

Our mission is to support *County Boards of MRDD* in providing services and supports to individuals with disabilities.

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY BOARDS



CELEBRATING THE ABILITIES OF OHIO'S 80,000 INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OF MRDD

It's Official: 25th Annual Convention 'Terrific'

OACB's 25th ANNUAL CONVENTION was held in late October, highlighted by a recognition of the organization's inaugural board.

This year's convention drew close to 900 individuals over the course of the three-day multi-track event. Each individual day broke prior attendance records. It appears from the feedback received through the OACB's on-line evaluation system that the formula for success requires: A diverse agenda of motivational, introductory and advanced educational opportunities; showcasing the talents of individual's with developmental disabilities; informal networking opportunities and hospitalities; a location with great opportunities for evening entertainment, and easy to navigate registration, evaluation and CEC process.

OACB continually strives to have diverse offerings for our attendees. We were fortunate to have Kim and Fran Peek for three days and received numer-



Pictured above are eight of the eleven original members of the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD* Board of Trustees. They included (seated) David Miller, Gary Courtright, Franklin J. Hickman, (standing) Fred Bischoff, Jerry Manual, Steve Pleasnick, Mike Miller, and Rick Pfannenschmidt. For the complete press release, [click here](#).

ous comments on how many participants enjoyed their sessions. The opening plenary was highly rated, and we hope to continue this at future events.

Participants highly rated some of the more rudimentary training sessions, but many commented on the fact that the networking and entertaining sessions, such as Harvey

Alston, should always be an option. The Art Show was a huge success, and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to shop in a comfortable location. More than 22 vendors from throughout Ohio participated in the event, and the evaluations clearly indicated it was well received and enjoyed by all.

OACB works very closely with hotel management team throughout the year.

“Thanks for a terrific Convention!”

“The topics of this year were so relevant”

“The Art Show was terrific.”

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See “Convention”
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A Word From Our President ...

OACB Thanks Stan Thomas, John Hoyes

By Robert Milliken

President, OACB

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It seems as though there are as many ways to serve people in our local communities, counties, state, nation and even internationally as there are fish in the sea.

Having said that, I cannot think of a more important or noble way to serve Ohio's people with developmental disabilities than by serving on your local *County Board of MRDD*. Actually, I can think of one. It would be serving on the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD*. It not only encompasses the work of the local *County Boards of MRDD*, but it enhances it.

Many times, we have difficulties finding a board member in a specific region to serve. There is a hefty time commitment that comes with an appointment or election to a seat on the 18-member board. I have never spoken with a trustee, however, who has ever regret-

ted one minute they have spent serving on the *OACB*.

Because of term limits, we are losing two extremely valuable members of our Board December 31, 2008: Stan Thomas of Cuyahoga County and Dr. John Hoyes of Muskingum County. I have known these gentlemen for the past three years and can tell you that no one rivals their attendance records for board meetings or their commitment to helping those with developmental disabilities.

Stan currently is Vice President of the *OACB* and has shown his leadership abilities throughout his tenure. At each meeting, he brought a common

sense, level-headed approach to problems, and because of his knowledge, his peers often times acquiesced to his thoughts.

I appreciate John's ability to think "outside the box" and his willingness to do whatever the Board needed him



The OACB Board of Trustees will be losing two valuable officers to term limits Dec. 31. Pictured above are the 2008 officers, including (back to front) President Bob Milliken, Vice President Stan Thomas, Secretary Dr. John Hoyes, and Treasurer Rod Standiford.

to do. He has held office in the way of treasurer and secretary because of his willingness to help. John never cared about what capacity he served, as long as he was helping.

While it is difficult to replace the knowledge and abilities of my two colleagues, the *OACB* will go on. It must, because the work needed in these difficult economic times makes our work that much more important.

While Stan and John must sit out at least two years before throwing their respective hats back into their *County Board of MRDD* races, I know their hearts will not allow them to stop serving in some capacity to help those who cannot help themselves.

For that, I know I speak for many with these two simple words: Thank you.

Bob Milliken also serves on the Stark County Board of MRDD.

Senator Gillmor Honored By Board

Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently hosted a Legislators' Day and invited county and state elected officials to tour their facilities. Pictured are some parents who attended the event, as well as State Senator-Elect Karen Gillmor and Superintendent Kim Miller. They are Aime Fehrman, Mary Beth Merklin, and Brenda Crawford. These parents also recently attended the newly created Family Advisory Council.



Financial Woes Not Limited To Buckeye State

By Dan Ohler

Executive Director, OACB
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Many of you joined us for the OACB's 25TH ANNUAL CONVENTION at the Easton Town Center in Columbus. This year's convention featured 120 speakers and more than 900 people attended the three-day event.



Dan Ohler

We were pleased to welcome Fran and Kim (*Rainman*) Peek as they shared their incredible journey - and even passed around an Academy Award. Now we know why all those Oscar winners

comment on the weight of the trophy.

Nancy Thaler shared her perspective from the nation's capital and those who attended one of Harvey Alston's sessions certainly left the room with a smile. On October 27, we had the honor of recognizing the first Board of Trustees of the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD*. It was truly a memorable experience, watching those individuals interact with each other and share their memories of that very first Convention, and the pride they exhibited in knowing the organization they helped to create back in the mid-80s is still vibrant today. We were fortunate to make contact with all 11 of those inaugural Board Members and many were able to be with us.

Before the Convention officially closed, *Cuyahoga CBMRDD* Superintendent Dr. Terry Ryan and I were off to Austin, TX to attend the fall board meeting of the *National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)*.

An overview of that meeting was published in the October issue of *National*

Perspectives (available on our website www.oacbmRDD.org).

Interacting with colleagues from other states is always a refreshing experience from many different angles. To a person, they are envious of our ability to raise dollars at the local level for services. A very limited number of county authorities have that ability, and those that do fall far short of the dollars we raise in Ohio.

Many of them are struggling with their State Departments over cuts in appropriations, monitoring of services, interpretations of statewide-ness, the administration of waivers, and the imposition of unfunded mandates. Ironically, just as we often look at the grass as being greener in someone else's yard, we fail to recognize how many others look at our yard as the one with the greenest grass.

As 2008 winds to a close, it is clear that we are living in rapidly changing world and experiencing historic times.

See "Ohler"
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NOWAC Meets With Rep. Goodwin

Northwest Ohio Waiver Administration Council (NOWAC) recently invited State Representative Bruce Goodwin to their meeting in Defiance County to discuss funding issues. The round table discussion included advocacy issues and how best to address biennium budgetary issues with legislators. Attending the meeting were (seated) Michelle Vogelsong, Business Manager, NOWAC; Superintendent Bruce Abell, Williams County; Superintendent Jim King, Henry County; Superintendent Beth Friess, Fulton County; (standing) Superintendent Doug McVey, Paulding County; Deb Guilford, Executive Director, NOWAC; State Representative Goodwin; Superintendent Rick Edmonds, Defiance County, and Superintendent Jim Stripe, Van Wert County.



Ohio's First Lady Speaks At Symposium



Ohio's First Lady Frances Strickland was the special speaker at the first COLLABORATION SYMPOSIUM Nov. 18 at the Dublin Embassy Suites Hotel. Mrs. Strickland spoke about her extensive involvement, as well as that of her husband, Governor Ted Strickland, in the fields of mental health and developmental disabilities.



Pictured above are leaders in the field of developmental disabilities who signed the proclamation on behalf of their agencies. They included (left to right) Mary Ann Chamberlain, Superintendent of *Washington County Board of DD* and President of the *Ohio Superintendents Association*; Cheryl Phipps, Superintendent of the *Hamilton County Board of MRDD* and Past President of the *Ohio Superintendents' Association*; Mark Davis, *OPRA* Executive Director; First Lady Frances Strickland; John Martin, Director of the *Ohio Department of MRDD*; Dan Ohler, Executive Director of the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD*; Than Johnson, CEO of *Champaign Residential Services* and President of the *OPRA* Board of Trustees; and Ron Kozlowski, Executive Director, *Advocacy and Protective Services*. For the complete Press Release on the event, [click here](#).

OACB Trustee Special Speaker



At right, State Representative Jon Peterson, an OACB "Legislator of the Year," talks to several family members at the Family Advisory Council meeting about the best times to speak to legislators and how to have the most impact.



Pictured at left are Dean Fadel, a *Franklin County Board of MRDD* board member and an OACB Trustee, spoke to family members about advocating for their loved ones with developmental disabilities. Mr. Fadel has a brother with a developmental disability. Mr. Fadel is pictured with Scott Elliott, a parent of a child with developmental disabilities from Delaware County, and Teri Derry, Senior Manager of Training and Professional Development for *OPRA*. Mr. Fadel works in the Statehouse as a lobbyist, and gave family members tips on how they can be more effective advocates.

Distinguished Service Award Winners

At right, Dennis Butler, center, is pictured with his wife. Mr. Butler has served the *Highland County Board of MRDD* for 13 years, and has been president for 12 of those. "He knows the role of the Board, and I have always appreciated his humor and laughter," Mr. Amen said, noting that on a number of occasions, Mr. Butler has admonished board members for asking a question that was already answered in their board packet. For the complete press release, [click here](#).



At left, Paul Schaeffer, third from right, was honored for his more than 40 years of service to the people of Preble County. In 1963, Paul Shaffer, who is the current president of the *Preble County Board of MRDD*, helped build the first classroom for students with developmental disabilities in Eaton. Today, *Preble County Board of MRDD* and *L&M Products* serve more than 250 individuals with developmental disabilities from birth to senior citizens. For the complete press release, [click here](#).

At right, Bonnie Sisley, pictured in the center of the photo, was honored from *Portage County Board of MRDD*. In 1955, Bonnie Sisley, along with her husband Walter and other members of the Portage County community, built the *Happy Days School for Retarded Children*. Seven years later, the Sisleys found out they would have a child attending the school when their daughter Kathy was diagnosed with a developmental disability. For the complete press release, [click here](#).



Legats, Macintosh Award Winners



Hamilton County Superintendent Cheryl Phipps was honored with the *Kenneth Legats Award for Visionary Leadership in Administration*. This award is presented annually to an executive who has been duly nominated by the OACB Board of Trustees and who over a career of more than 20 years has shown high ideals, vision, and moral leadership in administration of programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. “Cheryl Phipps is a consummate professional,” said Dan Ohler, OACB Executive Director. “There are very few individuals that can compete with her level of knowledge, compassion, leadership skills, and ability to advocate for those individuals with developmental disabilities,” Ohler said. “It truly is my honor to call her a friend.” For the complete press release, [click here](#).



Superintendent Rick Marriott was honored with the *Betty Macintosh Award*, which is presented annually to a professional in the MRDD service delivery system who exhibits extraordinary accomplishments in professional leadership and advocacy for individuals with mental retardation and/or other developmental disabilities. Marriott was lauded by last year’s recipient, Superintendent Jim Frederick of *Ottawa County Board of MRDD*, as someone who “looks at the positive in everything.” Active in nearly every community project in Ross County, Marriott has led *United Way* campaigns, has held leadership positions in the *Kiwanis*, *YMCA*, *Junior Achievement* and other civic-minded organizations. He was named statehood “citizen of the year” in 2004, and was the Ross County “citizen of the year” in 2006. For the complete press release, [click here](#).



State Representative Kevin Bacon was awarded the *Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACB)* “Legislator of the Year” award at the 25th ANNUAL CONVENTION held at the *Easton Hilton Hotel* on Tuesday, Oct. 28. In introducing Representative Bacon, *OACB* Executive Director Dan Ohler noted the legislator has been instrumental in helping those with developmental disabilities from the moment he stepped into the *Statehouse*. “Within one month of taking office, he spearheaded a study for early autism diagnosis,” Ohler said, noting his motivation is his eight-year old daughter Rebecca, who was diagnosed with autism about two years ago. For the complete press release, [click here](#).



Convention *(From Page 1)*

We will be sharing the common theme of “cold” with them as well as some other comments related to the meals. Providing lunches for close to 600 people each day is quite a job, but a job the *Hilton* team completes several times a week.

We will be incorporating clearer instructions in our accommodation section of the registration website so you will know that we can honor special menu requests.

Although some comments were made about the size of the convention site and the great amenities of Easton, there are no other available alternatives in Central Ohio that can accommodate our needs, except for the Columbus Convention Center. Although this is an option, we consistently have been told our guests prefer to stay away from downtown locations.

OACB staff is now compiling all of the session evaluations to provide feedback to speakers and speaker panels. We appreciate that individuals are willing to take time away from already busy schedules to share valuable information with you. We hope the feedback they receive will help them in developing their programs for future training events. Please complete your session

evaluations if you have not done so already by [clicking here](#).

We will continue to enhance our on-line systems for evaluating and applying for CECs as there has been a huge outpouring of support for this model.

Again, thank you for attending the 25th ANNUAL CONVENTION, and we look forward to seeing you at future events and programs.

Sincerely,

The Entire *OACB* Staff

Dan, Kim, Lori, Linda, Ann, Lisa, Lana & Todd

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**Please join us at
the *Easton Hilton*
December 2-4, 2009
for the
26th Annual
Convention**

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Ohler *(From Page 3)*

Be it the collapse of the financial sector, the election of our nation’s first African-American President, the shift of political leadership in the *Ohio House of Representatives*, or the unfortunate loss of jobs in our state, these are days that none of us will soon forget.

Yet despite the challenges and uncer-

tainty faced by individuals all across Ohio, 92% of the *MRDD* levy issues successfully passed on the Nov. 4 ballot. This inspires hope that Ohioans still look out for their fellow citizens and support the efforts of *County*

Boards of MRDD as we strive to enhance the lives of those we serve.

Clearly the difficult economic times we face in this State are not behind us. In fact, things may get worse before they get better. We anticipate another reduc-

tion in state appropriation after the first of the year as the Governor strives to ensure the state budget remains balanced.

The reliance on local tax dollars by *County Boards of MRDD* to help assure quality services remains steadfast. The relationships between Boards and citizens in their respective counties will continue to be what drives our system forward, just as it has for the past 41 years.