

The Vision of the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD is to promote self-directed and self-determined choices in programs, services and supports for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY BOARDS

CELEBRATING THE ABILITIES OF OHIO'S 80,000 DISABLED INDIVIDUALS OF MRDD

Sen. Voinovich Earns Lifetime OACB Achievement Award

A longtime Ohio politician recently was honored by a statewide agency for more than four decades of fighting for the rights of the state's most vulnerable population.

Sen. George Voinovich was presented with the first-ever *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD Lifetime Achievement Award* at an intimate ceremony in the senator's

Washington D.C. office. Cuyahoga County Superintendent Terry Ryan and Union County Superintendent Kim Miller presented Sen. Voinovich with the award.

Ryan and Miller were in Washington D.C. attending the *National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Directors (NACBHDD) Legislative Conference*, and met with Sen. Voinovich in his office. It was intended for the long-time Ohio legislator to receive the award last December at the 24th Annual OACB



Gov. George Voinovich is pictured with Terry Ryan, superintendent of the Cuyahoga County Board of MRDD, and Kim Miller, superintendent of the *Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities*. Gov. Voinovich is holding the Lifetime Achievement Award, presented to him by the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD*.

convention, but that did not occur due to schedule conflicts.

"No other public official has played such an integral part in promoting awareness and situations of those individuals in Ohio who are served by *County Boards of MRDD* as George Voinovich," Ohler said.

"As *County Boards of MRDD* throughout the state of Ohio celebrate their 40th an-

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OUR MISSION:

To support county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities in providing services and supports to individuals with disabilities.

www.oacb.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING CONVENTION

Join us for the annual OACB Spring Convention May 22-23 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, Ohio. Relevant training programs will be in place to help all those associated with MRDD agencies.

COUNTY WEBSITES

Your best resources may be an easy click away. Did you know that you can easily access any *County Board of MRDD's* website by simply clicking [here](#).

GOLF OUTING

Mark Your Calendar Now! The annual OACB PAC Golf Outing will be Thursday, September 25 at the prestigious Golf Club of Dublin. More information will be available at the Spring Conference.

STATE AUTISM RALLY

That Statehouse Autism Rally will be 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 2. For more information, contact Doug at 614-882-8763 or 614-554-0802.

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VOLUME 1

MARCH 31, 2008

25 Years Of Serving Ohio's MRDD Boards Celebrated

The *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD* has announced its 25th Annual Convention will be held October 27-29 at the Hilton at Easton.

Last year, more than 500 people attended each day of the three-day convention, which provides in depth training in several important areas for board members, superintendents, business managers, providers, and other MRDD staff members.

"This convention has grown each year because we offer important training that people want and can use in their profession," said Dan Ohler, Executive Director of the *OACB*.

In addition to training, Mr. Ohler said the *OACB* looks for people who have great stories to tell to inspire those who work in the MRDD field. This year, the *OACB* will be bringing in Kim Peek, the

inspiration for the feature film *Rain Man*.

Kim was played by Dustin Hoffman, who won an Academy Award for his performance. In addition, the movie won "Best Picture," "Best Screenplay," and "Best Director."

While Kim, age 57, was referred to as autistic in the movie, he actually has macrocephaly, which is a congenital brain disorder. It has left him with developmental disabilities. He also has a photogenic memory, and is a true savant. He can recall more than 12,000 books by memory.

"We are expecting this to be the best Convention we have ever hosted," Mr. Ohler predicted. "We are very excited that the Peeks will be with us each day of the Convention. I had the opportunity to attend one of their sessions last year and it was the most inspiring two hours I have experienced during my 10 years in our



Kim Peek and his father, Fran Peek

field."

The 25th Annual Convention will be held in October, after having been in December for the past several years. It will move back to the first week in December in 2009.

For more information, contact the *OACB* office at 614-431-0616.

Legislators Kick Off March MRDD Awareness Month

Adults and children with developmental disabilities were honored with a special kick-off to the March MRDD Awareness Month at the Statehouse on March 6.

Representatives Fred Strayhorn and Kevin Bacon were featured speakers at the event. Rep. Strayhorn (D-Dayton) recently was honored as the *OACB's* "legislator of the year."

Rep. Bacon publicly thanked the *OACB* for its help in promoting the passage of HB405, legislation Rep. Bacon introduced to simplify the waiver program for Ohio's families. The measure passed unanimously in the House, and is waiting Health Committee hearings in the Senate.

In addition to *ODMRDD* Director John Martin, about 200 guests heard from adults with developmental disabilities who are gainfully employed throughout Ohio. They also had the opportunity to view various displays in the Statehouse Atrium.

The *OACB* was represented at the kick-off by Executive Director Dan Ohler, his administrative assistant Lana Beddoes, and Linda Oda, Director of Communications.



Lana Beddoes, administrative assistant to *OACB* Executive Director Dan Ohler, takes time out during the kick off to MRDD Awareness Month activities to play with Maddie, one of the many children and adults with developmental disabilities who attended the celebration at the Statehouse.

"Many legislators who were in committee stopped by to say 'hello' and to wish all 88 counties well as we celebrate this month," Ohler said.

New Medicaid Deputy Director From Summit Co.

A longtime administrator with the *Summit County Board of MRDD* has accepted a new position as Deputy Director of Medicaid for the *Ohio Department of MRDD*.

Patrick Stephan, who has worked for Summit County since graduating with his Masters Degree in Public Administration, said he is excited about the new challenges that await him in Columbus. He begins his new position at the *ODMRDD* April 14.

“This is going to be a big job,” Patrick told the *OACB*. “Short term, I will be focusing on making the new waiver reimbursement system as feasible for the field as possible, and looking at the new residential group daily rate structure and some of the systems we have in place to make this complicated system easier for our clients.”

For the past decade, Stephan has worked with Summit County, and has become somewhat of a “guru” in the Medicaid field.

“Tom Armstrong (superintendent of *Summit County Board of MRDD*) has given me a lot of insight into how Medicaid and the waiver programs function at the state level and some of the problems we see at the county level in the system,” Stephan explained.

“I think my day to day interaction at the county level will be a real asset at the state. I have knowledge of providers and the grassroots background,” he said.

Armstrong said Stephan will be missed by his entire staff.

“While our organization will miss the knowledge and experience that Stephan has demonstrated as a key member of the Summit MRDD Strategic Planning Team, we are pleased that his leadership in Ohio’s Medicaid arena will now benefit all Ohioans with developmen-

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niversary, it seemed appropriate to recognize the one public official who has been so consistent in his support and action during those past four decades,” he said.

George Voinovich’s long and storied political career has put him in a position where he could help Ohio’s developmentally disabled from a number of unique perspectives. Sen. Voinovich is the former Cuyahoga County auditor and county commissioner, as well as a former state senator and mayor of Cleveland, and most recognizably as Ohio’s Governor.

“I am honored to receive this Lifetime Achievement Award from the *Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OACB)*,” Sen. Voinovich recently said from his Washington, D.C. office.

“Since my days as governor of Ohio I have supported initiatives that provide people with disabilities access to the tools they need to best contribute to their communities. You are the angels in the lives of those who benefit from your work, and I am honored that I have been able to help you in your mission,” he said.

Ryan and Miller said they were surprised by how personally Sen. Voinovich accepted the award. “Clearly, Sen. Voinovich was overcome by emotion” when he was presented with this award, Ryan said.

“It was very meaningful for Senator Voinovich, and he expressed his appreciation to the *county boards association* for the award. He said it was important that all our elected officials understand the needs of people with disabilities in our local communities and the state,” Ryan said.

Interestingly, Sen. Voinovich was one of the original legislators who signed into law the creation of the 88 *County Boards of MRDD*. This came about during a period of time when a philosophical change occurred in the state, and people realized that housing developmentally disabled people in institutions was not only morally wrong, but that those with developmental disabilities could become productive citizens in Ohio’s communities.

For Kim Miller, the moment was “almost surreal, realizing that what we have today is because of the legislation Sen. Voinovich and others in the legislature created 40 years ago.”

“It is very humbling to be a part of this Lifetime Achievement Award. Listening to Sen. Voinovich talk about all the things he has been involved with. . .it absolutely, positively touched his heart to receive this recognition,” Miller said.

Ryan and Miller were attending the *NACBHDD* conference, where Ohler serves as vice president of the entire national organization. Ryan is a board member, while Miller is vice chair of the developmental disabilities policy committee. Ohler was unable to attend due to his participation on the MRDD Futures Committee.

The *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD* is a non-profit corporation formed in 1983 to serve and protect the interests of its membership; specifically, *County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities* in Ohio.

tal disabilities,” Armstrong said.

Like many in the MRDD field, Stephan has taken a profession and turned it into his passion. Summit’s Communications Director, Kevin McGee, noted Patrick is loved by many staff members because of his “personal

commitment to the cause we all love.” Stephan and wife Janet have a 16-month old son, Kyle.

“This is a great opportunity. I feel confident in my abilities that I will be able to help our developmentally disabled folks,” he said.
