



Newsletter

Ohio Association of County Boards - *Serving People with Developmental Disabilities*

Association advocates for DD issues in Washington, D.C.

By Dustin McKee, Policy Analyst

Stakeholders in Ohio's DD community have a responsibility to be aware of issues that affect individuals with developmental disabilities at all levels of government. As a result of two recent trips to Washington D.C., I've had a chance to renew my focus on discussions at the national level and am pleased to provide this update as a service to OACB members.

Disability Policy Seminar

On February 14, 15, and 16, I attended the 2011 Disability Policy Seminar sponsored by *The Arc of the United States* and *United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)*, with contributions from: the *American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)*, the *American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)*, the *Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)* and the *National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)*.

As one would imagine, the sessions were packed with useful information about national legislative issues that affect people with developmental disabilities. The primary focus of the sessions revolved around the looming cuts in discretionary spending and the alterations of major



SENATE PHOTOGRAPHY OFFICE

Above: Clermont County ADAMH Executive Director Karen Scherra (left), OACB Policy Analyst Dustin McKee (second from left), Project Manager Pete Moore (second from right), and U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (right) discuss Senator Brown's strong support of DD issues during an office visit on Capitol Hill.

entitlement programs currently being considered at the federal level. It quickly became apparent that the budget cuts brought upon by our country's current financial crisis are threatening to undo the significant progress we have made in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities through such long-standing programs as Social Security, Medicaid, and Special Education funding. In this environment, everything is on the table as a potential budget reduction. As a result, I am convinced that, in order to protect the tremendous gains we have made for people with disabilities over the

past half-century, we must step up our advocacy efforts at the state and federal level. Fortunately, I had my first opportunity to do just that during our next visit to Washington three weeks later.

Visiting Ohio's D.C. delegation

On March 3 and 4, Pete Moore and I attended 20 separate meetings with every member of Ohio's delegation (or their policy staff). In addition to providing a general explanation of the challenges facing our state's developmental disabilities system, we asked Ohio's lawmakers to support three separate pieces of

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What If?

By Dean Fadel, OACB Board President



As a volunteer on a County Board of DD serving the state's most vulnerable population, it is important to recognize your role and how best to impact your program's success.

Since I began serving on the Franklin County Board of DD and the OACB Board of Trustees I have tried to pay more attention to articles on being a good Board Member. A while ago I came across a commentary piece written by John Beavers, a practicing lawyer since 1972 and managing partner at Bricker & Eckler, LLP in Columbus. His article – “Directors

Should Ask “What if?” – has never been more relevant given these difficult budgetary times. Mr. Beavers has been kind enough to allow me to share his commentary with you – I hope you find it useful.

Directors Should Ask “What If?”

By John Beavers, Partner
Bricker & Eckler LLP

The role of a Director is to oversee that direction is provided, but it is not to execute that direction or manage the organization unless the Board Member believes that the CEO and management are not reliable and competent to do so.

A Director does this by asking sufficient questions, so the Director has a reasonable belief that the CEO and management are reliable and competent in what they are authorized or directed to do.

Questions should not generally be “how are you going to do this.” Management should have the authority to determine “how.” A Director’s questions are to verify or confirm management’s reliability and competence in making the “how” determination: “How does this benefit the best interests of the business?” “Is it consistent with our business model and strategy for the future?” “What financial, legal, ethical, strategic and reputational issues have been considered?”

Directors should take into account the premise of Nassim Nicholas Taleb’s book, “Black Swan, The Impact of the Highly Improbable,” that policy makers such as Directors must consider all of the possibilities, especially those that could have a high impact, albeit remotely probable, and not just the normal. The current “Great Recession” is the likely result of a failure to take into account the highly improbable, but high impact, occurrence of real estate and investment prices falling significantly at the same time.

Accordingly, the most important questions that a Director should ask are “what if,” most importantly, “What happens if things don’t go as expected?”

John Beavers established and directs Bricker & Eckler’s Counsel for BOARDS AND EXECUTIVES that counsels and represents governing boards, their committees and their executives regarding duties and responsibilities.

OACB in Washington

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federal legislation focused on transition age youth with developmental disabilities. The bills, HR 602, 603 and 604, are collectively known as the TEAM Act (Transition Toward Excellence Achievement and Mobility). The goal of this legislation is to concentrate on enhancing the education, empowerment and employment of transition aged youths with developmental disabilities. Needless to say, Pete’s expertise as Project Manager for the Bridges to Transition program helped immensely in making the case for this legislation with members and their legislative aides.

As we work to overcome our system’s current challenges, we must always remember and find inspiration in the obstacles we have already overcome. No progress has been made without the hard work and advocacy that has become a trademark of Ohio’s DD community. I feel truly fortunate to have all of you as partners as we continue to work towards improving our system and enhancing the lives of people with DD. ■



OFFICE OF CONGRESSWOMAN SCHMIDT

Above: Project Manager Pete Moore discusses employment issues with Congresswoman Jean Schmidt (OH-2) in her Washington, D.C. office.

April in Wonderland

By Dan Ohler, *OACB* Executive Director

March Madness is over for another year. The term, like many popular phrases, was born via marketing – in this case, the *NCAA* College Basketball Tournament (which, coincidentally, ends in April). In 2011, March Madness also applied to the budget process in many states across the nation. Wisconsin seems to have stolen the show, with Ohio, California and Illinois each vying for a close second.

Overall, 49 of the 50 states face a budget deficit. The main causes for these states' budget crises are similar – declining revenue, increasing costs, and the end of federal stimulus funding. Like other states, Ohio's predicament was not created overnight. For *County Boards of DD*, this crisis began six years ago with the elimination of the tangible personal property tax. When the economy tanked a few years later, the Enhanced Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage provided short-term assistance for local budget problems caused by the downturn. Unfortunately, things haven't improved much since then.

What has happened is more than half of those states with budget deficits have elected new governors promising fiscal reform. Many, like here in Ohio, have the necessary legislative support to enact their agendas. Governor Kasich's agenda has not been without controversy. Public protests have been frequent and legal challenges to some of his plans may ensue. But those efforts will not stop him from attempting to implement his agenda, so we must prepare accordingly.

The state budget was released on March 15th. News media has daily coverage relative to how some impacted entities will react - requests to increase local taxes; staff layoffs; service reductions or eliminations; and increases in user fees just to name a few. The Governor and legislative leaders have consistently stated that Ohio has to do something different. But exactly what "different" is has yet to be determined.

A month after his budget was released, the best tax experts in our state are not totally certain what

No funding cut is good; however, in comparison to other service systems, it could have been worse.

the Governor's plan fully entails or exactly how it will work. Add to that equation the fact that Ohio's tax code and financial system of revenues and expenditures is extremely complicated and one begins to see the chaos that has currently swept up state policymakers on both sides of the aisle.

In this chaos, dozens of special interest groups are lobbying anyone who will listen in order to ensure their funding is not impacted by decreases in state appropriation. At times, I am reminded of a scene in Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice in Wonderland* in which all of his memorable characters are sitting around the table at the Mad Hatter's tea party. With everyone clamoring for their spot at the table

in this budget, up is down, right is wrong, and TEA Party references are plentiful. The next few months are sure to be as interesting as they are challenging as we work our way through the legislative process.

Despite the current chaos, we have reason to be encouraged. No service system was spared cuts in state appropriation, yet Governor Kasich stated very early on that "developmental disabilities was not a system ripe for devastating cuts." His budget seems to make good on that statement by funding the *Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD)* at nearly 93%. How that 7% cut is applied may seem more devastating to some counties than others (via reductions in the county subsidy line item), but we will not truly know these cuts' impact until the actual distribution of state funds is made clear.

The members of the *House of Representatives* are nearing the end of their deliberations this month, and the *Senate* is expected to pick up the bill after the Easter recess. From there, the chaos begins again as the process starts over.

We will be challenged in these tough times to make decisions that permit the continuation of quality services for individuals with developmental disabilities in Ohio. No funding cut is good; however, in comparison to other service systems, it could have been worse. There is no easy button for the environment we are in; now is the time for leaders to emerge in order to ensure that we continue to enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. ■

Getting to Know: Joe Catalano, OACB Board Member, Wood County Board of DD

How long have you been a County Board Member? I've just completed my second year in Wood County.

How long have you served as a trustee at the OACB? About four months (since the Dec. 2010 meeting).

My family: I've been married since 1967. We have two grown children, 6 grand children, and have had 9 foster children.

Occupation: I spent my career in the manufacturing industry in many roles ranging from manufacturing engineering to CEO. After leaving industry, I was the Executive Director of the *Center for Applied Technology* within the *College of Technology* at *Bowling Green State University*. I currently assist companies that want to improve their operating performance.

Education: I have a BS in mechanical engineering from the *Johns Hopkins University*, an MBA from the *University of Chicago* and I attended the Advanced Management Program at the *Harvard Business School*.

My favorite snack food is: Whole wheat nachos.

Proudest moment as a board member? This is very hard to answer. I've had so many really good experiences. Perhaps my proudest moment was when *Wood Lane Adult Services* received CARF accreditation.

Three people (living or dead) you would like to have dinner with? Jesus Christ (at his place, not mine), Christa Tippett (*On Being* – National Public Radio), and perhaps Tich Nahat Hanh, a noted Buddhist monk.

One thing I would like to accomplish: To learn how to relax. (People keep telling me that it is really important.)

People would be surprised to know that: I am a certified SCUBA diver.

My favorite thing to do is: When I'm not helping companies (including my daughter's) improve their performance, wood working is very enjoyable.

This irritates me: Data-free discussions when we're attempting to make a decision to define a strategy. ■

County Board Spotlight: Cuyahoga Celebrates DD Awareness Month

By Lula Holt Robertson, General Manager of Public Information & Communication, *Cuyahoga County Board of DD*

The *Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities* kicked off DD Awareness Month Friday, March 4, with an opening reception at the Galleria in downtown Cleveland. The main attraction at the event was an exhibit of the 6-foot by 30-foot mural created through *VSA Ohio* to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a panel of which is pictured at right.

The mural was created by several Ohio artists who have developmental disabilities and was on display until the end of March. One of the mural artists, Kevin White, was present for the event.

The *Board of DD* operates *HeARTworks*, a gallery and gift shop that markets the works of artists with developmental disabilities, in the Galleria. Several artists whose work is for sale in the shop served as hosts throughout the day.



In addition to the mural exhibit, the *Cuyahoga County Board of DD* has placed 20 awareness billboards throughout the county and is running awareness spots on several local cable channels as well as radio stations. We look forward to next year's activities! ■

County Board Spotlight: Montgomery Holds Chili Cook-Off

By Tim Pfister, Community Relations Specialist, *Montgomery County Board of DD*



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF DD

Above: Cathy Clark and Brandon Thornton offer a taste of their signature chili at the Montgomery County Board of DD 10th Annual Chili Cook-off.

Excited and hungry crowds from the greater Dayton area gathered in the Coliseum at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds to taste 20 chili recipes on March 12 when the *Montgomery County Board of DD* hosted its 10th Annual Chili Cook-off. Attendees enjoyed an evening of fun, including music, dancing, games, and an inflatable moon bounce for the kids. The theme

this year was “The Wizard of Oz,” and the Coliseum was transformed to play the part. Tucked in among the chili cookers and tasters were Dorothy’s house, a field of poppies, the Emerald City, rainbows, and the yellow brick road. Many cooks and guests participated in the theme by showing up in costume.

Tracey Johnson and Keith Lewis from *RHA* took home third place. Second place went to Chris O’Connor, from *Mental Health and Support Services*, who also won Most Unique for the second year in a row. Finally, Joe Akakpo, from *Kuntz Adult Services Center*, placed first for the best chili. Judges included State Senators Peggy Lehner and Bill Beagle, State Representatives Michael Henne and James Butler, and Montgomery County Commissioners Judy Dodge, Debbie Lieberman, and Dan Foley. The Chili Cook-off was a great event for *Montgomery County Board of DD*, with more than 800 people in attendance. A special thank you goes out to all chili cooks, volunteers, and participants for making this year’s 10th Annual Chili Cook-off such a huge success. ■

Getting to Know: Adam Herman, *OACB*’s New Communications Director

Adam Herman joined the OACB as Communications Director after serving in a similar capacity for former Attorney General Richard Cordray, former Ohio House Minority Leader Joyce Beatty, and Canton Mayor William Healy. A Stark County native, Adam is a graduate of Kent State University. He currently lives in Columbus.

What I do when I’m not working: Travel is my lifelong passion. I have visited five countries over the past two years (United Kingdom, France, Canada, South Korea, and Tunisia) as well as several cities across the United States in an ongoing effort to explore the world and the many different types of people who live in it. Photography, cooking, reading, and spending time with friends and family fill the rest of my free time.

My favorite restaurant: My top three current favorites include *Lolita* (in the Tremont neighborhood of Cleveland), *Longman & Eagle* (near Logan Square in Chicago), and *Northstar Café* (in Columbus).

My favorite song or musical group: I enjoy a wide variety of music genres, but no favorites come to mind.



DOTTIE FAY / PIONEER CENTER

Above: Adam Herman speaks on behalf of OACB at the 11th Annual Pioneer Center Awards Banquet in Ross County on March 24, 2011.

My guilty pleasure: Watching cooking shows for hours.

My favorite moment working with individuals with developmental disabilities: I am new to Ohio’s DD system, having joined the *OACB* with no prior experience in the DD field. Over the past two months, I have met many individuals in my visits to County Boards across the state. The pride and heartfelt sense of accomplishment that shines through during our conversations keeps me motivated and makes me confident that my favorite moment has yet to come. ■

Affiliate Spotlight: Speech Therapy That Really Hits Home

OACB offers Affiliate Memberships to individuals, companies, and organizations that enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities. In an effort to better acquaint you with our Affiliate Members, we will be showcasing an Affiliate Member in each issue of the Newsletter.

Many parents are in disbelief when they learn that *Cornerstone Speech Therapy* provides their child's speech therapy sessions within their homes. But if you ask *Cornerstone* staff, they wouldn't have it any other way.

Cornerstone Speech Therapy was founded two years ago by speech-language pathologist Janelle Pickens to provide an alternative to the traditional clinical model of speech therapy. She has more than ten years' experience working with children in a variety of settings, including time spent in the early intervention field while living in Massachusetts. It was that positive experience of working with families in the home that led her to open her own private practice focused on providing home-based speech services in central Ohio.

Some people wonder how *Cornerstone* can make much progress in the home environment, especially with parents present. *Cornerstone* staff subscribe to the theory that most learning occurs through the relationships

children have with the people closest to them. With the right supports, they believe parents can and should be empowered to help their own children during teachable moments throughout their family's daily activities.

Cornerstone has now grown to a practice of five speech-language pathologists who serve children of all ages and address everything from early developing language to feeding to articulation. In addition, they offer educational seminars to families on speech and language development. They provide consultation and lead discussions with county Early Intervention programs about evidence-based practices for Part-C services. They have gained expertise in this area through participation with *Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities* in the *DD Council's* grant to train early intervention teams in evidence-based practices. Recently, two of their therapists were selected to complete the Master Coach Training program that began in March.

Cornerstone Speech Therapy is at the forefront of evidence-based practices for speech and language intervention. They are looking forward to a long future serving central Ohio as they make themselves at home in the homes of their families. ■

Across Ohio: News in a Nutshell

Athens County

More than 200 people attended the 2011 Disability Awareness Festival that was held at the Athens Community Center. "Together the Future is Brighter" focused on promoting positive perceptions and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. Presentations included the reading of a proclamation from the *Athens County Commissioners*, poetry readings by the Atco-Hocking College Creative Writers Collaborative, dance interpretation of the poetry by the Factory Street Dance Studio, self-advocacy awards by the PersonnelPlus Advocacy

and Advisory Council, highlights from the 2010 PersonnelPlus Employee/Employer Banquet, a stellar performance by the Atco Bell Choir (directed by *Ohio University* Music Therapy students), a Life-Time Service Award presented to Arlene Sheak from the Athens City Commission on Disabilities, and a "Together" skit and march by individuals and staff from the *Athens County Board of DD*. The event also included exhibits from 28 agencies, including: day service and residential providers, health care providers, Commission on Disabilities, local libraries, ORSC, AmeriCorps, NAMI of

Athens, OU College of Medicine Community Health Program, Social Security Administration, and self-advocacy groups. The high level of participation and collaboration of so many different entities truly epitomized the theme and demonstrated the atmosphere of "togetherness" that exists within Athens County. ■

Auglaize County

Auglaize County Board of DD closed its programs for two days as the worst flood in 90 years hit the cities of St. Mary's and Wapakoneta. Two adults served by the *County Board of DD* had to be rescued by boat

as a result of their home flooding. Staff and community assisted with getting them back in their home safely. There are many stories of rescue, special outreach, and great teamwork taking place throughout the county during this time of emergency (see photo below). Thanks to all of the agencies and volunteers who rose to the occasion to protect and serve our community! ■

Butler County

The *Butler County Board of DD* held its 17th Annual Community Recognition Dinner. 400 people were in attendance, the biggest crowd to date! Awards were presented to 168 community volunteers, employers, providers, families and self-advocates. ■

Carroll County

Carroll Hills Industries has been busy with contract work from GBS file folders and a new pliers contract from 7 Ranges. *Carroll County Board of DD* was able to call back one full-time workshop specialist from the layoff. The Board also sponsored Kristen Long to attend Project STIR in 2011. This training has empowered Kristen and she has shared her new knowledge with peers and Board staff. ■

Champaign County

Nine individuals from *Champaign County People First* attended the Developmental Disability Awareness Month Rally at the Statehouse on March 3. This same group also participated in many activities throughout the month to bring awareness to Champaign County. Jeff Dorsey from Confidence Builders visited the Lawnview Enrichment and Employment Center to teach participants how to make wooden whistles. All who participated enjoyed the opportunity to make their own whistles, some even made two! This activity may become a fund-raiser for the employee advisory council. ■

Clark County

Clark County Board of DD's Quest Adult Services Bloomin' Arts Exhibit showcased artwork from 26 artists with developmental disabilities. The exhibit was located at the *Springfield Museum of Art*. Additionally, *Quest Inc.* held their first ever Silent Auction on Tuesday April 5 from 6:00-8:00 at the Mueller Activity Center. ■

Clinton County

DODD Director Martin visited

Clinton County on March 10. He toured the campus and met with staff and providers. *Leadership Orion* and *Clinton County Commissioners* joined him for lunch. The Leadership Orion group is composed of customers of the Adult Services program. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed good conversation. ■

Delaware County

The *Delaware County Board of DD* has an exciting spring planned for the community. They hosted a 4-hour disability awareness training for Boy Scouts; a kick-off rally with inflatables, a pig roast and fun music and a training for first responders to provide education regarding responding to an emergency with a person with special needs and to bring more exposure for the program. They also created a Focus on Abilities Facebook page and a web page to inform the public of the levy on the May ballot. ■

Erie County

Erie County Board of DD recently published the second edition of its newly revised newsletter, *The Cable*. Gianna Musser, a young lady who receives early intervention services from *Erie County Board of DD* and who was recently named the 2011 *March of Dimes* Ambassador for the Cleveland region, was featured.

In other Board news, Jude Theibert recently joined the staff, and Carrie Beier, the Early Intervention Administrator for *Erie County Board of DD*, was recently named to two statewide committees. She was selected to participate in a statewide rule revision of the Help Me Grow program, and will serve on the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council. ■



AUGLAIZE CBDD
Above: Flooding closed the Auglaize County Board of DD for two days as the community banded together to help keep individuals with DD safe from rising waters.

Franklin County

Franklin County Board of DD recently completed a project where more than three million pages of individual records were indexed, scanned, and digitized to allow for immediate, electronic access by Service Coordinators. Over 150 file cabinets were emptied. ■

Gallia County

On Thursday, March 24th, the *Gallia County Board of DD* hosted an open house of *Gallco Industries* in its new location in Gallipolis, Ohio. The event coincided with DD Awareness Month and served as a means of showcasing the adult services program. The entire community was invited to stop in for a tour. ■

Geauga County

On March 18, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to open the new facility for use by both *Geauga County Board of DD* and *West Geauga Local Schools* transportation fleets. The shared facility (see photo below) will serve approximately 40 *West Geauga Local Schools* buses and 20 *Metzenbaum* vans. The collaboration is seen as a positive for both groups and the local taxpayers. Initial savings of at least \$1.5 Million will result from one facility being built over building two separate facilities less than a mile apart. In addition,



GEAUGA CBDD

Above: A new transportation facility helps Geauga CBDD share resources with other local agencies.

more savings will be realized by the potential economies of scale and sharing of staff. *West Geauga Local Schools* estimates they will realize a savings of almost \$100,000 due to reduced route mileage. Buying fuel in bulk will result in a \$30,000 savings. Finally, sharing transportation management will result in about \$30,000 in savings. The ceremony was attended by Commissioners Tracy Jemison and Bill Young, Architect Robert Blatchford, Contractor Eric Hummel, and representatives from both *West Geauga Local Schools* and *Metzenbaum*. ■

Hancock County

Hancock County Board of DD is participating in a life-changing Outreach Program for individuals with disabilities involving *Lowe's Distribution Center*, *The National Organization on Disabilities* and *Blanchard Valley Center*. This outreach effort affords individuals with disabilities the opportunity to obtain employment, economic independence, full benefits and lifelong friendships through equal opportunity employment. Director of Community Employment, Jenny Ferguson, nominated *Lowe's* to receive the *Ohio Public Images Employers Award*. On March 21, 2011, Mark Stewart, Manager, and Alan Cox, Human Resources Manager, accepted the award at Annual Awareness Awards Luncheon held at the *Embassy Suites* in Dublin, Ohio. ■

Hocking County

A breakfast hosted by *Hocking County Board of DD* was the first of several activities commemorating DD Awareness Month. Several community leaders and agencies

that work with *Hocking County Board of DD* attended the meeting, including State Senator Tim Schaffer, who was the keynote speaker. Several *Hocking County Board of DD* employees and the mother of a child who receives Help Me Grow services also spoke.

Other activities in recognition of DD Awareness Month included The Ability Bowl on March 9 at *Scenic Lanes & Billiards* in Logan; an ice cream social and dance for people served by *Hocking County Board of DD* and staff at *Hocking Valley Industries* on March 16; a blood drive at *Hocking Valley Industries* from 12 to 5 p.m. on March 29; and presentations to local schools throughout the month. ■

Highland County

Highland County Board of DD celebrated DD Awareness Month with a balloon launch on the Courthouse lawn (see photo below). ■



HIGHLAND CBDD

Above: A balloon launch was held in Highland County to celebrate DD Awareness Month.

Holmes County

Holmes County Board of DD's renewal levy campaign is underway and everyone is gearing up for the 35th Annual Spring Festival on May 13 and 14. The first day of the festival will feature volleyball, music, soup and sandwiches, and open viewing of quilts and auction items. The second day of the festival will begin with breakfast at 7 a.m. and a bake sale. The craft and furniture auction will begin at 9 a.m. and children's games will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. There will be a chicken barbeque beginning at 11:30 a.m. The quilt auction, featuring over 100 hand-made quilts like the one pictured below, begins at 2 p.m. All proceeds go to the Holmes County Association for Handicapped Citizens. The Holmes County Training Center is 4.5 miles north of Millersburg on Rt. 83. For more information call 330-674-8045. ■



HOLMES CBDD

Above: A hand-made quilt is auctioned to benefit the Holmes County Board of DD.

Huron County

Huron County Board of DD Self Advocates hosted their third annual Community Awareness Breakfast in celebration of DD Awareness Month. The many local policymakers and community members who attended were treated to a presentation entitled "In Three Words." Video clips from a variety of Huron County Board of DD



HURON CBDD

Above: "In Three Words" was performed to celebrate DD Awareness Month at Huron CBDD.

programs were each summarized by a caption of three words (see photo above). A video clip of two young men who will soon graduate from Christie Lane School had the caption "Class of 2011." A video clip of a few members of the Christie Lane basketball team had the caption "Together We Can." Norwalk Mayor Sue Lesch presented Christie Lane Self-Advocates a proclamation recognizing March as DD Awareness Month. The Huron County Commissioners also spoke at the breakfast and reminded attendees of the high quality of programming that Christie Lane provides to individuals in our communities. ■

Jackson County

The Jackson County Trotters Basketball Team is off to the state finals in Bowling Green. The sendoff included a pep rally band and the rollout of their new mascot - Trotter. ■

Knox County

Knox County Board of DD joined statewide DD Awareness Month efforts by encouraging the community to celebrate the abilities of individuals with disabilities. They began the month with a luncheon to educate local officials and prominent community members, including the

signing of proclamations by officials in four cities and a resolution by the Knox County Commissioners. The Knox County Board of DD hosted a successful 4th Annual Celebrity Omelet Dinner with 33 prominent community leaders volunteering their time to cook omelets or pancakes serve them to more than 400 community members who attended. Part of the proceeds went to Aktion Club of Knox County, a community service group of individuals with disabilities. Knox County Board DD also facilitated a 'Just Like You' 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament with proceeds benefiting Special Olympics of Knox County. Other DD Awareness Month activities included a Life Planning Panel to help families plan for their future, an Art Exhibit & Sale, and the 4th Annual Bowling Benefit to raise funds for Citizens Supporting Developmental Disabilities. ■



KNOX CBDD

Above: The Knox County Aktion Club is a community service group of people with disabilities.

Lake County

What do Hollywood spot lights and red carpet, crock pots full of chili, an art show depicting the "togetherness" theme, agency displays, Singer Fingers Choir performances, Dr. Seuss books, VIP bus rides, a presentation during the County Commissioner meeting and Board resolutions have

in common? All are the different ways *Lake County Board of DD* is celebrating the 2011 DD Awareness Month. *Lake County Board of DD's* program areas engage schools, libraries, charitable organizations, the general public, and community leaders to get involved in the activities. DD Awareness Month is filled with great events that highlight the accomplished talents of individuals with developmental disabilities and the commitment of the staff and community to inspire more possibilities. "Together... our future is brighter, we accomplish more, inspire possibilities and everyone wins." ■

Lorain County

Lorain County Board of DD's Murray Ridge Bell Choir participated in the Cleveland Glee Choir Competition, sponsored by *WjW Fox 8 News* and held at the IX Center in Cleveland. The Bell Choir "wowed" the judges with its performances of "Scarborough Fair," "Over the Rainbow," and "When the Saints Go Marching In," winning the evening's challenge along with a \$500 cash prize awarded by *Northeast Ohio Ford Stores*. Through the month of March the Bell Choir competed with eight other contestants for the \$5,000 Grand Prize, also awarded by Ford, through an on-line voting campaign at www.driveoneohio.com. ■

Madison County

Being an advocate for people with disabilities has been the life's work of Ron Spencer. For nearly three decades, Spencer has served the individuals associated with the *Madison County Board of DD*. He has worked in various capacities ranging from working in the Adult Program

where he assisted adults with disabilities succeed in work and life skills, to assessing the quality of services provided to individuals to Special Olympics coach, to his current position of Support Services Coordinator. On March 10, his commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities was honored as Spencer was presented with the prestigious Dorothy Allison Lifetime Achievement Award (pictured below). Named after *Madison County Board of DD's* founder, that presentation was the highlight of the 21st Annual Appreciation Awards, coinciding with March's statewide DD Awareness Month.



Above: Pictured are Madison County Board of DD President Tonya Keaton, State Rep. Bob Hackett, honoree Spencer, and Superintendent Jim Canney.

The event, held at *Fairhaven School* with an enthusiastic crowd numbering close to 300, honored those who have dedicated themselves to improving the lives of people with disabilities. Superintendent Jim Canney introduced each recipient with words from the winners' nominators themselves. *Madison County Board of DD* President Tonya Keaton and State Representative Bob Hackett assisted with distributing the awards. Awards were also presented to Paula Manning, Kenny Stischok,

and Penny Powers, all people who receive services from *Madison County Board of DD*. ■



MAHONING CBDD

Above: A new wheelchair ramp is constructed by Mahoning CBDD and Habitat for Humanity.

Mahoning County

The *Mahoning County Board of DD* teamed up with *Habitat for Humanity of Mahoning County* to construct a wheelchair ramp for a child receiving services. The project was funded through a federal grant with volunteer labor from the Board and Habitat. Previously, the family was pushing a wheelchair up and down a piece of plywood placed over the steps. The new ramp is ADA compliant and will provide safe transport for the child and a way to go outside and enjoy the wonderful Ohio summer. ■

Medina County

Medina County Board of DD hosted a luncheon for county leaders to celebrate DD Awareness Month. The event centered on this year's theme, "Together." The afternoon emphasized the importance of connections in the community. ■

Mercer County

Mercer County Board of DD held an Open House in all of its facilities on March 27 to celebrate DD Awareness Month. *Mercer County Board of DD* is on the ballot in May for a renewal of its six-year levy first passed in 2005. ■

Miami County

May 3 will see the *Miami County Board of DD* on the ballot for a 2.5 mill replacement. This levy was originally passed in 1997 and has been renewed several times since. An aggressive effort is under way to educate the citizens of Miami County on both the Board's stewardship of taxpayer dollars over the past 14 years as well as the need to place this millage on the ballot as a replacement. The *Miami County Board of DD* currently serves more than 900 people. ■

Morgan County

Morgan County Board of DD celebrated DD Awareness Month by recognizing everyday heroes when they realized the letters for the word "hero" are contained in the word "together. The first honored guests were soldiers represented by veterans from American Legion Post 24, VFW Post 4713 and personnel from 2-174 Air Defense Artillery Battalion. As the guests entered the room, people served by *Morgan County Board of DD* stood and applauded. They were proud to be a part of honoring the men and women who have served our country and protected our freedoms. The everyday heroes *Morgan County Board of DD* works with were introduced to the soldiers. Other special guests during the month of March included: ministers, police officers, firefighters, teachers, librarians, and county personnel. Heroes were chosen by talking with those served to find out whom they admire and who made a big difference in their lives. ■

Muskingum County

Starlight Programs hosted an Open House and Provider Fair on March 14

to celebrate DD Awareness Month. Those who attended were able to tour *Starlight School, Muskingum Starlight Industries Workshop* and the Adult Day Program. Attendees were also given the opportunity to speak with providers and learn more about the services and products they represent. The participation from the providers and the support from our individuals and their families made this a special night and a big success! ■

Portage County

In May 2010, the *Portage County Board of DD* received notification from the *Ohio EPA* of a grant award in the amount of \$25,000 for installation of clean diesel retrofit technology on twelve school buses. These unanticipated funds will be used for the installation of engine pre-heating systems on twelve vehicles. The clean diesel retrofit technology will significantly reduce students' and staff exposure to particulate matter from diesel exhaust. ■

Preble County

With a little assistance from a leprechaun, people served by the *Preble County Board of DD* created and shared this delicious magical soup recipe: Chicken broth (for comfort and the soul), Tomatoes (for love) Irish potatoes (for luck) Carrots (for seeing the best in others), Noodles (for flexibility), Garlic (to chase away the blues), Onions (to laugh with friends until you cry), Salt and Pepper (friends who add spice to your life). ■

Putnam County

Putnam County Board of DD has been celebrating DD Awareness Month in a number of ways. The

focus on artistic talents that many people who are served by the Board demonstrate has been reported well in the local newspaper, *The Putnam County Sentinel*. ■

Richland County

Richland Newhope teamed up with *Element of Art Studio/Gallery* and the *Richland Mall* to present "Bringing the Elements Together" – an art/talent exhibition. The five-hour event took place in the mall's center court and featured a display of artwork as well as musical performances by people supported by *Richland Newhope*. Also included were informational displays and simulated disability awareness activities. This was the first year for the exhibition and is one of a number of activities *Richland Newhope* held to mark DD Awareness Month. Others include the 18th Annual Richland County Third Grade Coloring Contest Awards Luncheon, the 10th Annual Community Awareness Day, 10 proclamations, and the distribution of more than 5,600 pamphlets. ■

Ross County

With the aim of involving as many people as possible during DD Awareness Month, the *Pioneer Center (Ross County Board of DD)* has been on the move. Although their annual Awards Event is the culmination of awareness activities, they also conducted their annual "Provider Fair" where more than 30 providers of services displayed their information to people served by the *Pioneer Center* and their families. *Pioneer Center* also had its employees, contracted agencies and kids delivering balloon bouquets to more than 50 businesses that have been supportive of their programs.



DOTTIE FAY / PIONEER CENTER

Above: Students at the Pioneer Center participate in a Provider Fair, where more than 30 providers of services displayed their information to people served by the Pioneer Center and their families.

The last week of the month will see 70 adults and children given the royal spa treatment by budding cosmetologists at the *Pickaway Ross Career and Technology Center*. ■

Sandusky County

A new service is becoming a big hit at *Sandusky County Board of DD*. The very first remote monitoring system has been installed in a home in Fremont. As of October 1, *Rest Assured* has installed video cameras, sensors, an interactive monitor, and speakers into a home with 3 people with disabilities. Aaron Fenner and Steve Queen, the two gentlemen who live in the remotely monitored setting, appreciate the benefits of the new system. The equipment is installed in their main living area with a camera in the kitchen and one pointed towards the door. There are sensors they can put on the stove and doorway that trigger a signal to the response center.

Rest Assured's goal is to improve the lives of seniors, adults, and people with disabilities while increasing their independence and maintaining their privacy, health and safety. Their

patented web-based Telecare system uses the latest wireless technology with secure broadband internet connections and state-of the art network support and response center. Although the network support and response center is located in Lafayette, Indiana, they are able to communicate 24/7 with their clients. They know how to effectively respond to the clients from the pre-screening processes used to assist in the set up of services through the detailed consumer-specific protocols, notifications of listed agency's/providers, on call staff, or families. They monitor daily activities and act as home security system as well. Program participants see this system as a benefit to them while trying to live independently in the community. It makes them feel safe and secure while providing them with an alternative to having a physical staff member in their home. The system is a more cost effective way to provide the supports they need. They can use the additional service money they are saving to do things like improve their quality of life or reaching more of their goals. They

recommend this to any of their peers that would like to work on living more independently. ■

Scioto County

The *Scioto County Board of DD* had two successful DD Awareness Month events in March - a Literacy Night at the preschool and an open house for the *Vern Riffe School*. Beginning March 29 they are hosting a series of public meetings styled as "cafe conversations" all around the county to meet with stakeholders and gain input for strategic planning. This will wrap up April 28 and results will be published on the Board's new website, scheduled to go live soon. ■

Seneca County

The 2011 Leadership Class of the *Seneca County Board of DD* attended the DD Awareness Month Kick-off on March 3 in Columbus. The focus was on persons who had succeeded in community employment with the help of various employers from the across the state. The program was very encouraging and inspired all to go to their respective counties and promote DD awareness. The class participated in this event and learned how advocacy works through changing of laws. ■

Shelby County



SENECA CBDD

Above: Several members of the Seneca County Leadership 2011 Class participate in the DD Awareness Month Activities.

Patty Huelskamp started community employment at *Partners In Recognition*, a Ft. Loramie, Ohio business that specializes in creating recognition systems. Patty is working in the engraving department and at de-masking engraved products. Prior to employment at Partners In Recognition, Patty had been employed at *S & H Products*. Patty receives transportation to and from work through The *Shelby County Board of DD* and *Shelby Transit*. ■

Stark County

Stark County Board of DD celebrated DD Awareness Month in all corners of the county. The month was kicked off with the County Commissioners declaring March DD Awareness Month. Each of the Commissioners were gifted with a mug, created in-house, decorated with the “Together” logo and original artwork created by Ed Miller, an artist from *TWi (The Workshops Inc.)* *Stark County Board of DD* participated in the annual Arc of Stark County Awareness Dinner with keynote speaker Doug Dieken. Amanda Westlake, another *TWi* artist, gave Dieken an original depiction of the Pro Football Hall of Fame that she created herself. Weekly newspaper advertisements introduced a few of the *Stark County Board of DD* family members to the community, while colorful billboards proclaimed “We Inspire Possibilities” across the county. Radio listeners were also treated to a special public service announcement recorded by Marc, who helps deliver supplies for the *Stark County Board of DD* purchasing department. Finally, the *Stark County Board of DD* Art Program provided a promise of Spring with a month-long display at the main branch of the *Stark County District*

Library. Scattered throughout the library were oversized flowers, bugs, animals, and trees created with paper mache’ and recycled products. In Stark County, Together...We Accomplish More! ■

Summit County

Summit County Board of DD underwent a site visit as part of its application for the 2011 *Ohio Partnership for Excellence (OPE)* Baldrige Award. The visit involved a team of examiners who conducted a series of interviews and reviewed documents to verify strengths and clarify opportunities for improvement. The *Summit County Board of DD* submitted a 50 page application to the *OPE* that documents its system continuous improvement efforts and application of Total Quality Management principles. The *Summit County Board of DD* received a Silver Baldrige Award in 2007. ■

Tuscarawas County

Tuscarawas County Board of DD held its annual Community Appreciation Awards Luncheon to recognize individuals and organizations in Tuscarawas County for their outstanding efforts. Award winners included community leaders, provider staff, local high school students, area businesses, and an individual who is employed in the community. Award recipients received recognition certificates and original works of art painted by individuals who participate in *Tuscarawas County Board of DD* adult programs. These pieces of art had recently been part of a week-long gallery showing at *Tuscarawas County Center for the Arts*. Several guests inquired about where to purchase additional art. The luncheon

received extensive coverage by every major media outlet in the county. ■

Union County

Union County Board of DD’s Harold Lewis Center students took a field trip to *The Bank/Delaware County Bank and Trust* to cash in pennies they collected for “Pennies for Peace” and a donation to the Central Asia Institute. Pupils cashed in a total of \$270.33 worth of pennies they collected from students and staff at *Harold Lewis Center*, as well as staff members of the *Union County Board of DD*. The Pennies for Peace Website is www.penniesforpeace.org. ■



Above: Students donate “Pennies for Peace” at the *Delaware County Bank and Trust*.

Warren County

Warren County Board of DD kicked off DD Awareness Month with Jeff Davis, Jami Patrick and Tammy Culp serving as ‘Ambassadors’ at the grand opening of the new administrative office building. A proclamation was presented by Commissioner Pat South before the Deerfield Center ended its Open House with a balloon lift. At the evening open house at Production Services Unlimited, Probate Judge Michael Powell read a journal entry after the choir, *Voices of Warren County*, performed. The annual provider fair held that evening was also quite a success! ■