes from people who live in these homes.

Tom Depue loves his new home and loves living closer to his family members. When a visitor comes to the home they have to ring the doorbell so now he knows when there are visitors in his home.

Patty Naffziger likes being able to relax in her recliner and loves the staff that helps her. She also likes helping get ready for meals so she loves her new big kitchen.

Carolyn Williams enjoys having her own bedroom and being able to go outside and enjoy the beautiful country setting that she now lives in.

Dawn Deisher who lives in a waiver home says she has encountered so many new things and enjoys the independence that she has and being able to do things on her own.

Some of the things they enjoy may seem small to us but that would be because we take the small things for granted. With these new homes Echoing Hills can provide safe and comfortable homes where individuals with disabilities can practice self-advocacy and personal growth.

Our office is located at 528 1/2 Richland Ave and we are always offering employment, volunteer, and internship opportunities.



Working with echoing CONNECTIONS I get to work with so many wonderful individuals. One individual that has really made an impact with me is Brittany Anderson. This young lady is always eager to be involved and always says hello to you when she first sees you in the morning. Brittany is very involved in the community and enjoys doing as much as she can. She participates in bowling in the evenings with

ATCO and outings with echoing CONNECTIONS and Havar RAH. She helps out with the Athens County Community Singers by setting up and cleaning up after rehearsals at eC. She has participated in several service learning projects with Ohio University and Hocking College with echoingCONNECTIONS. When anyone asks Brittany if she wants to go somewhere the typical response is "Yes!" Brittany is willing to try new things, has been involved with a crocheting club at the local library and most recently you can find her at the local D&D club. This young lady is well known in her community as she is not shy about meeting anyone. Brittany is the true definition of a social butterfly.

~ Grace Inboden, Habilitation Coordinator, echoingCONNECTIONS



Tiffany, who attends echoing CONNECTIONS is a hard working young lady, who has many skills and has the drive to learn and improve; she was offered a position with Shagbark Seed and Mill. Tiffany started out filling in on an "as needed" basis, but that grew to a part time position last year. With her employment she has gained so much independence and grown overall in many aspects of her life. When talking with her mother, Karen always responds with how excited she is to see her daughter excited and doing things with greater purpose. Her mother shared the following with me:

"In spite of having many skills, my daughter also faces challenges that have up until now kept her from being successful in a job. The jobs she attempted seemed to be given to her because the employer was willing to 'hire the handicapped', not because they fit her capabilities. After a series of failures I was very cautious about her attempting another job. However, the staff of Echoing Connections offered her the opportunity to try a job that seemed perfect for her and it was! She has now worked for over a year for Shagbark Seed and Mill. She loves her job and takes pride in her work. Even when we are out doing our personal shopping she will go to the Shagbark shelves to be sure all the products are straight and in place. Her success at her job has carried over into other areas of her life. She is happy and more responsible and independent than she has ever been in the past:

To see the pride and joy in Tiffany's face when she tells us about her work, to hear how employees at local stores where Tiffany delivers items for Shagbark look forward to seeing her come in and talk with her. To witness employees at Shagbark ask for her when she is not in town, that tells me that she is valued and a part of the team! It has been so exciting watching her grow, watching her learn and watching her teach.

When Tiffany is not working for Shagbark, she loves sports, watching, participating, anything sports related. She is a member of the Washington County Special Olympics Swim team. Last year Echoing Hills Village sponsored a Copperheads game night and she was invited to throw an opening pitch. There are so many things I could say about Tiffany, but one thing is for sure. this opportunity of employment with Shagbark has allowed everyone in her life to witness her growth and successes.

- Rachel Ulbrich, Director of Adult Services, echoingCONNECTIONS



At Beacon School, it's all about striving to be the best

Beacon School works in cooperation with the five Athens County school districts and their families to provide specialized services to children and adults with developmental disabilities, autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, or those with multiple disabilities. Students who qualify are referred from their local school districts through the special education evaluation process.

Our Early Intervention program serves children who are eligible from birth through age 2. These services are delivered by our developmental specialists, through the interdisciplinary team, and offered to children and families in their homes or an agreed-upon location. At age 3, if the children remain eligible, they are referred to preschool programs in the local school districts or the Integrated Preschool program at Beacon School. Our preschool program combines students with special needs with typically developing peers who act as models for children with speech language delays, social behavior or motor skills challenges. Children transition to the school-age program at age 5 and can continue in the program at Beacon School through age 21, or as long as they remain eligible.

Beacon School has access to a behavior support specialist who works in cooperation with our classroom teachers to develop behavior plans for students with special needs or to provide staff with strategies needed to deal with challenging behaviors. Such plans are developed on an individual basis and allow

students to experience success while at school.

Students also receive extensive therapies from the speech language therapist, occupational therapist and physical therapy assistant.

Our speech therapist uses assistive technology such as the LAMP communication approach on devices and iPads for students who are non-verbal. The LAMP approach uses a series of pictures that allow students to communicate. As the students become more familiar with the device, the number of pictures is increased and the student is able to "talk" in sentences to participate in class activities or to express their wants and needs. Students with the most severe communication delays have access to a variety of switches that allow them total participation.

Our occupational therapist provides direct therapy to increase fine motor skills and self-help skills, plus providing sensory evaluations for students. They address the physical, cognitive, and sensory components of performance in school. This allows students to participate in academics, play, leisure, and social activities, self-care skills and transition to work skills.

Our physical therapist and the physical therapy assistant deliver therapy that enhances students' mobility and gross motor development. They treat students through exercise and gait and balance training to regain movement. The focus is on mobility, safe efficient access and participation in educational activities and routines. The occupational and physical therapist both consult with families and classroom



Adaptive Physical Education Instructor Miriah Park works with student Haven Tivner in the pool. Students at Beacon School enjoy pool time at least twice a week for both physical therapy needs and also recreation.

teachers on a regular basis as well.

Beacon School is fortunate to have one full-time and one part-time nurse who collaborate with the child's medical professional to provide medications to students throughout the day as prescribed, and tend to any medical issues that may occur throughout a normal operating day.

The school offers an Adapted Physical Education teacher dedicated to promoting strength and agility through specially designed activities, as well as providing therapeutic and recreational swimming in the indoor pool.

Students in the Intermediate II and Young Adult classrooms are provided the additional services of a transition coordinator to develop the functional and social skills necessary to be successful on the job as they enter the workforce.

Beacon School collaborates with a number of agencies that provide specialty services to our students. This past summer, we were fortunate to team up with Ohio University's Kids on Campus to offer a five-week, integrated camp at the school. Students were provided academic activities, breakfast, lunch and snacks, swimming, and many other fun activities throughout the day.

We also partner with Ohio University students to provide

music therapy engaging our students in singing, dancing and drumming. In return, Beacon School is a placement for practicing music therapists as well as Intervention Specialists attending the university.

We were very privileged to be awarded the VSA Ohio & Ohio Arts Council Grant again this school year. This grant provides the school with a resident artist who works with our students to express themselves through art projects and illustrations. Our resident artist was instrumental in creating Pete the Cat, who travels to elementary schools and local businesses all over the county to instill a love for reading.

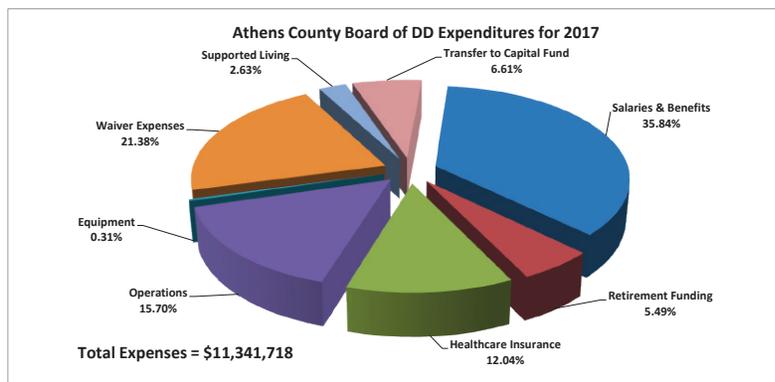
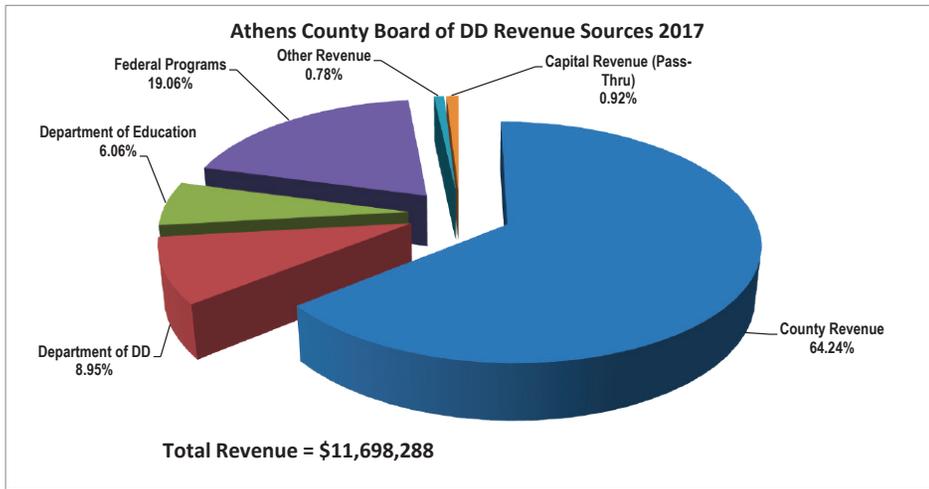
This year we will feature an Art Show and Ice Cream Social to showcase student art that has been completed during the year. Our students also participate in preparing and cooking healthy meals through the Live Healthy Appalachia grant. And finally, we have our own Beacon Singers, who practice very hard on a weekly basis with the purpose of providing concerts several times a year to students, parents and members of the community.

We are thankful our students have the opportunity to develop a love for music and performance.

Beacon School has a devoted staff of administrators, teachers, therapists, teacher assistants and paraprofessionals, who truly love what they do. Working in collaboration with our 52 families, we strive to provide the best educational experience for children and adults who require an adapted curriculum and specialized instruction, thus enhancing their quality of life.



Beacon teacher Ciara Jenkins, along with students Karman Jenkins and Ronnie Riley, spend some time on one of Beacon's new playgrounds.



ACBDD's financial situation...

The Athens County Board of DD continues to increase the number of individuals served by waivers in Athens County. At the same time, the Board is carefully managing its resources to ensure fiscal responsibility. Calendar year 2017 ended with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$356,570.

The Board was able to replenish its Capital Fund in the amount of \$750,000, allowing us to explore options for a new or renovated

space to house the Service and Support Administration Department.

In November of 2017, the Athens community passed a renewal levy helping us secure the operations of the County Board for a term of eight years. As we continue to serve more individuals each year, it is imperative that we continue the judicious management of our resources so that funds are available throughout that timeframe.

SSA dept....

Continued from page 12

children with developmental disabilities to have an opportunity to participate in Kids on Campus. This was a wonderful chance to meet other kids in their community, as well as learn and grow with days full of education and activities.

Addison and Sienna said their favorite part was "meeting people, helping younger kids, and the science activities." Grant and Asa said "swimming in the pool with their friends was the best part," but they also enjoyed "the science stuff and reading." They all agreed it was

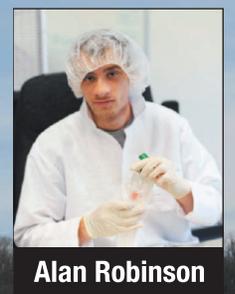
a delightful experience and wanted to come back next year.

It was wonderful to see Dr. Kevin Davis, ACBDD superintendent, offer the Kids on Campus experience to all children with developmental disabilities, not just those who attend Beacon School. What a brilliant way to partner with our community.

Athens County has a long tradition of supporting people with developmental disabilities. These are only a few examples. Clearly, new stories are happening every day. Thank you for your support.

Individuals with developmental disabilities who are in need of services can apply by contacting the Service and Support offices at (740) 592-6006.

Partners making a difference



PersonnelPlus is a professional and logical solution to your employment needs.

ACBDD/HAPCAP enjoy key transportation partnership

Transportation barriers can hinder community members from employment, medical appointments, shopping, social gatherings and educational opportunities. With the support of Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD), Hocking Athens Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP) continues to work to alleviate these barriers in Athens County and beyond through a variety of transportation programs that operate in Athens County.

- The Athens Mobility Management Project
- Athens On-Demand Transit
- Athens Public Transit
- GoBus

The Athens Mobility Management program is dedicated to helping community members access and utilize local transportation options. The Mobility Management Program works with all transportation providers in the region to connect community members to the transportation options that could best serve their needs. With free travel training, community members with a developmental disability can learn how to ride the bus, navigate the bike path, or take a taxi independently by going along with the Athens County mobility manager and learning through a step-by-step experience.

Athens On-Demand Transit (AODT) is a door-to-door transportation service that provides accessible and affordable rides for just \$2 one-way anywhere in Athens County. AODT



Students from Federal Hocking Middle School's special education program wait for the bus on East State Street during their travel training session, led by Katie Schmitzer, the Athens Mobility coordinator (not pictured).

works with ACBDD, ATCO, and PersonnelPlus as one of their major partners to provide rides to individuals with a developmental disability who need to travel to places of employment,

medical appointments, work, the grocery store and social events. Although AODT is open to everyone, priority is given to seniors and individuals with disabilities. In 2017, AODT

provided 9,764 rides of which 3,480 were for individuals with a developmental disability.

Athens Public Transit is a fixed-route bus system that currently services Athens city, Chauncey and The Plains. Every vehicle is handicap accessible, and APT offers discounted passes for individuals with a disability. APT utilizes a real-time mapping system, DoubleMap, to make riding the bus easier, and the drivers can answer any questions riders may have. With stops at major employers and local medical facilities and businesses, individuals with a developmental disability can utilize the bus for a variety of reasons. In 2017, APT provided 436,109 rides, 22,687 of which transported elderly and disabled community members.

GoBus is an inter-city bus system that serves the state of Ohio. Riders gain access to medical facilities, educational institutions and fun activities throughout the state. Organizations can utilize the GoBus for social day trips to museums, parks and more. Each bus is accessible and can accommodate two wheel chairs at a time. Purchasing tickets and mapping out trips can easily be completed online, and the GoBus help center is just a call away to assist community members.

With the continued support of ACBDD, HAPCAP is able to provide these services and strive to support independent community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities.

What's Team Heart and Sole Athens?

Team Heart and Sole Athens is a non-profit volunteer organization that assists people with disabilities in Athens County. Its mission is to provide people with disabilities, their families and friends inclusive opportunities to participate in endurance racing events while building authentic relationships through teamwork.

Individuals with disabilities are the athletes who compete in events, and they are partnered with teammates who support them in the event. With the use of adaptive equipment to support the athletes, everyone can participate in events they never thought possible.

The Athens Chapter is in its fourth season in Athens and is an affiliate of the Columbus area Team Heart and Sole. If you would like to become a Team Heart and Sole member, check out the www.teamheartandsole.com website. "Together... Yes we can" is the motto that guides Team Heart and Sole. They are always looking for more community members to join the team. Feel free to contact team coordinators Paul Richard at paulrichard@columbus.rr.com, or Autumn Brown at autb77@yahoo.com for more information.



Deidra Carlton and her support teammates participate in a recent Team Heart and Sole event. Team Heart and Sole exists to provide inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in endurance racing events, while building authentic relationships through teamwork.

An effective match

Creative Foundations & Passion Works Studio

In August 2017, Passion Works Studio celebrated the first day of its operation under the management of Creative Foundations, a private day habilitation provider. It was a bittersweet transfer, particularly for staff of ACBDD and artists who have been with the program since its beginnings at ATCO nearly 20 years ago. These changes, however, open up new opportunities for the studio to have a greater impact on the community, including extended hours and additional programming. The successful transfer can be credited to ACBDD staff, Creative Foundations and community partners working collaboratively and cooperatively to ensure a smooth transition.

Creative Foundations was founded in 2001 to provide supports to individuals with developmental disabilities by providing residential services. In 2005, they opened their first adult day Service program in Knox County. Creative Foundations has continued to grow, now serving people with developmental disabilities in five different counties in central and southeast Ohio.

The mission of Creative Foundations is to provide individuals with independence, choice, opportunity and security. They strive to intensify a commitment to pro-social values such as kindness, helpfulness, personal responsibility, equality and respect for others. These are qualities they believe are essentials to leading humane and productive lives in society.

Passion Works Studio was founded in September 1998 through an Artist in Residency program with Patty Mitchell. She began with a nine-month residency with the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities funded by the Ohio Arts Council. Mitchell was invited to collaboratively make art with the members of ATCO Adult Services, the sheltered workshop in Athens County. Through this grant, the Passion Works model of collaborative and explorative making grew and changed lives. In 2008, Passion Works grew so much that it was moved into its own space in uptown Athens.

Passion Works Studio is dedicated to creating opportunities for people with and without developmental differences to explore, collaborate, and socially connect through the process of making art. Passion Works' mission is to inspire and liberate the human spirit through the arts.

In 2017, ATCO sought a new provider to operate within Passion Works. Creative Foundations was chosen to provide an integrated day service program within the walls of Passion Works Studio. Together Creative Foundations and Passion Works Studio provide a creative, all-inclusive atmosphere for artists with and without perceived disabilities to collaborate and share in making. All community members are invited to work, create, and build partnerships along with Creative Foundations and Passion Works.



David



Noah

Words from our artists...

"I love being able to come up to Passion Works and CF for full days and take advantage of all the services. This program makes me feel fabulous!" – *Sarina Winner*

"I love the atmosphere here at Passion Works and CF. I enjoy developing new skills and I hope I continue to grow here!" – *Sadie Hedges*

"I enjoy making art and being with my friends, plus the flexible schedules and options for me." – *Troy Goins*



Devun



Sarina