

First-ever “March on Court Street” kicks off county’s Developmental Disability Awareness Month



Glenda Murray, foreground, walks in the region’s first-ever “March on Court Street” for Disability Awareness.

A bit of rain did not prevent the nearly 100 people from participating in the "March on Court Street" to start off Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Athens County.

Every year, ACBDD hosts events throughout the month. This year was our first march ever, and people came from all over southeast Ohio. The event also attracted representatives from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, who helped us document the event.

Dr. Kevin Davis, ACBDD Superintendent, said about

200 to 300 people were originally expected to attend from around the region, but due to rainy conditions, many couldn’t make it. Still, a sizeable crowd turned out for the march despite the light showers, with ponchos and umbrellas at the ready.

Davis said the rainy weather during the march was almost symbolic of people with disabilities.

“Their life is often filled with challenges — many challenges that most people can’t even understand — and the rain today is kind of symbolic of that,” Davis said. “No matter what kind of challenges, people

“March on Court Street” cont...

with developmental disabilities always see the positive side and they’re always willing to work and overcome, and the fact that there’s a little rain today doesn’t keep anybody from getting out here and celebrating.”

Pam Cline, who lives with a disability, participated in the march to show support for ATCO (Advocacy, Training, Careers and Opportunities), ACBDD’s adult services program.

Cline brought her own handmade sign to the march, which read: “I am helpful, I am creative.”

Glenda Murray, who also attended the march, said she was excited to participate and to raise awareness. “I’m also a person with a disability, and I have a

son that has a disability. He’s walking in it, too,” Murray said, adding that it’s “very good” to start the Month off with such an event, and that she hopes ACBDD will continue the marches in the future.

“I just like helping other people stand up for themselves,” she said.

At the end of the march, participants gathered in front of the Athens County Courthouse, where Athens Mayor Steve Patterson and County Commissioner Lenny Eliason each read a proclamation declaring March National Disabilities Awareness Month in the city and county, respectively.

We thank everyone who participated and who made this event possible.



March attendees gathered at the fourth-floor entrance of Baker University Center, where the march began.



Daniel Burton beams with his own handmade signs during the march.



This year was the region’s first march ever, and people came from all over southeast Ohio.



ACBDD’s Gwen Brooks, Becky Martin, and Steve Kramer march together.

ACBDD's Developmental Disability Awareness Festival breaks record with over 300 attendees



The new format of this year's DD Awareness Festival at the Athens Community Center focused on the community.

More than 300 people attended the ACBDD's annual Developmental Disability Awareness Festival at the Athens Community Center. And nearly 50 different agencies from the state, county, and city were also present.

The event is part of the ACBDD's numerous activities during March, which is Developmental Disability Awareness Month. The purpose of this event is to bring the disabilities community and the broader community together to celebrate all of the resources that exist in Athens County that support individuals with disabilities. Many of the entities have been coming to this event for years, and we had a few new ones, too.

In previous years, the festival had a formal program with speakers and presenters. This year, the event's format was changed to conform to the

statewide theme, "Celebrate COMMUNITY."

"We're underscoring the UNITY in our COMMUNITY, and we really wanted this year to be more of a celebration," said Dr. Kevin Davis, ACBDD Superintendent.

This meant community partners were given free reign of the space and encouraged to make their informational tables interactive. All of our community partners were incredibly creative, and it made for an electrifying evening.

The Athens County Community Singers, led by Director Stephanie Morris, performed various songs during the festival, as well.

The evening was full of reconnecting with friends and meeting new ones. We thank everyone who attended and made the evening possible. We most definitely felt the unity in our community.

DD Awareness Festival cont...



Athens County Community Singers Director Stephanie Morris speaks to the crowd in between songs during the festival.



Tracy Gillum, a bus driver for ACBDD, spent the evening operating Buster, the friendly school bus. As always, Buster was a hit throughout the festival.



Dr. Kevin Davis, ACBDD Superintendent, speaks with the press during the event.



ACBDD staff members enjoy one of the many interactive tables during the festival. This one featured a photo booth.

DD Awareness Festival cont...



Staff of ATCO provided coffee for the evening. As a way to recognize ATCO's final year in operation and celebrate its service to the community, staff also displayed a collection of photos from over the years for attendees to look through and share memories.



Tami Harter, of Harter Hill Stables and of ACBDD, and her horse were another highlight of the evening.



A youngster enjoys one of the interactive displays.



The PersonnelPlus Advocacy and Advisory Council offered snacks and beverages for attendees.

March declared Developmental Disability Awareness Month in Athens County and Athens City



In late February, the Athens County Commissioners (at left) and the Athens City Mayor (at right) officially proclaimed March Developmental Disability Awareness Month in Athens County and Athens City, respectively. We thank Commissioners Lenny Eliason, Charlie Adkins, and Chris Chmiel, and Athens Mayor Steve Patterson for supporting what we do and the individuals we assist.

Developmental Disability Awareness & Advocacy Day

As part of DD Awareness Month, several Athens County individuals participated in statewide activities as well as local ones. We are proud of the individuals who took the time to travel to the Columbus Statehouse for the 2018 Developmental Disability Awareness & Advocacy Day. Thank you for speaking up for yourselves and for others.



Giving back to the community through Good Works

As part of our DD Awareness Month activities, our organization sought opportunities to give back to the community. We had the privilege of sponsoring the Friday Night Life Dinner for Good Works, Inc. We appreciate the opportunity to support this great program, which has provided meals and a sense of community for the past 25 years. We thank them for allowing us to be a part of it.



Board training stresses the importance of respect

It is part of our mission to educate the community about what we do and who we assist. And so, as part of DD Awareness Month, we invited Glenda Murray to provide a training to our board members.

She gave an amazing and inspiring presentation. She talked about how growing up with a “disability” has affected her life. She shared how it would make her feel when others would call her derogatory terms such as “retarded,” “special,” or “stupid.” She explained how she would often feel scared, alone, and bullied.

Glenda talked about how during middle school she would have to be at a table alone because no other children would want to be near her. She even shared how it makes her feel now, as an adult, to still be called a “kid” sometimes.

Operating under the belief that all people should be treated equally and with respect, Glenda is an amazing advocate for others. She has spent her life



advocating for others here in Athens, and in Columbus on a statewide level.

Glenda’s take away message was that people should focus on abilities not disabilities. And that everyone should support and respect people with different abilities. Thank you Glenda for your advocacy efforts for others. Thank you for having the courage to stand up and share your past experiences. We all can learn so much from them.

Athens NEWS Special Edition focuses on DD Awareness

As you’ve read through the first few pages of this edition of Newsline, you know we do a number of activities to commemorate the importance of Developmental Disability Awareness Month. In addition, we coordinate the publication of The Athens NEWS Special Edition.

This insert has been one of our most popular activities over the past eight years. It helps us keep the community informed and educated on what we do and why we do it.

The theme “Celebrate CommUNITY” carried through all of our activities, and the insert was no exception. We accomplished our goal of highlighting our agency and our community partnerships. This edition became our largest Special Edition Insert ever. We hope you had a chance to see it. And thank you to everyone who made this publication possible.



APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

join us in
CELEBRATION



awareness

action

acceptance

inclusion

appreciation

Autism Society invites all to celebrate Autism Awareness Month

Nearly a quarter century ago, the Autism Society launched a nationwide effort to promote autism awareness, inclusion and self-determination for all, and assure that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life. This year, the Autism Society wants to go beyond simply promoting autism awareness to encouraging friends and collaborators to become partners in the movement toward acceptance and appreciation.

The Autism Society, and all of us, want to get one step closer to a society where those with ASDs are truly valued for their unique talents and gifts.

Join us in celebration for 2018 National Autism Awareness Month! National Autism Awareness Month represents an excellent opportunity to promote autism awareness, autism acceptance and to draw attention to the tens of thousands facing an autism diagnosis each year.

How is it celebrated?

- Presidential/Congressional declarations
- Online events and activities

- Local events and activities through Affiliates
- Partner opportunities

What can you do?

- Sign up for e-newsletter Autism Matters (found on the Autism Society website).
- Share your experience/stories with NAAM or autism with us. Use #StandUpForAutism to join the conversation.
- Connect with your neighborhood. Many Autism Society local affiliates hold special events in their communities throughout the month of April.
- Put on the Puzzle! The Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon is the most recognized symbol of the autism community in the world. Show your support for people with autism by wearing the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon.





Floors at Beacon School get a makeover

Over the winter break, Beacon School replaced the original tile in the cafeteria, which was over 30 years old, and the carpet in the hallway. It looks amazing. The changes make the school a more welcoming and warmer space. We thank the ACBDD board and staff for making these upgrades possible.



“Good-bye” party for one special guy — Mr. Brenton

Beacon School had to say good-bye to Mr. Brenton, one of our many beloved students. His family will be moving out of state.



Staff and students at Beacon School hosted a special farewell party for him. We wanted to make sure he knew we will miss him dearly and wish him well in the Sunshine State.

Updated Beacon School calendar for students

Due to the number of snow days this year, the last day of Beacon School for students has been moved to June 4th.





Valentine's Party: A lovely good time



The annual Valentine's Party was a huge hit. We had music, a dance party, snacks, and lovely decorations. Thank you to Heather Jolley and the Primary I classroom for planning this great event.





Lots of “Amore” in the air at ATCO’s Valentine’s Dinner & Jazz Night



Around 100 people attended the inaugural Amore Valentine’s Dinner & Jazz Night at the Athens Community Center. An evening of cool jazz and delicious Italian food made the event truly one for the ages. As one of many integrated events sponsored by ACBDD, the evening was another opportunity to demonstrate how simple integration can be. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to make this a romantic and relaxing event.





New “ATCO Idol” format debuts April 5 at Stuart’s Opera House



Participants from last year’s ATCO Idol stand on stage at Stuart’s Opera House for their finale.

The 2018 edition of ATCO Idol, the county's most popular talent show that’s organized by Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities, is set for April 5 at Stuart’s Opera House, 6-8 p.m., with a brand new format. The event is free and open to the public. Doors open at 5:30.

Audience members can expect unique performances of classic favorites like “Keep Your Hands to Yourself,” “Ain’t Nothin’ But a Hound Dog,” and “This Land is Your Land.”

The new feature of this year’s ATCO Idol is that this year, several local musicians without disabilities will be paired with performers with disabilities. This new format will create a more integrated experience for everyone involved, according to Autumn Brown, of ACBDD and organizer of the event. She added this will help make the county an even more inclusive community.

“This evening is first and foremost about highlighting the talents and passions of individuals,” Brown said. “And by broadening our participation to others in the community, we’re creating opportunities for lasting friendships across abilities to be created.”

ACBDD’s ATCO Idol started eight years ago featuring karaoke-style musical performances done exclusively by individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Every ATCO Idol since then has grown and evolved. This year is the first time local musicians without disabilities are invited to partner.

Event Details:

Day: Thursday, April 5
Time: 6 p.m.—8 p.m. (doors open at 5:30)
Location: Stuart’s Opera House



At regional tournament, Special Olympics Bowling Team takes home 17 medals



Congratulations to the Special Olympics Bowling Team on yet another successful outing at the Region 8 Singles Tournament in Marietta. 17 of our Athens County bowlers competed—4 women and 13 men. Everyone brought home a medal—7 gold, 6 silver, and 4 bronze medals. Well done!

ATCO Forum updates community on Transition Plan

Several stakeholders attended the first ATCO Transition Forum of 2018. Information detailing the three-year transition plan was shared, along with the many supportive processes ACBDD has created to assist individuals and their families. The priority of the board is to ensure individuals and families are well aware of the changes, choices, and timelines. The ATCO Transition, in the third year of a three-year plan, is on schedule. We will host four open forums



this year. It is important that we continue to openly share details about the transition with everyone interested in what is happening and the plans for the future.



Employment First Initiative turns 6

In March, Ohio’s Employment First Initiative celebrated its 6th anniversary. This executive order, signed by the Governor in 2012, states community employment should be the preferred outcome for all adults with developmental disabilities.

ACBDD is committed to community employment. We are fortunate to have

Doug Mitchell as Director of Employment Options and PersonnelPlus.

Please take the time to learn more about PersonnelPlus and how they assist people. Also, be sure to thank Doug Mitchell and his talented, professional staff at PersonnelPlus for their service and dedication to Athens County.



From left to right, Doug Mitchell with Dr. Davis.

Please welcome our organization’s recent hires!



Amy Goldsberry – Transition Coordinator

Amy started with the agency as our new Transition Coordinator in early March.



Caitlyn Lowe — Substitute Instructor Assistant for Beacon School

Caitlyn started with the agency as a Beacon School Substitute Instructor Assistant in early January.



Anna Nagy-Heinrich – Substitute Instructor for Beacon School

Anna will be starting as a Substitute Instructor with Beacon School in April.



Michelle Scarbrough – Substitute Adult Services Aide

Michelle started as a Substitute Adult Services Aide in mid-January. She also works for Buckeye Community Services. At ACBDD, she’s looking forward to meeting new people and making new connections. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her two boys.



Paul Scarmack – Substitute Instructor for Beacon School

Paul is one of our newest Substitute Instructors for Beacon School. It is anticipated he will start some time this month.

Welcome 2018 ACBDD Board Members



From left to right, 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, Board Superintendent.

We hope you will join us in welcoming the 2018 Board Members of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities. These amazing people volunteer an enormous amount of time ensuring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive the highest quality of services in Athens County. We appreciate them and everything they do.

Two new board members bring unique expertise

We are delighted to announce we have two new members of the ACBDD board. Both joined at the start of 2018 to fill the vacancies left when two terms ended in 2017. The new members are Michelle Oestrike, President of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce; and Sherri Oliver, Executive Director of Community Health Programs and Area Health Education at the Ohio University's Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. Both bring extensive experience in business and public administration. We are honored to have them and thank them for their dedication.



Michelle Oestrike



Sherri Oliver

Parting board member recognized for her service

During a recent board meeting, we acknowledged Jennifer DeForest for her six years of service as a board member. She served two terms, 2010-2013 and again from 2014-2017. Here she poses with Dr. Kevin Davis, ACBDD Superintendent.



ACBDD formally acknowledges work of Levy Committee



From left to right, Dr. Davis, Jarod Soto, and Margaret Demko.

From left to right, Dr. Davis, Noriko Kantake, and Margaret Demko.

ACBDD board members recently passed a resolution of appreciation for the hard work of our Levy Committee members. Jarod Soto, Chairman; and Noriko Kantake, Treasurer, were both acknowledged at Kroger in Athens, where Jarod works.

Both of their efforts played a significant part in the successful passage of our levy. We appreciate their help, dedication, and commitment. Pictured at left is Jarod and at right is Noriko. Both are posing with Dr. Kevin Davis, Superintendent; and Margaret Demko, ACBDD Board President.

It's time to **Fix the List** — www.FixTheList.info

People with developmental disabilities and their families have repeatedly said Ohio's waiting list for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers is overly complex and in need of simplification.

The current waiting list confuses people with developmental disabilities and their families, misleads advocates, and hinders efforts by policymakers to direct resources to where they are needed most.

To better serve Ohioans with developmental disabilities, several organizations have been collaborating for more than 15 months to modernize Ohio's failed Medicaid Waiver waiting list.

Find out more by visiting:
www.FixTheList.info.



ACBDD in the news

Popular ‘ATCO Idol’ event has new twist this year

The Athens NEWS—April 2, 2018

We can learn things we don’t expect at Disability Festival

The Athens NEWS—March 25, 2018

DD Festival shines a light on community’s resources

The Athens Messenger—March 22, 2018

The Athens NEWS Special Edition: DD Awareness

The Athens NEWS—March 8, 2018

ACBDD march defies the rain

The Athens Messenger—March 4, 2018

Marching into March

The Athens Messenger—March 2, 2018

ACBDD coordinates region’s first-ever march for DD Awareness

DODD’s Pipeline Weekly—March 2, 2018



Birthdays:

Mark Shrivvers —Feb. 11

Wendy Cremeans —Feb. 16

Ron Kelley —Feb. 20

Audra Harrison —Feb. 22

Kevin Davis —March 3

Jerry Swackhamer — March 3

Jayne Hart —March 5

Amy Goldsberry —March 6

Suzanne Perry —March 6

Jeff Dolman —March 11

Lyn Justis —March 12

Bethany Rivera —March 18

Tami Harter — March 20

Kathleen Carlson —April 11

Mary Ann Smathers —April 14

Susan Weaver —April 26



Anniversaries from Feb-April:

Sue Orth —16 years

Julie Jones —3 years

Clayton Ray —5 years

Jennie Booth —3 years

Jaqueline White —16 years

Doug Mitchell —14 years

Emily Wilson —20 year

Beth Graham —22 years

Barbara North-Moss —14 years

Katie Evans —2 years

Tyler Sisson —1 year

Kris Dunlap —3 years

Jamie Hart —17 years

Mary Howell —5 years



Employment Opportunity at Beacon School, apply by April 13

Instructors, Intervention Specialist K-12

Beacon School is our special educational service provider for the county’s five local school districts. We seek instructors who are dedicated to enhancing the lives of students age 5-21 with exceptional needs and have a passion for serving a population diverse in social, educational, and economic backgrounds and levels. Wage is competitive and position comes with comprehensive benefits. Schedule follows the academic year.

To see full job description, visit athenscbdd.org.

Some qualifications:

- Ohio Department of Education Licensure, Intervention Specialist- K-12.
- Knowledge of multiple disabilities, child development, community-based resources, educational and adaptive equipment and devices.
- Computer proficiency with ability/skill in instructional technology tools.
- Possess good observational skills coupled with the ability to define problems, collect and analyze data and patterns, and draw valid conclusions.



Job duties include, but are not limited to:

- Manage the development and implementation of a comprehensive academic and life skills-based Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for each student. Prepare and deliver educational curriculum as well as social and recreational experiences in accordance with student IEP’s. Provide direction, training and leadership to assigned classroom instructor assistants and educational aides.
- Conduct weekly student evaluations; maintain documentation, reports and records. Prepare progress reports detailing student IEP progress.



To apply, send a cover letter, resume and list of at least three professional references to personnel@athenscbdd.org or complete an application at Beacon School, 801 W Union St, Athens, OH 45701. Internal applications will be given priority in screening and selection.

Working conditions may exist that do not normally exist in the occupation of a public employee. These conditions may include: exposure to blood borne pathogens, communicable diseases, potential infectious materials, hazardous chemicals and/or aggressive behaviors.

ACBDD is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer with a strong commitment to building and maintaining a diverse workforce.