



MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT

BRIAN W. GREEN

Superintendent Brian Green shares details about a current issue facing the Developmental Disabilities system in Ohio.

Winter/Spring 2023

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Superintendent's Corner

Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities:

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Our Mission is to empower people with developmental disabilities to live, work and play as full members of our community.

ABLE Magazine is published by the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Riverside).

Article suggestions and address changes should be submitted to:

Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Riverside)
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Troy, Ohio 45373
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At the time of this newsletter's publication, we are in the midst of March, which is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Normally, you'll find happy messages from us during DD Awareness Month, but this year we need to share some information about the challenges our system is currently facing.

Right now, many Ohioans with disabilities cannot get the care and support they desperately need because of the unprecedented workforce shortage of skilled Direct Support Professionals (i.e. caregivers) caused by extremely low wages.

Without Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), many people with developmental disabilities cannot eat, go to the bathroom, bathe themselves or do the things many take for granted. Without DSPs, people with developmental disabilities suffer.

Service provider agencies are locked into reimbursement rates set by the State of Ohio, and those reimbursement rates set the limit on wages for DSPs. These rates have not budged since 2007, and only action by state officials can resolve this issue.

We are working with state legislators to try to raise these wages and ensure there are enough well-trained DSPs to serve our friends and neighbors in Miami County and throughout Ohio. In fact, one of our service provider partners, RT Industries, took part in the Ohio House of Representative's House Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee's recent hearing on this issue. RTI's CEO Ashley Brocius testified about the importance of state legislators voting to increase the wages for DSPs. Currently, agencies like RT Industries cannot raise their employees' wages, which limits their ability to attract and maintain talented caregivers.

If you would like to learn more about this important issue facing our system, I encourage you to visit www.OhioDDCrisis.com and consider signing the petition or even submitting your own personal story if you have one to share.



Brian W. Green
Superintendent

Kristiferlee Owens Pursues Artistic Dreams



Kris Owens paints a piece during live painting demonstration at a recent art show in Dayton.



Several pieces of Kris' art were on display at Roots to Wings Gallery during his live art demonstration on Feb. 3.



Kris poses with one of the many commissioned pieces he has completed for clients who hired him to paint their beloved pets.

Kristiferlee "Kris" Owens has been painting for several years and recently achieved one of his dreams by painting live during an art event. Kris, working in acrylics, painted at the Roots to Wings Gallery on February 3. Roots to Wings is part of the larger Front Street, which is the largest community of artist, artisans and small business owners in Dayton, Ohio. Front Street has frequent exhibits where art enthusiasts can explore a wide variety of local art while also meeting and interacting with the artists. Several people attended the Feb. 3 event to see Kris at work and celebrate his talent.

A specialist in acrylic on canvas, he often paints animals and landscapes. Often, his pieces reflect his Christian faith as well.

"What inspires me about painting is the mental challenge I see in being able to let Jesus show me what I need to do with my painting," Kris explained.

Kris became interested in painting when he was 14 years old. His art program at school took him to We Care Art based in Montgomery County. Due to physical limitations with his hands, his instructor initially worked to help him paint with his mouth, however that didn't work well for Kris. Next, they tried taping a brush to a hat, which eventually shifted into a brush fastened into a headband, and the rest is history. He's now been painting for nearly 20 years. In recent years he received professional training with local art instructor Jack Wellbaum of West Milton, as well as Rusty Harden of Tipp City.

Kris has several pieces available for sale, which were also featured in a gallery at his live art demonstration. In addition, Kris has been commissioned to paint pieces several times, often for pet portraits.

"I am thankful that I have met Kristiferlee and am able to play a small part in helping him connect with all of the people who have provided support to help him achieve his vision of a good life," said Riverside SSA (case manager) Patrick Kilbane. "I look forward to seeing whatever artwork he develops next and what partnerships he forges to help spread his gift to others."

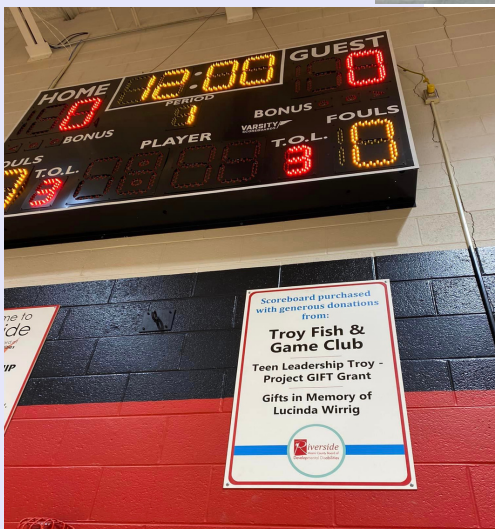
Kris hopes to one day have one of his art pieces featured in an art museum, in addition to turning his passion into a true vocation. For those interested in learning more about Kristiferlee Owens and his art, he can be reached at 937-552-9176.

Special Olympics Update

Basketball

Miami County Special Olympics had a very successful winter season with 3 basketball teams competing from October through February. Our "White" team featured many new athletes who had never played before, as well as those who are working to build their skills. They had a great time playing a scrimmage during halftime of a Miami East girls basketball game in January. Our cheerleaders also had a great season, with many new athletes. They also enjoyed working with some special mentors in the Troy High School Varsity Basketball Cheerleaders who helped throughout the season.

MIAMI COUNTY SPECIAL OLYMPICS OHIO



We are so grateful for the generosity of our community, who made the purchase of a new scoreboard possible this year. A big THANK YOU to the Troy Fish and Game Club, Teen Leadership Troy/The Troy Foundation - Project GIFT grant, and gifts made in memory of Lucinda Wirrig. We had a special sign installed under the new scoreboard to let our athletes and spectators know who contributed to this gift.



Swimming

Several members of the Miami County Special Olympics swim team competed at the Southwest Ohio Regional Tournament as well as the Special Olympics Ohio Winter Games in early March at Bowling Green State University. We extend a big THANK YOU to the G. William Hartzell Community Grant through the Piqua Community Foundation for the generous grant, which covered fees for our swim team's uniforms, t-shirts, towels and backpacks. Much of this equipment will be able to be used for many years to come!



Members of the Miami County Special Olympics Swim Team prepare to compete at the Southwest Ohio Regional Tournament in Cincinnati. (Photo credit: Mike Ullery)

Powerlifting



The Miami County Special Olympics Powerlifting Team - better known as "The Crew" - has been working hard at the gym (Complete Fitness in Tipp City), preparing for their first tournament of the year. The event will be held April 1 at Riverside beginning at 10am. Mark your calendars and come out to cheer them on! The energy at these events is always ELECTRIC!

Finally, our volleyball season just began and we have many more exciting events throughout 2023. Stay tuned to our Facebook page and website for updates on games and tournaments, and come out when you can to cheer on Miami County Special Olympics!

POWER LIFTING MEET

APRIL 1
Weigh ins 9am
First lift at 10am

RIVERSIDE
1625 TROY SIDNEY RD, TROY OH

THE CREW



COMPLETE-FITNESS-

EVENTS:
Deadlift
Bench Press

SPONSORS:



Riverside Welcomes New Board Member

We are pleased to announce the addition of a new member to our Board with the swearing in of DJ Gayhart at our January meeting.

Mr. Gayhart is a Tipp City resident with long connections to Riverside. He understands the developmental disabilities system from his experience working for an adult day services provider, becoming a certified Project STIR (Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility) trainer where he trains individuals served on how to advocate for themselves, and has been a People First Ohio board member.

Also at the Board meeting, officers were appointed for the new term, naming Mandy Via as President, Shawn McKinney as Vice President and Michelle Fong as Secretary, along with the continued service of Deon Metz, Jerry Herbe and Joe Fulker.

"Riverside is fortunate to have such a well-rounded, knowledgeable and dedicated group serving us on our Board," said Brian Green, Riverside Superintendent. "The strong leadership of each of our Board members has served us well over the years, and we look forward to continued work on our mission with the addition of Mr. Gayhart."

There are seven seats on the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities, with five being appointed by the Miami County Commissioners, and two from the Miami County Probate Judge. Mr. Gayhart was appointed by the Commissioners. Welcome to the Riverside Team, Mr. Gayhart!



DJ Gayhart joined the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Riverside) Board in January.

Employment Updates

Riverside is committed to helping the people we serve obtain and maintain employment whenever possible and desired. We achieve this through partnerships with the state agency, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, as well as local employment vendors such as Capabilities, Empowered Community Services, Goodwill, RT Industries, URS and ViaQuest. Current counts show there are more than 110 people with developmental disabilities employed in Miami County. The average wage per hour for those workers is \$11.35. The number of people served who received new jobs in 2022 was 29. This work would not be possible without the support and inclusive hiring practices of local employers. We thank these businesses for their partnership in employing people of all abilities:



Connor is employed at Cassano's Pizza in Tipp City and receives job coaching from RT Industries.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Aaron's Rentals | General Films | Roses Discount Store |
| Agave & Rye | Goodwill Piqua & Troy | RT Industries |
| Applebee's | Harmony Systems & Service | ScribeAmerica |
| Arby's Tipp City | Harrison's Tipp City | SinBon |
| Bakehouse Breads | Hartzell | Smith's Boathouse |
| Bob Evans Piqua & Troy | Industry Products Company | Stanton Country Store |
| Bowman & Landes Farms | Jayna, Inc. | Taco Bell Troy |
| Burger King Troy | Jimmy John's Troy | Texas Roadhouse Troy |
| Casey's Covington | JJ's Lunchbox | Tipp City Public Library |
| Cassano's Troy/Tipp City/Piqua | Koester Pavilion | Tropical Smoothie Café |
| Certified Gas Station West Milton | Komyo | Troy Care |
| Chick-Fil-A | Kroger Troy/Piqua/Vandalia/Englewood | Wal-Mart Troy |
| Children's Medical Center | Lowe's | Wendy's Piqua |
| City of Troy | McDonald's Piqua/Tipp City/Troy | Wings and Rings |
| Clopay | Meijer Distribution | WIS Inventory Solutions |
| Collins Aerospace | Meijer Troy | YMCA - Miami County |
| Domino's Troy | Miami County Animal Shelter | |
| Donato's | Miami County Park District | |
| Edison State Community College | Outback Steakhouse | |
| F&P | Panera Bread | |
| Fazoli's Troy/Huber Heights | Papa Johns Troy | |
| Frisch's Tipp City & Troy | Partners In Hope | |
| Future4Families | Premier-UVMC | |

A special "shout out" to Miami County Park District and Partners In Hope, for extending offers of employment to volunteers who had proven to be valuable members of their organizations.

Direct Support Professionals

Independent Spotlight:

Carol Ruschau is in a unique group of Direct Support Professionals who are certified through the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to provide care for her two adult sons who have disabilities. Carol provides services to her sons through Ohio Shared Living. She says, like most children, Justin and Ryan prefer spending time with her over other people providing their care, which can present a challenge, but it is still worth it.

"I would like to advocate for parents to do this," Carol said. "I do have another job, but Ohio Shared Living really forced me to do more with them and find fun things to do and get out in the community. I try my best to do some sort of activity with them every day. We do fun things ... I bake with them at home and take them to the libraries twice each week. I try to get them moving. It really gives me more time to get them out and spend time with them."

Carol recently underwent a compliance review from the state. They gave her great reviews with no comments on things to fix. Keep up the great work, Carol!



Carol and Ryan



Carol and Justin

Provider Agency Spotlight:



Passion Home Health Care LLC is a home healthcare agency that serves several counties in our region.

Based in Dayton, Passion provides in-home care and transportation services to people with developmental disabilities. With 22 Direct Support Professionals and 4 office employees, the team focuses on getting the people they support out in the community and helping them live as they choose to live. Whether someone needs just a few hours of care each week or 24/7 coverage in their home, Passion delivers care based on the needs of the person.

Passion recently bought new wheelchair van to improve accessibility for those who need it, and are proud to use a system called ClearCare, an online scheduling software that allows several team members and family members or guardians to view an individual's care schedule.

For more information about Passion Home Health Care, call 937-991-0013 or email passioncarellc1@gmail.com.

Riverside Completes Accreditation Review

In January and February, the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Riverside) had participated in an Accreditation Review by the the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), which is responsible for monitoring and oversight of all 88 of Ohio's County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. Final results of the review are expected in coming weeks.

"While here, reviewers were very complimentary of the work we are doing in Miami County," said Superintendent Brian Green. "They remarked about the great culture we have and said it is evident that we are proud of who we are and what we do. We are honored to have received such high praise for our team's hard work and eagerly await the final report from DODD."



Inside this Issue
Winter/Spring 2023

Check out the exciting things we've been up to, see who has supported us along the way and get a peek at what's ahead!