



Pipeline Quarterly

Autumn 2014

*Working to Improve Employment Opportunities
for Everyone*



EXPECT. EMPLOY. EMPOWER.

What can YOU do?

Above: The U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2014

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, 30 East Broad Street, Floor 12, Columbus, Ohio 43215, (800) 617-6733,
www.dodd.ohio.gov

Working in their communities ...

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) oversees a statewide system of supports and services for more than 93,000 citizens with developmental disabilities and their families. We have learned from these individuals, their families, and friends, that many people served are ready for a greater level of independence than they currently have. Paid employment is a key element in attaining this improved level of independence.

One of the Department's key initiatives is to encourage supports and services that offer new and better opportunities for people with disabilities to work in the community, in integrated settings that maximize individual talents and available resources.

Statewide Expectations

This issue of *Pipeline Quarterly* explores employment options, programs, and initiatives within the state and national business community, as well as within the overall developmental disabilities service system.

We have been encouraged by our stakeholders to demonstrate how Governor John Kasich's Employment First initiative has begun to change the culture of the system, and provide positive outcomes for individuals and families around the state. We share this information and

some personal stories as illustrations of how training, person-centered planning, and collaborative relationships among service agencies can help individuals realize their employment goals -- and the ultimate satisfaction of more money in their pockets.

The days of low expectations for people with developmental disabilities are over. Providing community-based opportunities and options that are available to everyone, beginning with school-age and continuing into adulthood, is where Ohio's DD service system is clearly focused. We are excited about seeing more progress that makes a real difference in peoples' lives.

National Expectations

Each year, the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) develops a theme to help promote employing individuals with disabilities in communities across the nation. DODD strongly supports the 2014 theme: *Expect, Employ, Empower*.

See front cover for poster illustration.

More information is available at www.dol.gov/odep/

The days of low expectations for people with developmental disabilities are over.

Director's Message



DODD Director,
John Martin

“Citizenship is something that every person has an inherent right to exercise.”

Welcome to the Autumn 2014 *Pipeline Quarterly*. This issue focuses on the strides being made throughout Ohio to make community employment a preferred option and outcome for people with developmental disabilities. Involvement in one's community, including voting, volunteering, and having a job, are hallmarks of community participation – something every person has an inherent right to exercise – and for those who choose to do so, there always should be an opportunity.

It is with this in mind that DODD, and countless partners throughout the state – both public and private – approach employment, and the Employment First initiative. Collectively, we recognize the value and ability of the individuals we serve, and will champion their efforts on a state and local level, with the support of employers, families, and individuals themselves. Our communities are stronger when people are encouraged to use their talents, and when those talents are matched to an employer's needs. We know that while we have helped to open some doors for individuals to make valuable contributions to their communities through employment, there is always more work to do.

Sincerely, John Martin

Employment First ... People, Foremost



A Message from Kristen Helling
Division of Policy and Strategic Direction
DODD Lead for the Employment First initiative

October has come and gone, but the message promoted by the National Disability Employment Awareness Month campaign endures: “Expect. Employ. Empower.” These three words convey the message that employment for people with disabilities is about much more than just jobs – it’s about empowerment, and creating a continuum of inclusion.

Employment First endeavors to raise expectations about what people with developmental disabilities can achieve. People with developmental disabilities have employable strengths and can participate in meaningful work when provided the right measure of supports, in jobs that are well-matched and sometimes customized to a person’s interests, strengths, and preferences. The key to success is focusing on a person’s ability and not their disability. According to Webster, the Latin origin of the word ‘employ’ means ‘involve.’ Working is the manner in which most working-age adults are involved in their community, and most of us identify ourselves and our role in society by the job we do. Our jobs are a source of pride and often how we measure our self-worth, contributing to our quality of life.

As recognized by Governor Kasich in his Employment First Executive Order, all Ohioans, including those with developmental disabilities, should be encouraged to take part in the workforce, and to bring their individual strengths and talents to participate in Ohio business and industry.

The key to success is focusing on a person’s ability and not their disability.

This issue of *Pipeline Quarterly* features many stories about people who have been empowered by employment. Among them you’ll meet Michael, Erika, and Michelle, who encourage us to believe that, through working together, we can ensure that more people have opportunities to work in their community.

By raising expectations – with families, individuals, DD professionals and local communities – we believe that people with developmental disabilities can obtain jobs in the community so they can experience greater earnings, better benefits, and improved health and quality of life. Change is hard but possible – it just takes time and effort.

Kristen Helling may be reached at kristen.helling@dodd.ohio.gov.

Medicaid Buy-In

It’s About People Keeping More of What They Earn

Chuck Beatty, advocate for improved employment opportunities within Ohio’s DD community, recently provided updated information on the Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD, or MBI) program. This program allows people with disabilities who are employed to qualify for Medicaid benefits with higher income and resource limits, and buy in to Medicaid by paying a premium based on income.

At a recent Family Advisory Council meeting, Beatty reported that,

“As of October, 9500 Ohioans with disabilities are enrolled in MBI.

This is progress!

In May, there were 9408.

Medicaid Buy-In is helping more and more people.”

Chuck tours the state providing information about MBI, and is available for presentations, at no charge, anywhere in Ohio.

Contact Chuck Beatty at cwbeatty@centurylink.net.

See: <http://medicaid.ohio.gov/FOROHIO-ANS/Programs/MBIWD.aspx>

Contents

Overview; Director’s Message ...	2
Employment First; MBI ...	3
Southwest Ohio Spotlight ...	4-5
Section 503 Update ...	5
Employment Internships, Partnerships ...	6
A Perspective from Michelle ...	7
BLN; Interagency Agreement ...	8
Empowering Erika, Darke County ...	9
Employment Resources...	10

Southwest Ohio Spotlights Employment

Michael Richards is able to work on anything from a large riding mower, to a chainsaw, to a push-mower, and will take a good, hard look at anything that's brought into his shop for repair. Opening M&A Small Engine Repair in downtown Hillsboro about two years ago, he took a leap into the Employment First culture and made his dream of business ownership come true.

Michael and wife, April, will tell you that the support and cooperation needed to get them to this point was no small effort, and involved the services and support of the Highland County Board of Developmental Disabilities (HCBDD), Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), the local business community, and technical assistance offered by assistive technology -- along with a strong work ethic and desire to succeed on their part.

What They've Learned

Michael, a Briggs & Stratton Master Service Technician, has learned a lot on the job during the last couple of years, and not only about machinery. He commented, "We've learned a lot about customer service, and about the seasonal nature of the work we do. One time we delivered to the owner a large piece of equipment I had repaired, and I was a little nervous about the amount I had to charge due to the hours of labor and the parts needed. But it was still a very fair price, I thought."



M&A owner Michael Richards (center) updates his support team about business at the shop in downtown Hillsboro. (L. to R.) Kraig Walker and Candice Baker, Highland County Board of DD; Erin Shaffer, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities; and Michael's wife and business partner, April. Pipeline first visited them in April 2013 (see photo inset). On our return visit, we learned they are stocking more parts, and adding new software to better manage the inventory.

"Michael was talking about employment and having his own shop long before the Employment First initiative.

He's a go-getter." - Kraig Walker, Adult Services Director, HCBDD

"Sure enough, the man took one look at the invoice and the work I did, and then opened up the door to his garage full of other things that needed repair and said something like, 'Here's a few more things you can work on for me.' I was so relieved, and it made me feel so good!"

(cont. on p. 5)

The DaVinci Magnifier is assistive technology that helps Michael to read detailed manuals and diagrams ... and those all-important parts catalogs.



In April 2013, Michael had been in business about six months. He's shown with Kelli Williamson, Highland County Board of DD, along with the many roto-tillers, mowers, and weed-whackers he'd recently repaired. Michael said,

"I know if I didn't have all this support behind me, I wouldn't be here in this shop!"

Southwest Ohio Spotlight *(cont. from p. 4)*

Michael uses assistive technology for his vision impairment, including the Da-Vinci Magnifier, and an Adaptive Lift that helps him to be more comfortable and gain better access to areas on the equipment he is repairing. Michael has cerebral palsy, so leverage is improved with the lift, as is overall safety, and he gets around the shop easily with the help of forearm crutches.

Collaboration is Key

Kraig Walker, HCBDD adult services director, noted that Michael and April have been especially persistent in achieving their goals, and that they look for opportunities to connect with services that will help to move the business forward. Michael agreed, and added,

*“The thing of it is ...and I can’t stress it enough ...
you have to make an effort!”*

Across Highland County to Kroger and Lowe's

Our southwest Ohio spotlight on employment now shifts from business ownership to working for a large grocery store chain that expects a lot from its employees – from baggers to managers – Kroger.

D.J., an enthusiastic employee who came to Kroger prepared with skills gained via the local Bridges to Transition program, sets the stage as we approach to talk with him. He said,

*“I can’t talk now.
I’ve got a customer.”*

D.J.’s priorities are clear, and he says it with a smile, grabbing a bag of raisins and asking the customer, “You think Ohio State is going to do OK this year?”

And, at Lowe's, another employer excited about HCBDD-referred employees, managers Tiffani Armentroutt and Roger Bowlby appreciate good customer service. They explained,

"We think Shawn is great! ...

“Shawn’s like ‘Mr. Hustle.’ I can tell if he’s here on any given day because the carts are rolled in by color -- the right way -- not just randomly lined up.”

(cont. on page 7)



D.J.’s preparation for employment included participating in the local Employment First job-readiness program.

Section 503 Updates *Important for Employers and Prospective Employees*

An update to section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offers advantages to people with disabilities, including those eligible to receive free employment services through the U.S. Social Security Office Ticket to Work program. The changes were effective in March of this year.

Section 503 requires companies doing business with the federal government to take affirmative action to recruit, employ, train, and promote qualified people with disabilities. It also requires contractors to invite job applicants to voluntarily self-identify as a person with a disability before being offered a job, without fearing discrimination.

In addition, a seven percent utilization goal for federal contractors regarding the hiring and retention of people with disabilities is a goal contractors are encouraged to meet. Businesses are required to track data to demonstrate how their policies are making progress toward this goal.

To make the most of the work opportunities resulting from the new regulations, Ticket to Work Employment Network agencies, such as Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), are connecting federal contractors with people who have disabilities and are job-ready.

How can Section 503 help you?

For more information, visit:
www.socialsecurity.gov/work; or
www.access-board.gov/the-board/laws/rehabilitation-act-of-1973
Contact: support@choosework.net;
Call 1-866-968-7842 (V) or
1-866-833-2967 (TTY)

Businesses Welcome Internships & Partnerships

P&G – Partnership Leads to Paid Internships

A successful Cincinnati area partnership named Project Reach involves high school students with disabilities participating in paid internships within Proctor & Gamble (P&G). Currently, four of the six P&G Cincinnati locations have begun participating in Project Reach, with plans for the final two launching in the next three months.

According to Chris Filler at the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), “Deb Stroud, a member of the Realizing Employment First for Youth Leadership Team, is one of the school partners that made this a reality!”

See the complete story, *Creating and Nurturing a More Diverse and Inclusive Culture*, online at the link shown at the end of this article.

People with Disabilities Affinity Group

In addition, P&G has a People with Disabilities (PwD) corporate affinity group that supports employees with disabilities, as well as those who care for family members with disabilities. A PwD recruiting team also collaborates with local university recruiting teams to attract and hire qualified students with disabilities.

Due to the efforts of this group, P&G has been recognized by *Diversity Inc.* magazine as one of the top five companies welcoming people with disabilities into the workplace in 2014.

More information at
<http://news.pg.com/blog/diversity-and-inclusion/ndeam14>.

Kroger stores make hiring qualified people with disabilities a priority.



Nationwide Partnership Recruits Interns

Nationwide is a values-driven company where people work in an engaging environment that is committed to recruiting talented workers with disabilities. Recognizing this opportunity, the Columbus-based company has partnered with WrightChoice Inc. to help recruit interns from across the country to be a part of Nationwide’s Internship Program.



WrightChoice, also based in Columbus, is a non-profit organization that works to bridge the education-to-workforce gap, and eliminate barriers to employment for students with disabilities and other at-risk populations.

The Nationwide internship program offers an intense, 12-week internship that provides participants with high-profile experiences to enhance their college degrees and careers. Students with disabilities must have a strong academic background and desire to work in fields including finance, investments, strategy, enterprise risk management, accounting, and internal audit.

According to an annual survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 95 percent of employers said candidate experience is a factor in hiring decisions. Nearly half say they expected a new graduate’s experience to come from internships or co-op programs.

To learn more, contact
TyKiah Wright at
614-802-2364; twright@wrightchoice.org

The Kroger store in Warren County was named an Employer of the Year at the recent Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities annual event in Columbus.

A Perspective from Michelle



Michelle Marcellus (right), who received a coveted ESDY Award at the recent Synergy Conference, attended with Samantha Klinow, community employment job coach with Ability Works in Sandusky. Along with providing administrative support and effective organizational skills in her paid position at Ability Works, Michelle facilitates a monthly self-advocacy discussion group, volunteers in her community, and enjoys writing.

“Being presented the ESDY Award was a huge validation of my work. I sincerely thank my Service and Support Administrator Larrick Zirkle, and Lisa Moore, a friend and Ability Works colleague, for the nomination.”

“Much of my life I feel like I roll on a tightrope.”

Individuals working in paid employment that recognizes and utilizes their skills and talents were among people honored at the recent Synergy Conference in Columbus. Among them was Michelle Marcellus, an employee of Ability Works, in Sandusky.

Michelle beamed a surprised smile as her name was called to receive an ESDY award recognizing her many contributions to the agency. Below is an excerpt from a letter she wrote for consideration as an ESDY nominee. It speaks eloquently for many people with DD:

“Working at Ability Works sometimes is frustrating and is a tug-of-war of mind and heart. This is due to the fact that I have cerebral palsy myself, and also require much physical assistance in my everyday life. My struggle comes because I am completely capable of and aware of everything that goes on around me. I also have the educational credentials to back me up. I have a bachelor’s degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Kent State University. I also have a minor in Writing.”

Much of my life feels like I roll on a tightrope. Due to the fact that I am employed by the same place where I could also be considered a consumer of their services, I always strive to make sure that I am recognized as a valued employee of Ability Works apart from anything else. Many people don’t realize that I tend to take my work home with me in my mind. I analyze it from all angles because I totally understand every aspect of my workplace and of my life, sometimes a little more than I should, just by me being me. ”

Many thanks to Michelle for her permission to share her thoughts. She may be contacted at mmarcellus@ability-works.com

Spotlight on Southwest Ohio

(cont. from p. 5)

Bowlby, the store manager, explained that HCBDD has provided a number of qualified individuals to augment their pool of local employees in Highland County. He commented,

“It takes a lot of dynamic skills to work here. You have to synthesize questions that customers have. It’s more than just putting something in a bag, or on a shelf.”

“We’re interviewing another job candidate today and are pretty excited about him, too. He’s very confident. I think the training and conversations about skills and interests is so important. Not everyone’s an all-star, but we do give everyone a chance.”

Now, with five individuals actively participating in Employment First programs – and more on the way – Highland County is demonstrating that when workforce options are offered, people with disabilities are ready to step up to the plate.

Acknowledgments and thanks to Kraig Walker and staff at the Highland County Board of DD
Contact: Kraig Walker at kwalker@highdd.org

Ohio BLN Earns Top Honor

The Ohio Business Leadership Network (OHBLN) is a partnership of businesses initiated by the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities and the President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities. It is partially funded by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.

DODD is pleased to note that the Ohio Business Leadership Network was named the U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) 2014 Affiliate of the Year at the organization's annual conference this fall. The Affiliate of the Year award winner is described as,

"... Having demonstrated exemplary efforts in promoting the vision, mission, and spirit of the USBLN. In addition, as a result of their efforts, employers and their communities understand, utilize, and benefit from the valuable resources that people with disabilities present in the workplace."

The OHBLN is an affiliate of the USBLN, a national organization that promotes the business initiative to include people with disabilities in the workforce using a business-to-business model, and represents 51 chapters and more than 5,000 employers across the nation.

The recognition is a testament to the leadership at OHBLN and reflects the efforts of state agencies, including Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and other agencies that work to build strong relationships and partnerships with the business community. The mission is to educate businesses on how people with disabilities can help them meet their workforce needs.

According to OOD Director Kevin Miller, "These efforts have led to 4,576 job placements, the highest since 2011."

More information at <http://ddc.ohio.gov/Pub/BLN.htm>

(Right) Agencies supporting the Medina County interagency agreement include all of the county's local school districts, MCBDD, the County Educational Services Center, and many other agency partners. Melanie Kasten-Krause, executive director of the Society for Handicapped Citizens of Medina County (sic), is shown signing the Employment First Interagency Agreement for Transition of Students with Disabilities into the Workforce in October. (Photo courtesy, Medina County Board of DD)

Interagency Agreement Fosters Collaboration for Transition

An interagency agreement to strengthen the network of services that will help transition students with disabilities into the workforce was signed earlier this month in Medina County, bringing additional support to current collaborative efforts.

The Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities (MCBDD), area school districts, and other community-based organizations have teamed up to promote the mission and vision of the Employment First initiative, making opportunities for jobs that are integrated into the community the first priority for people with developmental disabilities. More than 20 state and local officials gathered at the MCBDD Achievement Center for the symbolic signing.

MCBDD Superintendent Annette Davis-Kramp observed, "Employment First is everyone's business—schools, County Boards of DD, families, and employers. It is steps such as these we are taking today that will make it successful."

The DODD Employment First team is excited about the county-wide approach. Project Manager Joe Kowalski noted,

"Medina County is helping to lead the way in terms of leveraging the collective strengths of local and state agencies to employ people with disabilities. Medina County has found a way to energize efforts around coordination and collaboration to support high school students. We will follow this approach with interest."



Empowerment for Erika, in Darke County



Erika enjoys helping and interacting with residents at Village Green.

Person-Centered Planning

When Erika Smith began looking for a job in Darke County, she knew exactly what she wanted -- she loves working with senior citizens, and has a heart for serving them. Her desire to work in a residential healthcare environment blossomed when she began volunteering in the laundry area for a local business. She felt this type of work was a perfect fit for her. Erika has a vision impairment and is eager to work in the community.

In November 2013, Erika began working with the Community First (CF) department of the Darke County Board of DD. The department helps individuals learn job skills, apply for jobs, and provides on-the-job training. Erika had held jobs in the past, but they were not a good fit for her -- including work in a garden department, in food service, and in child care. She made clear to CF staff her desire to work in a residential healthcare center, in laundry and/or housekeeping.

Preparation

Before beginning her job search, Erika began classes through the County Board. The classes are part of their overall grant efforts under an initiative called Project: Transformation. She learned about creating a resume and gaining interviewing skills, and took the advice of CF staff to heart, practicing her interviewing skills at home, and applying what she learned.

Erika's positive attitude and hard work paid off. She took

the next step in her journey by starting the job search process with a clear goal in mind. She worked with CF staff to apply and interview for a position at Village Green Healthcare Center, believing that it truly could be her dream job. Even though she was nervous when she interviewed in July with the facility's Executive Director Nick Anderson, she definitely was well-prepared.

Success

Erika was offered a job there as a laundry/housekeeping aide. Her excitement for the position is clear, and she will tell you, "I love the people I'm working with ... the residents and the staff." Anderson reported that Erika fits in well. "She has a good sense of humor, which is important here." He added,

"She impacts every resident she works with. Some residents even wait for her at the door when they know she's working that day. Erika exemplifies our organization's standards, especially customer service and customer satisfaction. She has a challenging job, because everyone has a different idea of what is clean!"

Special thanks to Eric Lee, Tamala Marley, and Bonnie Stockstill at the Darke County Board of DD for this information.

What They're Saying...

Below is a key observation as we explore the future for community-based and integrated employment options for Ohioans with DD. It was noted at a statewide employment conference in October, WORKING Together, which united more than 300 people who have an interest in expanding employment options for people with disabilities.

"We in Kentucky are envious of you in Ohio, with the awesome resources you are putting forward and the lead you are taking -- because employment matters!

It matters a lot, and to everyone.

That's how people identify themselves. "

*- Katie Wolf Whaley, University of Kentucky
Human Development Institute*

Employment Resources

ODJFS New Online Services

Furthering a statewide approach to expanding opportunities for community-based employment for people with DD, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is offering job search assistance for people with disabilities via a new online service. OhioMeansAccessibility.com works along with the ODJFS' site OhioMeansJobs.com, posting resumes and providing referrals to potential employers interested in hiring people with disabilities. The website also offers information about starting a business, building financial assets, transitioning from school to work, work incentive programs, and health care. Employers may use the site to find information about hiring incentives, workplace accommodations, employment law, and engaging a qualified and diverse workforce.

U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

ODEP recommends ideas regarding employability — including helping employers to launch disability Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Sometimes referred to as Employee Networks or Affinity Groups, ERGs offer employees an opportunity to connect to and receive support from others with similar backgrounds or interests. According to the ODEP guidance online, information about ERGs includes *A Toolkit for Establishing and Maintaining Successful Employee Resource Groups*. The ODEP website offers many other ideas for ways to celebrate local successes and to pave the way for more. Visit the ODEP website at www.dol.gov/odep.

Ohio Employment First Website

At www.ohioemploymentfirst.org many resources and ideas are shared, including 'Ohio's Path to Employment First,' which summarizes the activities that have been implemented since Governor John Kasich signed the Employment First Executive Order in March 2012. Long-range planning has taken place to help cultivate a culture in which employers recognize and embrace the contributions and capabilities of people with developmental disabilities.

Publication Notes

Published four times annually by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Division of Legislative Affairs and Communications, *Pipeline Quarterly* focuses on people and topics of interest to the statewide developmental disabilities community, and supports the Administration's core concepts and philosophy.

We thank all who have allowed us to work with them to prepare this issue, and who have contributed to its development.

Reader ideas, comments, and feedback are always welcomed. Please submit ideas and feedback to:

Editor Sherry Steinman,
sherry.steinman@dodd.ohio.gov,
614-644-0262.

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Ohio | Department of
Developmental Disabilities

**The Mission of the
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities**

is continuous improvement of the quality of life
for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

Ohio Department of
Developmental Disabilities
30 East Broad Street, Floor 12
Columbus, Ohio 43215
800-617-6733
www.dodd.ohio.gov