

DD Awareness Month kicks off with march on Court St.



Students proudly display their posters made for the 2nd annual “March on Court Street” for Disability Awareness.

Hundreds of individuals and almost a dozen organizations took to Court Street, laughing and walking hand-in-hand to celebrate the start of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

This happened during the community’s 2nd Annual March on Court Street for developmental disability awareness. The march was attended by groups such as Beacon School, Ohio University’s American Sign Language Club, Muskinghm County DD, Athens County People First, students and teachers from Athens Middle School, and the Athens Photo Project.

Christi Hysell, accessibilities coordinator for the

Athens Photo Project, said she was attending the march for the first time. She has a disability herself and was there representing the photo project.

“I didn’t expect this much turnout,” she said. “I’m very excited. It’s like a big family reunion. We’ve got photo-ops over here, conversations all over the place. It’s fun! This is what it’s all about.”

Supt. Kevin Davis said the event means a lot to advocates and individuals with developmental disabilities.

“All these people are here because they want to help raise awareness for disabilities,” Kevin said.

March on Court St. cont.

“Last year it rained really hard, and we had 100 people. This year, it’s cold and snowy. It really doesn’t matter to this group. They just want to get out and support any kind of inclusive effort that they can. We’re just very proud to be here.”

“This is a proud moment for Athens, too” Kevin continued. “Athens is a great city, very inclusive, very innovative. Events like this just help further the cause.”

Members of the various groups marched from Ohio University’s Baker Center to the Athens County Courthouse. Once there, marchers gathered to hear words from Autumn Brown, the ACBDD’s director of Integrate Athens; Athens Mayor Steve Patterson; State Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville); and William Peacock, chairman of Athens County People First.

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**— Christi Hysell
Community member**



2019 Awareness Festival was our “biggest and best” yet



This year’s awareness festival at the Athens Community Center was our “biggest and best” yet. Hundreds turned out to visit with the nearly 50 community organizations that set up tables to showcase various services.

This year’s theme was technology, with organizations featuring a wide variety of technological advancements made to help individuals with developmental disabilities live independently, such as in-home security cameras.

Other organizations educated the general public about their services, such as transportation services, the Athens Public Library and various health centers.

The event spanned two hours and included a performance from the Athens County Community Singers — a nonprofit choral group for all people with and without disabilities, which is led by director Stephanie Morris.

“I love getting to perform and showcase all the hard work these folks practice every week,” Stephanie said. “I love celebrating and supporting everyone in our community at this event.”

“Athens is a leader in Southeast Ohio as a progressive, integrated and inclusive city,” said Supt. Kevin Davis. “I’m happy to be a part of that and highlight the agencies that make it all possible.”

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— Kevin Davis

ACBDD Superintendent

DD Awareness Month activities, cont. Athens well represented at DD and Advocacy Awareness Day in Columbus

Several Athens County residents participated in the 2019 Developmental Disability Awareness & Advocacy Day at the Statehouse. Pictured at right are Grant from State Rep. Jay Edwards' office along with PPAAC members Sarina Winner, Sylvia Fields and Dale Ellis. Also joining the PPAAC members was Dara Walburn, State Advocacy Council member. Thank you all for representing Athens County so well!



WOUB's Conversation from Studio B highlights DD Awareness Month

We were grateful to be invited onto WOUB's Conversations from Studio B program, hosted by Dr. Carolyn Bailey Lewis. During our great conversation, we talked about the ACBDD, DD Awareness Month and our plans to celebrate. We appreciate every opportunity to talk about who we are, what we do, and our efforts to increase awareness in the community. Thank you for the opportunity, Dr. Lewis.



Athens NEWS publishes 9th annual ACBDD Special Edition

Hopefully, you had a chance to see our 2019 Special Edition in The Athens NEWS. The edition was full of wonderful examples of how we promote integration and inclusion throughout the county. This was truly a team project, and we thank everyone who made this edition possible. If you did not have a chance to get a paper copy, a link to the digital version can be found on our website, athenscbdd.org.



Envisioning an integrated and inclusive Athens County



DD Awareness Month activities, cont.

SAVE THE DATE: Integrate Athens Open House scheduled for April 2nd

Join us for the official Open House for the ACBDD’s new division – the Office of Integrate Athens. Meet our team, learn about advocacy opportunities, and see what Integrate Athens has to offer. This is our final activity planned in celebration of DD Awareness Month. The event will be Tuesday, April 2, from 3-5 p.m. at the office, located at 9033 Lavelle Road. Light refreshments will be provided.



More about the Office of Integrate Athens

Integrate Athens is the unique division of the ACBDD. It will help our agency, our community, and the people we serve learn more about integration and inclusion. We just recently finalized the set up of our new office. We greatly appreciate our community’s support along the way. We look forward to taking the lead in learning what inclusion looks, feels, and sounds like. Below is information about two new groups that are open to anyone with an interest.



Advocacy Empower Hour is a group that is open to anyone interested in advocating for issues that impact people with developmental disabilities. This group meets the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 3 p.m. at the Office of Integrate Athens.



Food for Thought is a monthly meeting that brings providers and community partners together with advocates to share what they are doing and identifying people’s interests. The group meets the first Tuesday of each month at noon at the Office of Integrate Athens.

More about the Office of Integrate Athens, cont.

Staff from this office will also manage ATCO Idol, Tuesday Night Rec, and Wednesday League Bowling. GoodLife learning will be facilitated from this office, as well, along with increased advocacy efforts that will be guided by the people we serve and focusing the issues they would like to address. We will also support the FANs program, community partners, and connect Day Habs to community events and resources to provide meaningful integrated experiences to the people they serve. There is more to come from this unique office. Be sure to stay tuned!

Special Olympics Bowling team takes home 14 medals

At their recent Special Olympics competition in Marietta, our league bowling team did an amazing job. They were so successful, they took home a total of 14 medals—seven gold and seven silver medals. Well done!



Save These Dates

May 8



“Athens Connects” will be an event at the Market on State on May 8th from 11am to 2pm. People will learn about the various resources and opportunities the county has to offer. To learn more, contact Tina Wilson at cwilson@athenscbdd.org.

May 23



The next ATCO Idol, the most popular talent show in the county, will be May 23 at Stuart’s Opera House. For more information, contact Leslie Perry or Chris Biester at (740) 541-9600.

World Down Syndrome Day 2019—#RockYourSocksAthens

World Down Syndrome Day was March 21st. To help celebrate and raise awareness, we invited everyone to wear their most colorful, spunky socks on this day. This was in celebration of people with Down syndrome and their unique ability to make our world brighter. We had approximately 100 people, organizations, businesses, and civic groups participate by posting their pictures on Facebook under the hashtag #RockYourSocksAthens. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Some Beacon staff and friends



Melissa Greenlee



Erica Williams



OUCU



Shawna Stump and team



Jill Watson



Career Connections



Sunrise Rotary



Echoing Hills of SE Ohio



“I believe in you” profile—Dara Walburn

In an effort to improve our services, the ACBDD’s management team discussed the importance of telling people, “I believe in you.”

This simple phrase lets a person know they matter and that they are valued. We even took a pledge to agree to share this message more often.

We highlighted this effort in last month’s newsletter. This month, we share our inaugural “I believe in you” profile, which features Dara Walburn.

Dara is an incredible young woman who has been advocating for herself since she was 5 years old. Currently, she is serving her second term as the Southeast Ohio Representative on the Ohio Governor’s DD Council, where she is also the Chair of Public Policy.

As a part of DD Awareness Month, Dara participated in Advocacy Day at the Statehouse. She spoke to the crowd of over 350 people about her work serving on the DD Council, advocacy, and what this work means to her.

Dara got the crowd excited about legislation day and encouraged people to talk to



Dara poses with the new DODD Director Jeff Davis at the Statehouse on Advocacy Day.

their legislators.

We believe in the power of self-advocates, and **we believe in you, Dara**. Thank you for your continued work for your own benefit and for the benefit of others.

ATCO Legacy Fund proposals due April 1

The RFP for the ATCO Legacy Fund is on the Athens County Foundation website. Proposals are due April 1. Questions and submissions should go directly to Jesse Stock, Program Director of the Athens County Foundation. He can be reached by emailing jesse@athensfoundation.org or by calling (740) 594-6061.





Albany VFW hands off \$8,000 to PTA

\$8,000? Yes, \$8,000! Earlier this month, the VFW Post 9893 of Albany handed off the proceeds from their recent fundraiser, the Polar Bear Plunge. It was the first year they organized the event and raised an amazing \$8,000. All of the proceeds went directly to the school’s PTA. Thank you so much!!



Beacon School students sport new donated jackets



Thank you to Mr. Alfred Crow (Rebecca Martin’s father) for buying all the students at Beacon School these sweet jackets. What a great gesture by this awesome, kind, and generous man! The students recently posed together in their new jackets in the school gym. Thank you again, Mr. Crow!!

Beacon hosts special education planning meeting



Beacon School hosted the first-ever county-wide planning meeting to help improve our special education services with our partners. Superintendents and Special Education Directors from Nelsonville York, Alexander, Federal Hocking, Trimble, Tri-County Career Center, the Athens-Meigs ESC, and the Athens City Schools attended. Thanks to all who helped as we move towards providing the highest quality of educational services in Athens County. What an amazing group of educators.

Employment Options &



PersonnelPlus
 Employment Services
Still the one in Athens County after 30 years!

Chester wins GEM (Gong the Extra Mile) Award from Holzer Clinic

Let us take a moment to celebrate Chester! Congratulations to Chester for receiving the GEM (Going the Extra Mile) Award at Holzer Clinic of Athens.

In the narrative of the award it states: "Chester is always very polite and takes time when he sees you to say hello or ask if there is anything he can do for us."

Congratulations, Chester. We are proud of you.





Civitan bench rehomed at new SSA office

We are happy to share that the Civitan bench donated to the ACBDD and previously located at the ATCO building has been rehomed. It is now located at the new SSA office in The Plains.

The Athens Civitan Club is one of thousands nationwide that have a focus on projects involving individuals with developmental disabilities. We appreciate this group and all that they do for our community. Thank you, Civitan Club!



ACBDD in the news

Month of activities planned for DD Awareness Month

The Athens Messenger—February 28, 2019

The Athens NEWS ACBDD Special Edition

The Athens NEWS—March 7, 2019

DD Awareness month kicks off with march

The Athens Messenger — March 10, 2019

Photo Gallery: March on Court Street for Disability Awareness

The Athens Messenger — March 11, 2019

Uptown disability awareness march celebrates ‘diverse abilities’

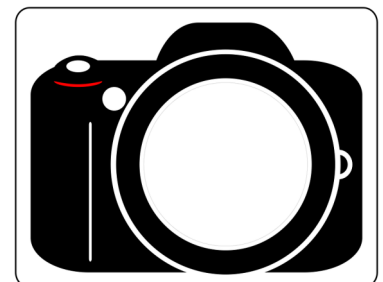
The Athens NEWS — March 10, 2019

Developmental Disabilities Fest celebrates tech

The Athens Messenger — March 21, 2019

Photo Gallery: Developmental Disabilities Fest 2019

The Athens Messenger — March 21, 2019



April Work Anniversaries:

Jamie Hart — 18 years

Carl Johnston — 13 years

Gail Tigner — 9 years

Kris Dunlap — 8 years

Mary Howell — 6 years

Anna Nagy-Heinrich — 1 year



More pictures from the march and Awareness Fest

