

ACBDD's newest division celebrates first anniversary



One year ago, the ACBDD officially created the Office of Integrate Athens. Its creation marked the end of a three-year transition away from adult day services and the closure of ATCO.

This new division, envisioned by Supt. Kevin Davis, was designed to promote integration and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities in Athens County. Through guidance from Davis and direction from Autumn Brown, the office has spawned numerous initiatives both at the ACBDD and in the community. The number of staff has grown, too, from three to four, including one COMCorps volunteer. Two interns are working with the division this semester, as well.

It was a great leap of faith on the part of the ACBDD to develop such a unique division, and it has been worth the investment. Following is a short list of just some of the accomplishments in its first year.

Community Inclusion



- Atco Idol increased its inclusive performances.
- Tuesday Night Rec is being adapted to promote it as a community-wide engagement.
- Wednesday Night Bowling is recruiting bowlers without disabilities.

Anniversary, cont...



- Transit Hop, which promoted use of public transportation, was held in May.
- Created and hosted the first-ever Athens Connects Event, which focused on exposing individuals to employment, volunteering, and other community opportunities.
- Coordinated a team to create a unified basketball team that is overseen by the City of Athens Parks and Recreation.

Resources and Community Education



- Began development of a transition-age resource for students and teachers called EPIC: Educational Path to Independence and Community.
- Started “Food for Thought” group, which meets monthly.
- Developed FANs-in-Schools initiative.

Advocacy



- Created a bi-monthly educational forum “Advocacy Empower Hour” for Advocates
- Actively promoting a Project Stir Fall training.
- Connecting Advocates to opportunities for them to share their story and their knowledge.

For more information about Integrate Athens, visit their Facebook page.

Second annual Polar Bear Plunge raises over \$10K



Above: Kevin and his wife Leslie rush out of Lake Snowden after taking their plunge. Below: Jaclyn and her son Elijah make their way out after their brave plunge. This second-annual plunge raised more than last year.

“It takes a special kind of person to get out there and do this. We’re glad that they are willing to come out and support Beacon School.”

— Kevin Davis
ACBDD Supt.



Local news reports contributed to this piece.

Plunge, cont...

Unlike 2019 when ice had to be sawed and hacked out of the way for the first Polar Bear Plunge at Lake Snowden, the recent second edition didn't have to deal with ice. But don't try to tell any of the shivering participants that it wasn't cold.

Forty degrees Fahrenheit on a breezy, gray morning in late January is quite frigid enough, thank you very much.

Despite the cold, more than 200 intrepid volunteers walked, ran, tip-toed, sauntered, ambled, trudged, strutted, sprinted or had friends drag them into the cold waters of Lake Snowden in order to benefit the local Beacon School PTA and VFW Ohio Charities.

This year's Plunge – put together and hosted by Albany VFW Post 9893, and co-hosted by Wild Country 107.7 – had a big bump in plungers, nearly 80 more than in 2019. This year's event raised more than \$10,000, last year's raised \$8,000.

"It's just amazing," said ACBDD Supt. Kevin Davis, who, while wearing chili pepper swim trunks, was the first one to dive into Lake Snowden this year. "It speaks to two things— one, the support for Beacon School, and two, just how many crazy people there are in Athens," Davis said with a laugh. "It takes a special kind of person to get out there and do this. We're glad that they are willing to come out and support Beacon School."



A re-cap video can be found on our agency's Facebook page.

March activities for DD Awareness Month

The ACBDD is gearing up for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March. This year’s theme is **“Let’s Connect!”** We will highlight ways our agency and our community partners promote connections and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities in Athens County. We hope you will join us in commemorating this special month! Below is a list of things to keep an eye out for during March 2020.



The Athens NEWS ACBDD Special Edition

March 5 | available countywide

The Athens NEWS ACBDD Special Edition, now in its 10th year, will be published on March 5th. This is an excellent way for us to educate the community about the various DD services and providers available in the county. Be sure to pick up a copy on this day to learn about the ACBDD, our community partners, and how we promote connections and inclusion in the work that we do.



Envisioning an integrated and inclusive Athens County



The Athens NEWS SPECIAL EDITION 2019

March on Court Street

March 6 | 10 a.m.

Join us for the third annual “March on Court Street” to increase disability awareness. Bring your signs, your banners, your voice, and your friends! Line-up begins at Baker University Center (4th Floor Entrance) at 9:45 a.m. The march starts at 10 a.m. The route goes up Court St. and ends at Courthouse with a brief presentation. In case of bad weather, the march will be at The Market on State.



March activities, cont.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Festival

March 18 | 6 p.m.—8 p.m.

This event, which has grown exponentially over the years, brings the disabilities community and the broader community together to celebrate all of the resources that exist in Athens County that support individuals with disabilities. This year’s event will highlight ways in which we create connections and promote inclusion in Athens County for individuals with developmental disabilities. Historically, we have been in the gym. This year, we will be in Multi-purpose rooms A, B, and C, and in the Conference Room. We hope you can join us.



“Intelligent Lives” screening and panel

March 30 | Times TBD (evening)

This screening will take place in the Athens High School auditorium. The film stars three young American adults with intellectual disabilities who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. The event will be followed by a panel of local self-advocates and members of their support systems. This event is hosted jointly by AF-CADRE, Athens Civitan, the ACBDD, and the Athens City Disabilities Commission.



DODD Director Jeff Davis spends the day in Athens

We were fortunate to host the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Director Jeff Davis earlier this month. For the Director to make the trip to the southeastern part of the state is a big deal.

Director Davis met with small groups of staff from our agency, had a tour of Personnel Plus, and a tour of Beacon School. He was very attentive to the concerns presented to him. We truly appreciate his taking the time to visit Athens County.



ACBDD helps moderate, participate in Lunch & Learn

ACBDD's Superintendent recently moderated January's Athens Chamber of Commerce Lunch & Learn. The topic was "Accessibility Matters: Create a Business That Supports All Customers."

Job Developer Angela Carter was also there. She presented information about PersonnelPlus and the services offered to



businesses who hire job seekers with disabilities. Noah Trembly, of Noah Trembly Enterprises, shared information about Augmentative Alternative Communication. Jill Bateman of Ohio University's Office of Information Security provided information on web accessibility. The event was well attended with several representatives of local businesses.

ACBDD staff, Beacon students celebrate Joe Burrow Day



PersonnelPlus staff joins Chamber in annual celebration



Doug Mitchell, Director of the ACBDD’s Employment Options Division, and PersonnelPlus Job Developers Marcus Dobro and Angela Carter attended the 33rd Annual Athens Chamber of Commerce Dinner recently. This team does an amazing job establishing connections and networking with local entrepreneurs and business owners. These events are just one of the ways to celebrate what makes Athens great.



A “thank-you” note from a mother whose child transitioned out of our EI Services:

“You have been so kind, positive, and helpful with everything we have ever needed. You have always been our biggest cheerleader – our best resource. Few people ever really find our ‘calling’ in life but you found yours. We appreciate all you have done for us. Most of all, you always believed [our child] could --- Thank You”

Work Anniversaries for February

Scott Crum — 11 years

Clayton Ray — 7 years

Jona Moberg — 3 years





Students delight when Beacon's new mascot, Ray, makes surprise visit at the school



We had a grand ole time introducing “Ray” to the students at Beacon School earlier this month. Everyone approved and enjoyed meeting Ray. What a fun afternoon. Go Rays!!

Don't forget! All new Beacon Rays spirit items, including sweatshirts, mugs, stickers and more, can be purchased at Zonez. With every purchase, 10% comes to Beacon. Go Rays!

School principal offers presentation to Athens Citivan

The Athens Citivan Club expressed their appreciation to Becky Martin, ACBDD's Director of Education and Beacon's Principal. She recently provided a presentation to the group about the school-age services offered at the ACBDD .





Beacon School celebrates 100th day of school

Students and staff celebrated their 100th day of school earlier this month, complete with cupcakes in our new school colors - blue and yellow! What a great way to celebrate! Thank you to our staff for making it happen.



Alfred Crow's recent donation gets students winter hats

The ACBDD's board members formally passed a resolution thanking Mr. Alfred Crow for providing a generous donation to Beacon School. This is his third one! His generous donation allowed us to get a new Beacon Ray winter hat for every student! These match the jackets his previous donation helped purchase. Thank you, Mr. Crow!



Students build birdhouses with local Masonic Lodge

We thank the Masonic Lodge of Athens and Trimble, as members of both groups came to Beacon recently. They helped students make birdhouses to take home. We appreciate their generosity.

Specifically, we wish to thank Dennis Robertson, Jerry Robertson, John Bennett, Travis Brand, Jim McDonald, and Mike Thomas. The students had a great time.



Birdhouses, cont...



ACBDD in the news

Second Polar Plunge planned for January

The Athens Messenger—January 7, 2020

Prepare to freeze: Annual Polar Bear Plunge coming

The Athens NEWS—January 8, 2020

First-ever Unified Basketball League to launch locally

The Athens NEWS—January 15, 2020

Polar Bear Plunge draws crowd in second year

The Athens Messenger—January 26, 2020

Icy waters no barrier to intrepid polar plungers

The Athens NEWS—January 30, 2020



More pictures from the 2020 Polar Bear Plunge

