

Individuals “Step Into Work” with the ACBDD

A new program is teaching some of Athens County’s most vulnerable youth valuable job skills.

The program, called “Step Into Work,” is through *PersonnelPlus*. The goal is to give youth with significant developmental disabilities, and who have been deemed unemployable, a chance to learn employment skills.

For two days a week for a month, four participants gathered in the Market on State in Athens for an hour of classroom instruction followed by an hour of hands-on experience, for which the participants were paid. Each was paired with one of our job trainers to help them learn more effectively. During the classroom time, students were taught basic social skills, such as how to interpret bathroom signs and other skills many individuals take for granted.

Then, the students were given a chance to curate their job skills at the Market on State, where the students and their trainers go to clean various furniture in the mall, as well as the front doors.

“This program is supporting individuals who just a few years ago would be considered unemployable,” said Sue Orth, Training Coordinator. “It is our goal to challenge that notion and help these young people find meaningful work.”

Doug Mitchell, Employment Options Director, noted often individuals with severe developmental disabilities are encouraged to attend day habilitation centers.

“Often there is more a menu of activities, and they’re not geared toward developing work skills with the goal of actually getting hired,” Mitchell said.



Top: Reno is learning how to clean trash cans, with help from Job Trainer James. Bottom: Gabi is learning how to clean benches with help from her Job Trainer, Steven.



“Step Into Work”, cont.

“They (the participants) are quite young, and for many this was perhaps the first time they have been introduced to the concept of work.”

In 2012, then-Gov. John Kasich declared Ohio an “employment first” state, meaning students with developmental disabilities be presumed employable first. That means individuals such as the ones served by “Step Into Work” would not be immediately enrolled into day habilitation centers, as was the typical process in years past.

Mitchell said he’s found the program to be “very successful” but also “interesting,” noting that often there are basic actions assumed to be understood by everyone that are important growth steps for individuals with severe developmental disabilities. The majority of the students served by “Step Into Work” are nonverbal, and struggle with interpersonal interactions, on top of learning societal norms and rules. That means these steps can’t be assumed, and the students need to learn to understand them on their own terms.

For example, one of the students in the program has washed tables at Beacon School for a while, using small circular motions. When tasked with cleaning items other than tables, he needed to learn a new method for wiping — long swipes.

“In his mind, (small, circular motions) are how he cleans everything,” Orth explained. “Now he has a new skill of cleaning other items. Small steps are really quite big steps for these folks.”

The program hasn’t been without its hitches — Orth and the trainers quickly discovered that not all of the individuals could work on the same

task at the same time, as it became overwhelming. Instead, the four students were separated into groups of two, in addition to their associated trainers.

“So they weren’t by themselves and could practice some cooperating for teamwork,” Orth said. “This is just the beginning of a longer process of supporting individuals who need assistance in developing skills to work in the community.”

The participants are paid minimum wage for the work they complete during the program. Mitchell and Orth both said they believe the program to be worthwhile for the participants, stating they are proud of how much the students have learned.

“I feel they have caught on,” Mitchell said. “Maybe some can’t work the whole time, but when they are able to work they have put a lot of effort into it.”

“This program is supporting individuals who just a few years ago would be considered unemployable. It is our goal to challenge that notion and help these young people find meaningful work.”

— Sue Orth, Training Coordinator

New bus route debuts in Nelsonville, Albany

The ACBDD participated in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new Line 7 public transit bus. This pilot program, partially funded by the ACBDD, runs from Athens, to Nelsonville, to Albany. We are thrilled to see this happening. Transportation has always been the biggest barrier for people with disabilities to fully participate in social, recreational, and employment opportunities. This new bus route will help.



ACBDD joins the “Party Line” with Dave Palmer

Our superintendent was lucky enough to speak with Dave Palmer on the “Party Line” on 970 WATH. Dave invited us on to talk about the great things happening at the ACBDD. The two spoke for about an hour about the history of the agency, the history of DD services in general, Beacon School, *PersonnelPlus*, the SSA division and our newest division, Integrate Athens.



Great turnout at second annual All Staff potluck

It is not often that our nearly 100 staff members, who work in four different buildings, get together and socialize. Historically, it would only happen twice per year during our All Staff trainings. In an effort to increase cross-division communication, we started hosting an All Staff potluck. Our second annual event had a great turnout. Thanks to everyone who came and contributed. We had great food and even better company.



“Chat with the Superintendent” starts September 18



“Chat with the Superintendent” is a new initiative to help improve communication across the agency. On Sept. 18, staff are welcome to join Kevin at Beacon School to chat about anything related to the agency. Times are:

- 7:30 a.m.
- 2:30 p.m.
- 4:30 p.m.

Agency well represented at Back To School Bash



The crowd for the Athens County Back to School Bash was impressive. Over 1,000 children and their families walked away with school supplies, clothes, food, and more. The first-ever event, hosted by Athens JFS, took place at the Market on State. We proudly had a table with representation from Administration, Beacon School, Personnel*Plus* and Service & Support Administration.

ACBDD takes on the Athens County Fair



The ACBDD also had a strong presence at the Athens County Fair, which ran from August 5 — August 9. As has been tradition, we had a special activity during Kids Day. We made sensory bottles. It was messy, but it sure was fun, and it sure was popular. Thank you to all the staff members who volunteered to help run the table during this week. We had so much fun connecting with the community.

Interest in “Boxing for Books” coming in from across the county

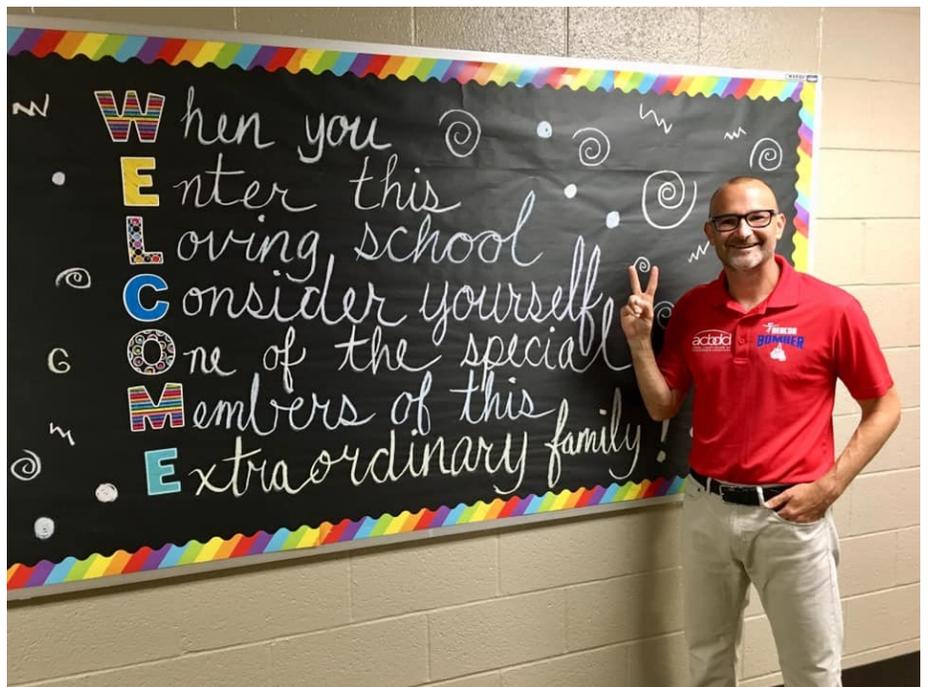


Ever since Supt. Kevin Davis agreed to represent the ACBDD in Trimble’s annual “Boxing for Books” event, he has been gaining attention from folks all over the county, like from Sheriff Smith, Auditor Thompson, Judge McCarthy, and Mayor Patterson. Many are watching the playful smack talk between Kevin and Commish Chris unfold online. But in actuality, both are really only interested in raising as much funds as possible for Trimble Local School District. We hope you will be there for the event. The date has yet to be determined, but it will be sometime in November, 2019. More soon.



Our 2019-2020 school year begins

We started the year off with our Beacon School staff training and our third annual Open House, which had the most attendance yet. We were glad to see the new and returning students. We heard numerous comments about our recent changes to the building, including the installation of the upgraded rock garden that has the letters “B” and “S” for Beacon School.





Scenes from Beacon's Open House

Beacon School's Open House was well attended, with kids, staff, and parents. All were excited to start the new school year.





Please join us in welcoming our newest Beacon School team members



Amanda Crites

Paraprofessional

Educational Service Center

Primary II



Angela Mosher

Instructor

ACBDD/Beacon

Preschool I



Brittany Foster

Paraprofessional

Educational Service Center

Preschool I

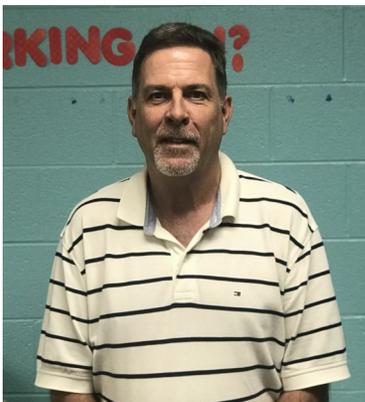


Jennifer Warner

Paraprofessional

Educational Service Center

Primary II



L. R. Faires

Paraprofessional

Educational Service Center

Young Adult



Mirabi Ingles

Paraprofessional

Educational Service Center

Intermediate I



Rubén Arroyo Santiago

Instructor

ACBDD/Beacon

Adapted PE



Tricia Congo

Instructional Assistant

ACBDD/Beacon

Preschool I

(Team members listed in alphabetical order by first name)

W e l c o m e



Athens Civitan donates supplies

Thank you to the Athens Ohio Civitan Club (and Pioneer Ladies Club) for their generous gift of school supplies and a donation for Beacon School. We are so grateful.



Beacon in need of substitute instructors & paraprofessionals

Beacon School has openings for Substitute Instructors and Paraprofessionals. Please share this widely with those who may be qualified and interested.

The Sub Instructor positions are hired through the ACBDD and pay \$18/hour (includes benefits in STRS and sick leave). The Sub Paraprofessional positions are hired through the Athens-Meigs Educational Service Center (ESC).

For more information, visit athenscbdd.org or contact the ESC directly.





In Memorium: Jacob Barnhart

We were saddened to share that Beacon School had a student unexpectedly pass away recently. Jacob Barnhart was an amazing young man who was loved by everyone.

Jacob had been a part of the Beacon School family for 14 years. He started with us at the age of 3 in our preschool program. He was most recently in our Young Adult class. He is dearly missed by his family and friends.



Employment Options &



PPAAC annual picnic features food, friendship, and fun!

The PersonnelPlus Advocacy and Advisory Council (PPAAC) recently hosted their annual summer picnic. There was food, games and music for everyone to enjoy. Thank you to everyone who made this event a big success. Special thanks to the Ohio University student athletes who volunteered, Rufus for again coming and getting things started, and DJ Enforcer Jim Childs for providing the music. We hope to see you all again next year!



Employment Options &



OOD visits with ACBDD and Employment Options

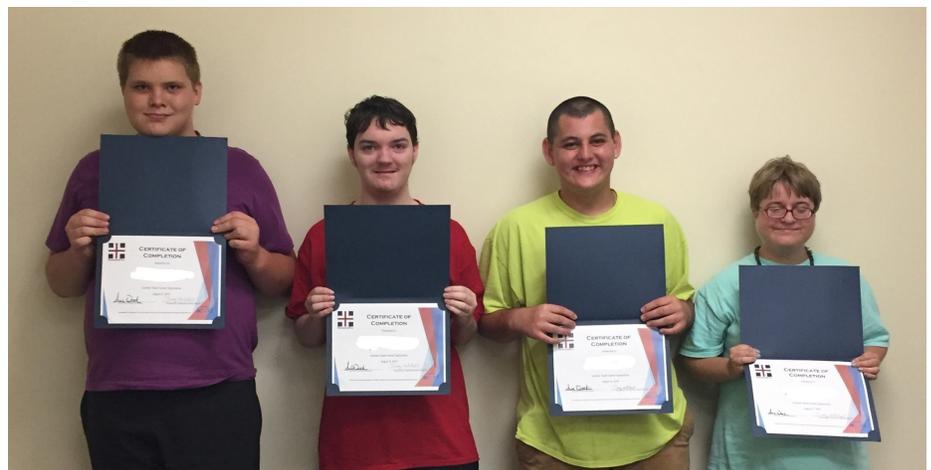
Members of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) State Office visited our Employment Options Division recently. Susan Pugh, Deputy Director of Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, shared several new exciting initiatives about to be launched by OOD.

Supt. Kevin Davis and Doug Mitchell also spoke about the commitment the ACBDD has for employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



Career Exploration Program ends with perfect attendance

We recently completed the Summer Youth Career Exploration Program. The participants visited the following community businesses: Sweet Arts Bakery, Harter Hills Stables, Athens High School, Athens Towing, The Laurels, Joint Implant Surgeons, Kroger, Steak and Shake, and The Hampton Inn.



Thank you to all the businesses for allowing us to visit and for supporting what we do. Also, congratulations to all of the participants. We again had perfect attendance from everyone. Be on the look out for these young people as they will be joining the work force soon.



Community Discovery with Brooke

Integrate Athens is developing what’s called the Community Discovery Project. This project is intended to give individuals opportunities to explore their community before volunteering or interning.

Brooke is the first participant in this program. She recently completed her community discovery with Integrate Athens. The project lasted four weeks. During that time, Brooke taught Integrate Athens about her interests and adapting tasks to fit her skills. Brooke was then able to partner with the Integrate Athens team to explore the community to present about inclusion, promote public transit, and to discover new things. It is hopeful that this experience will prepare Brooke for finding what a meaningful life for her will be following graduation.

Pictured at right is Brook and Autumn leading a discussion on diversity during the Good Works Kids Club this summer.



Join us for the “10 Million Steps” initiative

Integrate Athens has been hosting a once-a-month “Pop-up Fun Day” to help people connect with the community. For our next “Pop-up Fun Day,” we will be hosting a community walk in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Aging. The project, called “10 Million Steps,” is the Ohio Department of Aging’s promotional walk that helps bring awareness to fall prevention.

Pop-up Fun Day!!!



“10 Million Steps”

Next “Pop-up Fun Day”:

Date: Thursday, Sept. 19

Time: 9:30 a.m.— 11:30 a.m.

Location: West State Street Park

ACBDD in the news

Transit line debuts in Nelsonville, Albany

The Athens Messenger—August 1 , 2019

1,000-plus schoolkids & caregivers get back-to-school goods

The Athens NEWS — August 7, 2019

Individuals “Step Into Work” with ACBDD

The Athens Messenger—August 15, 2019

F.A.N.s hosting logo contest

The Athens Messenger — August 20, 2019



Work Anniversaries for September

Leslie Perry — 30 years

Sue Orth — 18 years

Doug Mitchell — 17 years

Greg Grimm — 16 years

David McNelly — 5 years

Emily Finsterwald — 5 years

Heather Clemons — 4 years

Connie Davis — 3 years

Wesley Kline — 3 years

Janet Wallisch — 2 years

Marcus Dobro—2 years

Community News

Kyle a regular guest during Mayor’s press conference

Anyone who knows Kyle knows he has a knack for telling the weather. His skill gained the attention of Athens Mayor Steve Patterson. So much so, Kyle has been invited as a guest during the mayor’s press conferences to share the weather. He has already appeared twice. Be sure to check out him out!



Community News (cont.)

THAS runs for the hills during Parade of the Hills 5K



Team Heart and Sole had another great race during Nelsonville’s Parade of the Hills “Run for the Hills” 5K. This is by far THAS’ most challenging race. Many of the hills are incredibly steep. Kudos to all of the runners and walkers!

Do you like to run/walk/bike? THAS is always looking for more community members to join the team. If you would like more information about THAS, contact team coordinator Paul Richard at athens.teamheartandsole@gmail.com.

Upcoming Athens Walk & Roll Curbside Conversation

Athens Curbside Conversations, in cooperation with the Athens Disabilities Commission, will be hosting a Walk & Roll Audit in Uptown Athens. This will be an active, hands-on "conversation." Participants will learn how to use the Athens City Source smart phone application to evaluate and report problems with sidewalks, curb cuts, and other obstacles to accessibility in Uptown Athens. The hosts will walk attendees through installing the app, setting up an account, and learning how to report. The event is on Thursday, September 26, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.—7 p.m.



More scenes from the PPAAC annual picnic

