

Pipeline Quarterly

A quarterly feature publication of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

Volume 6, Issue 1

Spring 2013

"You have to make an effort.
Be passionate!"
p. 3

System Reforms, Challenging Norms – Progress Continues



Silent Support Rings Capitol Square

In April, silent support for Medicaid expansion was shown by stakeholders attending the Ohio Provider Resource Association annual conference. While the effort did not persuade House members to keep the proposal in the budget, it was a strong message.

Spring 2013 felt like winter at the outset, then finally brought flowers and warm breezes. Some things take longer than hoped, and thus it is with many opportunities for people with disabilities. This issue of *Pipeline Quarterly* takes a closer look at Ohio's employment scene for people with developmental disabilities since the March 2012 signing of the Employment First initiative, as well as other steps to reform the state's DD services system.

In addition, we share news of individuals and groups who are challenging norms and seeing progress. Defined as, 'a way of behaving typical of a certain group,' norms serve as behavioral or societal benchmarks and reflect what is viewed as 'normal.' Looking ahead, the 'new normal' likely will push

well beyond the boundaries of years past, as federal and state dollars are accessed to support community-based services and newly-defined opportunities.

In late June, the state budget for 2014-2015 was finalized by the Ohio General Assembly (see *Director's Message*, p. 3). DODD participated in this process, along with partner agencies in the Governor's Office of Health Transformation (OHT), with a focus on assuring fiscally-sustainable programs and services for individuals and their families. As spring ends, we look to a year of improving employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities, and more stories of success and change as people served by Ohio's DD system move forward more confidently as participants in their communities.



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Director's Message

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"Jobs Budget 2.0 Has Arrived!"

-DODD Director John Martin



Employment First Initiative Fosters Opportunities

In signing the Employment First Executive Order in March 2012, Governor John Kasich underscored the belief that individuals with disabilities can use their strengths and talents to increase their economic wealth, build a sense of accomplishment, and create their own social identity.

Small Engines - Big Ideas

In Greenfield, Ohio (Highland County), M & A Small Engine Repair Shop hosted an open house for the new business in late March, which resulted in a huge influx of business that filled the downtown location front to back. It's the Employment First culture at work.

Business owners Michael and April (M & A) Richards now are surrounded with enough lawn mowers and weed-whackers to provide work for, "A good long while," according to Mike. He notes that the shop was made a reality only through the persistent and collaborative assistance of the Highland County Board of DD, HighCo Inc., the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) and allied Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BVSI).

Mike explains that he began his quest to become a Briggs & Stratton Master Service Technician a while back, and started working on various machines and engines long ago in a shed behind his home. He then got the ball rolling on the downtown business location. The Briggs & Stratton Master Service Technician designation is a highly respected credential, and Mike will tell you it wasn't easy to come by. *(cont. on p. 3)*



Business is Good!

Michael Richards is able to work on anything from a riding mower to a chain-saw, to a push-mower. He's shown here with Kelli Williamson, SSA with the Highland County Board of DD, along with some of the many roto-tillers, mowers, and weed-whackers he's recently repaired.

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

-Mike Richards

Employment First Conference, Changing Expectations



State Leadership Panel Participates

(L. to R.) Sue Zake, Director for Exceptional Children, Ohio Department of Education; Tracy Plouck, Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health; Kevin Miller, Director, Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission; John Martin, Director, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD); and Kristen Helling, Employment First Project Manager, DODD.

Visit the Employment First website: www.ohioemploymentfirst.org

At the inaugural Employment First conference June 4-5 in Columbus, a State Leadership Panel offered insight into efforts underway at their agencies assuring that Employment First yields real community-based work opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the state. Panel members responded to questions such as, "What future changes do you envision for your agency, to support the culture of Employment First?" DODD Employment First Project Manager Kristen Helling welcomed attendees, noting,

"This conference is an integral part of the Employment First approach that directs Ohio's state agencies to work together to remove barriers to community employment for people with developmental disabilities."

-Kristen Helling

Small Engines - Big Ideas

(cont. from p. 2)

He relates, "In 2007 I first completed technical training on 4-cycle and 2-cycle engines. Then I needed to have a certification to do warranty work if it came in the door, so I had to study for that. For factory training I needed transportation and a job coach to help me read and answer questions (Mike is visually impaired.) Then - and I was very excited about this - through RSC/BVSI, I was able to purchase some needed adaptive technology for the business. The DaVinci magnifier (see photo below) really helps me with reading and looking at manuals and schematics. They also assisted later with modifications to the workspace, and some help with marketing."

Mike took the final exam for the Briggs & Stratton credential online, and passed it the second time around. The certification plaque is proudly displayed on the wall of M & A's front lobby, along with framed recognition from the local Chamber of Commerce, and even from the Ohio House of Representatives, District 91, welcoming M & A to the local business community. "That was cool," says Mike. "I think they must have seen the story in our local paper about my Grand Opening."

And that's how it all began. The Grand Opening in March 2013 (following a 'soft' opening in October 2012) really set things moving. Kelli and Mike add, "Opening the shop back in October was tough, because the lawn mowing and
(cont. on p. 7)



An Adaptive Lift

helps Mike be more comfortable and gain better access to areas on the equipment he is repairing.

"Kelli, my SSA, encouraged me to keep going. So did April, my wife. I want to you know, it wasn't just me doing this!"



The DaVinci Magnifier

helps Mike with reading and viewing manuals and schematics. He's not shy about crediting the partners that have collaborated to help him open the business, emphasizing,

"The thing of it is ... and I can't stress it enough ... you have to make an effort. Be passionate!"

- Director's Message - Jobs Budget 2.0 Has Arrived



by **John Martin**
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In late June, the budget for 2014-2015 was finalized, and we are now ready to move forward with Ohio's *Jobs Budget 2.0* as our guide. While that process has been completed, the subject of funding for health care will continue to be a hot topic here in our state, as well as nationally.

As the new fiscal year begins, there are many encouraging signs that the Ohio economy continues to get back on track. For example, more than 170,000 private sector jobs were created between January 2013 and May 2013, and wages are growing faster here than in the rest of the nation.

Regarding the Department's budget, we have begun a major effort to modernize the ICF/IID program. In response to input from the DD community, we have negotiated a historic agreement with stakeholders to significantly increase individuals' opportunities to live in community-based settings. The so-called 'Grand Bargain' includes a commitment by the field to convert up to 600 ICF/IID beds to waivers, and to downsize up to 600 large ICF/IID beds to settings no larger than eight-bed homes.

The DODD budget also continues Employment First policies to ensure Community Employment is the preferred outcome for working-age individuals with developmental disabilities. The budget provides \$6 million over the biennium for the new Employment First line item. All of this is welcome news for Ohio's developmental disabilities community.

-Respectfully, John Martin

Perry County Sets the Bar High on Service Innovation *Academy of Leadership Abilities, Bio-Digester System -- Not 'Business as Usual'*

In a continuing effort to learn more about new employment options and other opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in communities throughout the state, DODD Director John Martin and Deputy Director Monty Kerr recently toured the Perry County area. They quickly learned that the Perry County Board of DD has 'stepped it up a few notches' with programs such as the innovative, participant-driven Academy of Leadership Abilities (ALA), at Miller High School, and a job-creating and energy-generating Bio Digester project, among other efforts. It's definitely not 'business as usual.'

Director Martin and Deputy Director Kerr joined PCBDD Superintendent David Couch and other staff traveling the winding roads of New Lexington, Corning, and Rendville. At each stop more was learned about people working toward goals, and otherwise making the most of their talents.

At Miller High School in Corning, a group of eight teens were still excited about being in the school building at the end of May. But the reasons were sound. Each of the students, including individuals with and without disabilities, athletes and scholars, had something positive to say about each other -- and about the ALA curriculum, focused on defining personal strengths, goals, and interests.

ALA program consultant Russ Tippett was thrilled with the students' progress during the pilot project's first school year. He commented, "I'm overwhelmed by how well they have worked together, and come out of their shells. Self-confidence after high school graduation is critical. These students will have a better start on the future."

(cont. on p. 5)



Top:

Bio-Digester project coordinator Gil Fuleki (center) gestures as he explains to Director John Martin (left) the processes involved in turning food waste into energy ... and grant dollars into jobs. Says Fuleki,

"It's a consortium of energy, environment and engineering. And, best of all, it will create jobs!"

Center:

Russ Tippett, program consultant for the Academy of Leadership Abilities (ALA) emphasizes the benefits of the peer-driven approach to building students' self esteem, and the need for continuity within the school day curriculum. He states,

"The students in this program have surpassed our expectations already this first year."

Right:

Miller High School soon-to-be senior Stephen McGrath, confidently addresses DODD visitors and local dignitaries ...

"What is ALA? For me it is a life-changer. I feel this group is part of my family."

Perry County (cont. from p. 4)

Moving on to the Bio-Digester project at the PCBDD site in New Lexington, project coordinator Gil Fuleki noted, "I was a Job Developer with the agency here, and when it came time for this project, I saw it as a great way to get our people employed. We expect it should employ from 3 – 20 people as things go along, and if it breaks even or brings in a few dollars, we'll feel that it's a win-win all the way around."

PCBDD entered into the Bio-Digester project about a year ago. No small undertaking, it involved many collaborative components, including ideas from Ohio University engineers, dollars via a Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) grant, the support of enthusiastic Board members, and buy-in from other community allies.

Work is nearly complete on the system, which will create methane gas from food scraps. The gas will be captured and used to power the nearby PCBDD Garden Center and activity buildings. As State Representative Bill Hayes commented after joining the DODD tour group onsite, "Dave (Couch) told me if they make a little money from this project that would be great. What's most exciting, though, is that it's providing learning opportunities leading to community-based jobs."

And, one cannot tour Perry County to learn more about opportunities for people with developmental disabilities without visiting the Rendville Art Works! Director Martin listened intently and peered with interest, as the artists worked at creating unique paintings and other art pieces. Executive Director for the Art Works, Joel Yeager, pointed out several unique pieces and their equally unique creators, who, in turn, communicated their excitement for their work. Some, totally caught up in their paints, simply nodded and kept carefully dabbing and blending. Others were happy to stop and explain what they were doing. Jim Swingle looked up from his shockingly-



"Just look at all that talent!"
Is Superintendent Dave Couch showing Deputy Director Monty Kerr how to soar like an eagle? No. He's just excited about the artwork gracing the walls, floors, and ceilings of the Rendville Art Works. And the artists will tell you, "Rendville is in Rendville - Not Corning!"
Learn more at www.rendvilleartworks.org

bright flower paintings to smile and offer to sell one to the 'tourists.' Joel notes that Rendville artists keep 100% of the proceeds from any art they might sell. Around 7-10 artists are at work there each day in the converted old church in Rendville, and the program has grown from its start in 2002 as an arts-oriented pilot project. Now it's a nationally-known 'folk art' destination ... and, like much of what was learned in Perry County, it's definitely more than 'business as usual.'

More at www.perrydd.org and at www.practicalstrategies.org; Contact: Dave Couch at (740) 342-3542

In Crawford County, Progress May Be Measured in Scoops



Under New Management! Manager Courtney Eidson, employee Jeff Turner, and Assistant Manager Taylor Graham are ready for the ribbon cutting to begin at the Aumiller Park concession stand. It has a new look, new name and new products. The stand, re-named "Delectables," now is operated by the Crawford County Board of DD.

This summer in Bucyrus, the concession stand at Aumiller Park will be serving a lot more than just ice cream. People with disabilities served by the Crawford County Board of DD will be making chili dogs, tacos, snow cones and all the summer favorites, while gaining work experience and new skills as part of the agency's *Bridges to Employment* program. "Delectables" will be open seven days per week, providing a fun and busy employment training site. Vanessa Shutler, Community Employment Manager with

CCBDD notes, "The city owns the stand and we are operating it in collaboration with them. She adds, "We'll have job coaches onsite along with the employees, and at this community-centered training site, our clients will learn a lot of different skills."

Deb Pinion, Director of the Bucyrus Area Chamber of Commerce, attended the Delectables ribbon-cutting ceremony and stated, "This is a nice marriage of the city working with the County Board. They have done a lot of work to the stand, and it is wonderful."

Mayor Roger Moore added that the stand will be a great learning center for the *Bridges to Employment* participants, as well as adding value to the Aumiller Park community as people visit the pool this summer. He said, "It's really a win-win situation."



Autism Diagnosis Education Project - Expanding Services to Children

The expansion is funded through the Office of Health Transformation (OHT) Innovation Fund. The funds support key Administration initiatives, including a 'Whole Child' approach to Autism Spectrum Disorders. There is no cost to participating counties.



Connor Osburn and early intervention specialist Jenny Montague in Greene County participate in a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation ... play with a purpose!

After launching ADEP, data indicates that lag time in identifying ASD in young children decreased significantly. Parent-reported baseline data show that the age of 'first concern' decreased from 40 months to 18 months.

In January 2013, DODD and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) announced an expansion of the Autism Diagnosis Education Project (ADEP). The statewide expansion of specialized services to children started as a pilot project supported through the commitment of ODH and the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The original pilot launched nearly 30 'Diagnostic Partnership' teams.

The statewide project now is administered by DODD, in collaboration with the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and Akron Children's Hospital/Family Child Learning Center.

The teams bring together the expertise of physicians and early intervention professionals to assure timely and comprehensive diagnostic evaluations at the earliest signs of an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The expansion supports key Kasich Administration initiatives that build upon existing programs targeting early identification and intervention for Ohio's youngest children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Several positive outcomes have resulted. In particular, the lag time is reduced between the initial suspicion of autism to the actual diagnosis. ADEP expansion also provides training to pediatricians and early interventionists to better coordinate efforts for diagnostic evaluations. And, specialized early intervention training is being expanded to include best practices that nurture the important parent/child relationship.

Seneca County is one of more than 40 Ohio counties now participating in the project. Seneca County *Help Me Grow* personnel, including Seneca County Board of DD Early

Intervention staff, joined the ADEP project aiming to increase local autism diagnostic capacity with existing resources in Seneca County.

Early Intervention Specialist Amber Crow, and Registered Nurse Colleen Newman, are using both in-person and online training to evaluate children whose families are concerned that they may have autism. They will share their findings with Dr. Sherri Thomas of the Center for Child Development in Bowling Green, who will then provide the medical component of an autism evaluation. Together, the local team can prepare a diagnosis using internationally-recognized and evidence-based tools.

Crow explains, "We are seeing an increase in the number of children referred to our program with parent concerns of autism-like behaviors. ADEP seemed like a good fit for our county since there are not a lot of autism-specific resources or specialists available locally." Dr. John Duby, Director of Developmental Behavior Pediatrics at Akron Children's Hospital and ADEP Medical Director adds, "Some families travel hours to receive evaluations like this. It's a new way of thinking about how we interact with our youngest children and their families. By expanding ADEP, more children and their families will have a head start on positive interventions." Colleen Newman, R.N., adds,

"ADEP expedites the diagnosis process for the family. We can provide developmental evaluations, screenings, and an autism diagnostic observation schedule right here in our county. The children are already familiar with our staff, so it just makes sense for us to initiate the process saving the family time, money, and stress."

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More about ADEP at www.ocali.org/adep. Contact: Courtney Yantes at Courtney_Yantes@ocali.org

Brewing Coffee, Swinging Bats ... They're Working in the Community

Double Play Sports, Fayette County

Opened in 2011, and working on an original business model based on consignment and used sports equipment, Double Play Sports in Washington Courthouse (Fayette County) moved forward in the past year to include a high percentage of reasonably-priced new equipment purchased for low prices through careful sourcing and some internet sleuthing.

Fueled by ingenuity and the support of the Employment First mindset, Fayette County Board of DD Adult Services Director Mark Schwartz, is pleased to note that over the last year or so the addition of two indoor batting cages and the sponsorship of local Little League teams have improved business overall. The non-profit organization, Fayette Progressive Industries, owns the store and employs individuals with DD to work in customer service and sales roles.

Contact: m Schwartz@fayettetedd.com

Square Seven, Fairfield County

The Fairfield County Board of DD opened 'Square Seven' coffee house in May, in the location already hosting its creative studio 'Art & Clay on Main' in downtown Lancaster. The new coffee house offers a lunch menu and pastries, along with coffee and fruit smoothies, and is staffed with individuals served by FCBDD as well as with individuals not served by the agency. Business Development Director David Uhl notes that the Square Seven name derives from the days when the city was laid out in squares. Art & Clay on Main sits on the seventh square of the downtown area.

Contact: jboss@fairfieldddd.com

"Take a Swing with This One!"
If Chuck Stackhouse can't sell you a baseball bat, no one can. It's pretty hard to beat his natural salesmanship!



"Happy to serve you!"
Square Seven employee Jessi Bash mixes up a coffee drink in downtown Lancaster. She also works at the Art & Clay center, where all employees

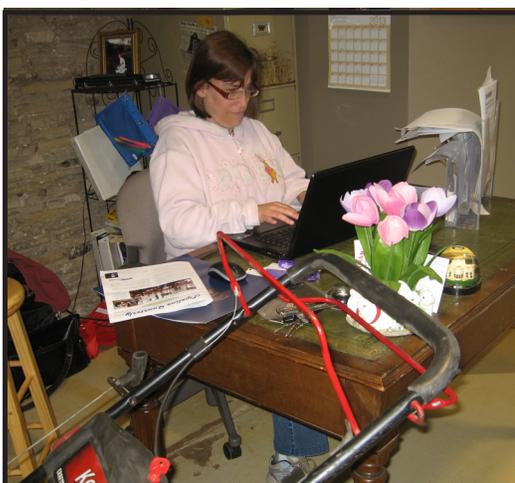
have been cross-trained in the art of coffee drink preparation, adhering to standards set by their coffee supplier, Stauf's.



Photo courtesy, John Bosser, FCBDD

"There will be a progressive movement to realize the promise of Employment First, including regulatory language and data collection to track progress and identify pockets of excellence." -DODD Director John Martin

Employment First - Small Engines, Big Ideas (cont. from p. 3)



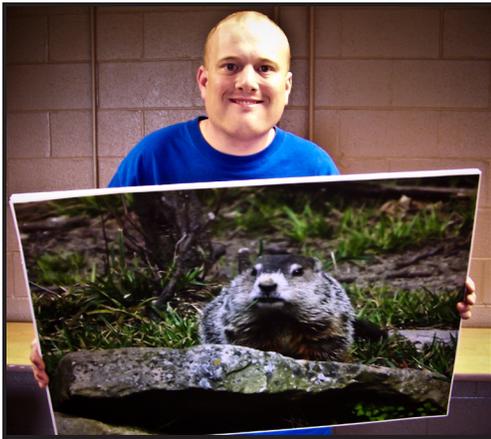
outdoor equipment season is about over. So, I needed some help to get through the fall and winter with rent and all. HCBDD helped me out with an interest-free loan that I will pay back, and I really appreciated that. It got me to where I am now ... plenty busy!" Finishing up a tour of the business in late April, Mike thought back to the years it took to put everything together. "When I first started talking about doing this work and having my own business, I don't think many thought it would happen." He pauses and smiles,

"I don't know -- Maybe they thought I was just going to tinker around or something!?"

< Mike's wife, April (the "A" in M & A) is the bookkeeper, and has learned to work well among the many mowers looming in her office territory.

Contact: Kelli Williamson at kwilliamson@highdd.org; M&A Small Engine Repair at (937) 981-9972

Inclusive Photography Group Goes a Little Wild



Jeffery O'Neil's Prize-Winning Photo
"Success is winning First Place in the Lake Erie Science Center's Photography Contest ... for my photo, 'Woodchuck.'"
-Jeffery O'Neil (and his work, above)

The Puffin Foundation Ltd.

This Foundation seeks to open doors of artistic expression by providing grants to artists and art organizations often excluded from mainstream opportunities due to their race, gender, disability, or social philosophy.

Why the Puffin?

The puffin, a bird once endangered in the northeastern U.S., was returned to its native habitats through the efforts of concerned citizenry. The name is a metaphor for the Foundation's mission in the arts: To join with other concerned groups and individuals to ensure that the arts not merely survive, but flourish at all levels of society.

More at: www.puffinfoundation.org



Wild Connections Photography Club, affiliated with the Lucas County Board of DD 'Shared Lives Studio & Gallery,' recently received a Puffin Foundation Grant (see sidebar) for \$900 to help fund the "Celebrating Community Through Nature" project. With the grant, the photography club purchased an indoor/outdoor portable display system to allow their photography exhibits to travel to other venues in the Toledo area. These venues include libraries, corporate offices, commercial and government facilities, and local art and photography shows.

- Pushing Boundaries -

Wild Connections Photography Club is nearly 30 members strong, and membership is open to people with and without disabilities.

According to Theresa Athaide-Victor at Lucas County DD, "Being recognized for the quality of one's artistic talents is another way people with DD in Lucas County are feeling successful. Wild Connections Photography Club members note that success for them is ...

"Getting paid for a matted photograph bought by a returning customer."
-Mark Arnett

"Presenting your photography portfolio to people at the Toledo Zoo."
-Anna Bartlett

The Club, in partnership with the Toledo area/Secor Metropark National Photography Center, now boasts expertise from professional and amateur photographers, and features 'tips and techniques' meetings, park photoshoots, cameras for Club member usage, photo sales, and competitions. Athaide-Victor says, "Our local community support has been priceless!"

For information about Wild Connections Photography Club, call the Lucas County Board of DD/ Connections at (419) 244-6720.



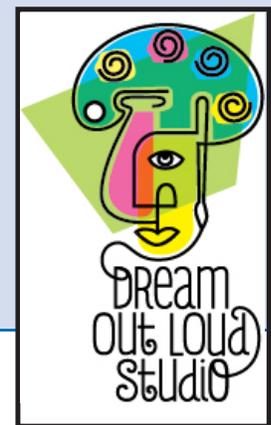
Publication Notes

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We thank all who have allowed us to work with them for this issue, and who have contributed to its preparation. Reader ideas, comments, and feedback are always welcomed.

Submit ideas and feedback to editor Sherry Steinman, at sherry.steinman@dodd.ohio.gov, or call (614) 644-0262.

Both the *Pipeline Quarterly* and the twice-monthly *Pipeline* publications are archived at dodd.ohio.gov/pipeline/



Dream Out Loud Studio ... a project of Summit DD, had several exciting exhibitions in June. **The Studio offers employment opportunities for adults interested in the arts. Studio artists are learning to express themselves, bringing creative inspirations to life in new ways.**
DreamOutLoud@SummitDD.org,
(330) 634-8235