



# Dateline

December 2015

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"Helping people to live, learn and work in our community"

## Guardianship training successful

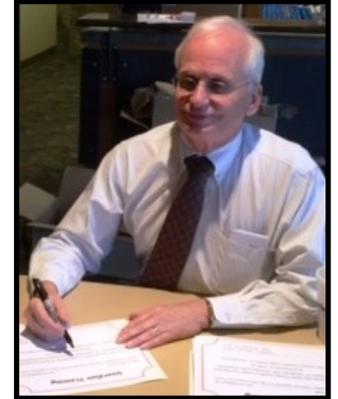
Close to 400 guardians of individuals served by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently received training required by the Ohio Supreme Court. The training for Franklin County guardians was approved by Probate Judge Robert G. Montgomery.

After hearing the suggestion at a Family Support meeting, Superintendent Morison arranged for two, 6-hour seminars provided by Attorney Franklin Hickman and Anne Russell, Service Coordination Supervisor. According to the Superintendent, "we had an overwhelming response. We thought 50 or so would register - close to 400 called! We had to schedule a third session."

Those attending were pleased with the seminars and appreciated the convenience of location. This is a new training requirement of the Ohio Supreme Court.

While FCBDD will not sponsor additional guardian training, guardians can register for training with the Ohio Judicial College. In addition to scheduled trainings, guardians are now able to register to take the training online.

For more information, email the Ohio Judicial College at: [adultguardianedu@sc.ohio.gov](mailto:adultguardianedu@sc.ohio.gov) or visit their website at: <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/Boards/judCollege/adultGuardianship/default.asp>.



Attorney Frank Hickman

## Northeast Center to open

Northeast Center (formerly Northeast School) should be in full operation by the end of the year.

Dot Yeager, Chief Business Officer for FCBDD stated that "the renovation, including a new sprinkler system, has progressed on schedule and the Living Skills Center program should be able to move in the weekend of December 5th."

Dot credits Mike Boyce, Facilities and Site Supervisor and Linda Monroe, Director of Living Skills Centers and their staffs with the completion of this project in a timely manner.

Plans call for the Living Skills Center at Northeast Center to be closed on Monday, December 7th, to allow staff to finalize preparation of the building. On December 8th the building will be fully operational.

The Hague Living Skills Center staff have done excellent work preparing for the move. In January, the Hague building will be turned over to the County for eventual use by the Franklin County Sherriff's office.

With the completion of this project, Northeast Center will now house three programs: the Goodwill Young Adult Services program, Head Start classes and the Living Skills Center.

Former Northeast School students and staff are now housed at West Central School.

## Marjorie Petruzzi resigns from Creative Housing Board

Marjorie Petruzzi, one of the original members of the Creative Housing, Inc. Board of Trustees, has resigned from the Board.

According to Superintendent/CEO Jed Morison, "Mrs. Petruzzi has been a true leader all these years. Her expertise has been invaluable."

Mrs. Petruzzi has been an active volunteer for close to 40 years. She first provided leadership with the parent organization at her son's school. She was a regular member of the "Parent League," providing feedback to agency administrators on behalf of parents and students.

As a person with a physical disability, Mrs. Petruzzi was able to help with practical suggestions on the design of the Franklin County Residential Services, Inc. (FCRS) properties built in the 1980s. This and her interest in accessible housing led to her appointment to the Creative Housing Board in the early 1990s.

Special thanks to Marjorie Petruzzi for outstanding volunteer services and leadership!!



Marjorie Petruzzi at Northeast School in the 70s.

# Nan Burns announces retirement

Nan Burns, Director at ARC Industries North, will retire on January 31, 2016.

Nan began her service to the Board in 1985 as a Habilitation Specialist at ARC Industries West. She came from Union County, where she started in this field in 1980.

Nan later became a Habilitation Manager and then Director of ARC North for the past 25 years.

Superintendent Morison stated that "Nan has been outstanding in every respect. Her passion, creativity and leadership at North and throughout all of Adult Services has impacted thousands of individuals in positive ways. Nan not only has great ideas - she also implements them."

About her service to the Board, Nan stated "I have had a wonderful career with FCBDD. I love what I do! There are so many creative minds on staff, resulting in some absolutely wonderful programs. I have learned as much from the



individuals we serve as they have from me. I will always have great memories of my time with the county and will stay in touch with many."

Nan has never been afraid to try something new -- always looking for creative ways to better meet the needs of those we serve and support staff.

Nan initiated the first "healthy eating" program and it was Nan Burns who marketed the original Sunapple product line of art pieces.

Nan and fellow Director Jan Montgomery stepped up to the plate to coordinate the agency's first Self-Advocacy Conference and they have continued this for the past five years. On December 1st, individuals enrolled at ARC North will perform at The Ohio Theater with The Harmony Project, thanks to Nan. Several years ago, Nan initiated a succession planning program for staff to ensure sustainability in the agency.

In her retirement, Nan plans to spend more time with her family, including her husband Bill, daughter Hannah and son Ian. She will continue to enjoy her many interests, including her passion for pottery, quilting, and travel.

Marcy Samuel, Director of Program Operations, said it best when she said "You can't just replace Nan Burns, but we will benefit from her initiatives and the example she has set for years to come."

Thanks and congratulations to Nan Burns.

## Holiday Wish

For more than 50 years, Franklin County Children Services has granted children's wishes through Holiday Wish.

These are children who may have experienced abuse, neglect or other difficult home conditions, and rely on the generosity of our community to put the joy back into their holidays. Last year, our community provided gifts for more than 5,500 children.

If you would like to grant a child's holiday wish, there are many ways you can help: Make a donation of any amount to sponsor a youth, donate new toys of any kind or make a donation online at: [fccsholidaywish.franklincountyohio.gov](http://fccsholidaywish.franklincountyohio.gov).

For more details call Holiday Wish at (614) 275-2525 or email at [holidaywish@fccs.us](mailto:holidaywish@fccs.us).



## Bill requires information on Down syndrome

**Editor's note: The following article appeared recently in the DSACO (Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio) newsletter.**

On December 19, 2014 House Bill 552 was signed into law by Governor John Kasich. The new law requires that medical professionals who deliver a prenatal or postnatal diagnosis of Down syndrome must provide to the patients information on the following:

- A description of Down syndrome, including its causes, effects on development, and potential complications.
- Information on diagnostic tests.
- Options for treatment and therapy.
- Contact information on local, state and national organizations.

While the bill passed back in December, it was not enacted until July. DSACO and other Associations from around the state partnered with the Ohio Department of Health to ensure the information was easy to understand and accurate. This information is now available on the Ohio Department of Health website and can be viewed at: <https://www.odh.ohio.gov> by searching Down syndrome.

DSACO recently mailed postcards to all OB/GYN offices in the area. The postcard explains HB 552 and offers to provide free, current and up-to-date materials to obstetrician offices that might deliver a child with a Down syndrome diagnosis.

# ABLE Act update

**Editor's Note:** Recently the Ohio Treasurer's Office provided answers to frequently asked questions related to the ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Act. We thought the 'Dateline' readers would appreciate the update.

## BASICS

**Q: What is an ABLE account?**

A: An ABLE account is a financial account available to individuals with a disability who meet certain criteria. An ABLE account allows an individual with disabilities to save and invest money without losing certain benefits. Income from the account is not federally taxed.

**Q: Is opening an ABLE account mandatory?**

A: No. Opening an ABLE account is not mandatory. It is a completely voluntary account to open and maintain.

## ELIGIBILITY

**Q: Who is an "eligible individual" for an ABLE account?**

A: An eligible individual is someone who became blind or disabled before age 26. Age of diagnosis is not a factor as long as the disability began before age 26.

An individual must also do one of the following: Be entitled to Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Be entitled to Social Security Disability Income (SSDI); or File a disability certification with the IRS.

**Q: Is serious mental illness considered a disability?**

## FEDERAL BENEFITS DETERMINATION

**Q: Will I lose my Medicaid benefits if I open an ABLE account?**

A: No, Medicaid benefits will not be affected by ABLE accounts.

**Q: Will I lose my SSI benefits if I open an ABLE account?**

A: SSI benefits won't be lost. SSI benefits are suspended if the account balance is over the limit of \$100,000. Suspended SSI benefits are reinstated when the ABLE account balance goes back to below the limit of \$100,000.

**Q: Can an individual with a disability work and maintain an ABLE account?**

A: Yes, as long as the individual meets the eligibility requirements for an account.

**Q: Can an employed individual with a disability contribute to an ABLE account with wages he/she has earned?**

A: Yes. After required taxes are paid, wages earned can be contributed to the ABLE account, but only up to the maximum \$14,000 yearly contribution limit.

## LIMITATIONS

**Q: Are there limitations to the account?**

A: Yes. There are limitations to the account including, but not limited to, the following: The maximum yearly contribution limit is currently \$14,000. The maximum account value is currently \$414,000. There is a 10% additional tax on funds withdrawn from an ABLE account for non-qualified expenses. SSI benefits may be suspended if the account total exceeds \$100,000. States may file claims for Medicaid reimbursement from the ABLE account upon death of the designated beneficiary.

## ABLE ACCOUNTS COMPARED TO OTHER SAVINGS VEHICLES

**Q: How does an ABLE account compare to a special needs trust?**

A: Special needs trusts are regulated at the state level. They must be reviewed and updated if a family moves to another state. Special needs trusts are taxed at the highest individual tax rate. They can be expensive to set up and maintain. Special needs trusts do not have contribution limits. The allowed expenditures are not as limited as ABLE accounts. If a special needs trust is set up as a third party trust, then a Medicaid payback is not required.

**Q: How does an ABLE account differ from pooled trusts?**

A: Pooled trusts are regulated at the state level. They are fully taxable and require set up and maintenance costs. A portion of the money left in the account after the beneficiary's death stays in the account for other participants before the Medicaid payback applies. There are no contribution limits for pooled trusts. The allowed expenditures from a pooled trust are broader than with an ABLE account. Set up and maintenance of pooled trusts are generally done by disability organizations. The set up fees can be less expensive than special needs trusts. The organizations that maintain pooled trusts are familiar with how funds can be used on behalf of the beneficiary.

**Q: Can I have an ABLE account AND a Special Needs Trust Fund, a Wholly Discretionary Trust Fund, or a Supplemental Services Trust Fund?**

A: Yes, both are tools for disability-related support and can be established for the same beneficiary.

## TRANSFERS & ROLL-OVERS

**Q: Can I make tax-free transfer of funds from an existing 529 college savings account to an ABLE account?**

A: Not at this time. Under the federal ABLE regulations, this type of transfer is not considered a qualified higher education expense.

# ABLE Act update continued...

## SETTING UP AN ACCOUNT

**Q: Who can set up an ABLE account?**

A: An eligible individual (the “designated beneficiary”), the parent or legal guardian of an eligible individual, or the holder of a power of attorney for an eligible individual can set up an ABLE account.

**Q: Can I have more than one ABLE account?**

A: No. An eligible individual can have only one ABLE account. The eligible individual must be a resident of the state where they open an account.

**Q: Where and how can I set up an ABLE account?**

A: The Treasurer’s Office is currently working on designing this part of Ohio ABLE. Check back soon for more information or visit our website for updates.

**Q: When can I set up an ABLE account?**

A: The goal is early 2016. Check back soon for more information or visit our website for updates.

**Q: Who controls the funds in an ABLE account?**

A: The designated beneficiary is considered the account owner. However, the account owner, the parent or legal guardian, or the designated power of attorney can control the funds in the account, depending on who has been authorized.

**Q: What are the administrative fees for opening and maintaining an ABLE account?**

A: The Treasurer’s Office is currently working on designing this part of Ohio ABLE. Check back soon for more information or visit our website for updates.

## TAX QUESTIONS

**Q: Will I still be able to claim my dependents for tax purposes?**

A: Please check with your tax professional in the preparation of your tax filing.

## QUESTIONS FROM YOU

**Q: I work at a law firm. Should our firm start preparing documents or forms to certify an individual’s disability status?**

A: The Treasurer’s Office is currently working on designing this part of Ohio ABLE. We envision that Ohio ABLE will provide these forms for the individual. Check back soon for more information or visit our website for updates.

## QUALIFIED EXPENSES

**Q: How are my expenses determined to be “qualified expenses”?**

A: The Treasurer’s Office is currently working on designing this part of Ohio ABLE. Check back soon for more information or visit our website for updates.

**Q: What if I use ABLE funds for something that isn’t considered a qualified expense?**

A: There is a 10% additional tax on funds withdrawn from an ABLE account for non-qualified expenses.

**Q: Can I use ABLE account funds for housing?**

A: Yes. However, SSI benefits can be affected if you use ABLE funds for any housing expenses. Designated beneficiaries will need to check if their SSI will be impacted.

**Q: What types of expenses are allowed with an ABLE account?**

A: Under the federal ABLE regulations, a “qualified expense” can be an expense that is a result from living with a disability. Below are some examples of qualified expenses. (This is not a complete list.)

**Education:**

Tuition for preschool through post-secondary education  
Books  
Supplies and Educational Materials

**Employment Support:**

Expenses related to obtaining and maintaining employment  
Job-related training  
Assistive Technology and personal assistance supports

**Assistive Technology and Personal Support:**

Expenses for assistive technology and personal support

**Miscellaneous expenses:**

Financial management and administrative services  
Legal fees  
Expenses for oversight  
Monitoring  
Home improvement, modifications, maintenance and repairs  
Funeral and burial expenses

**Housing:** (SSI benefits may be impacted)

Expenses for a primary residence  
Rent  
Purchase of a Primary Residence  
Mortgage payments  
Real property taxes  
Utility charges

**Health Prevention and Wellness:**

Expenses for health and wellness  
Premiums for health insurance  
Mental health, medical, vision, and dental expenses  
Habilitation and rehabilitation services  
Durable medical equipment  
Therapy  
Respite Care  
Long term services and supports  
Nutritional management  
Communication services and devices  
Adaptive equipment  
Assistive technology  
Personal assistance

**Other Approved Expenses:**

Any other expenses approved by the Secretary under regulations

# Good for you

*Notable achievements in the FCBDD community*

**Sally Harrington** and **Early Childhood** staff for being featured in the *Columbus Dispatch* in the "Guide to Life."

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Thanks to **Anne Russell**, Supervisor at Service Coordination, for co-presenting at the Guardian Training. Great job!



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Congratulations to artists at **Sunapple Studios** for the outstanding art installation titled 'The Hero Within' at the Cultural Arts Center and for being recognized nationally on PBS News Hour.



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Congratulations to Self-Advocate **Christine Brown**, for joining **Bridget Gargan**, CEO of the Ohio Association of County Boards, on a trip to Washington D.C. to advocate directly with Congressional Representatives and Senators.

The trip included a meeting with **Senator Rob Portman**, pictured with Bridget and Christine.

**Doreen Bailey** and other individuals at ARC West rescued a Red Tail Hawk. They noticed the injured hawk outside of ARC West. The Wild Life Rescue Center fixed the injured wing and returned the Hawk to its natural habitat. Thanks to Doreen and others for saving the Hawk!



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Special thanks to **Dr. Angela Ray**, **Lindsay Harding** and all the **Combined Charities Coordinators** on the great job with the 2015 campaign.

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Congratulations to the **ARC Industries singers**, who will join the *Harmony Project Choir* on December 1st at the Ohio Theater for a special performance.

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# Career Milestones

**35 Years**

Douglas Smith

**30 Years**

William Borden

**25 Years**

Linda Dudley

**15 Years**

Laura Patzer

**10 Years**

Patrick Keenist



# Check here for closing news

For information concerning the emergency closing of FCBDD facilities, please tune in to the following radio and TV stations after 5:30 a.m.:

**Radio AM**

- WBNS (1460)
- WMNI (920)
- WOSU (820)
- WTVN (610)

**Radio FM**

- WCOL (92.3)
- WNCI (97.9)
- WSNY (Sunny95)

**Television**

- WCMH (4)
- WSYX (6)
- WBNS (10)
- WOSU (34)
- FOX TV8 (28)

Please note that there are days when there may be inclement weather in one area of the county, while other areas are just fine.

In cases where we do not cancel transportation, yet inclement weather in some areas, individuals are reminded that they can choose not to attend a facility on a particular day. Safety is always the first priority.

Administration, Service Coordination and Adult facilities are generally open on calamity days and individuals served in Adult Services can attend, but must always call the Workshop or Living Skills Center in advance to make sure it is open.

# Sesame Street unveils new character with Autism

Sesame workshop said that it is introducing a new character named Julie, a preschool girl with autism who "does things a little differently when playing with her friends."

Julie is part of the nonprofit's "See Amazing in All Children" initiative, which is designed to teach kids about autism and offer tools for those with the developmental disorder.

For more details, go to the Sesame Street website at <http://autism.sesamestreet.org/>.



Julie (center) is the new character on Sesame Street.

## In memoriam

### Tom Allan and Jim Leake

We are sorry to report that two dedicated staff members passed away on November 2, 2015.



Tom Allan

Tom Allan was an Instructor Assistant at West Central School. Tom began his service with the Board in 1998 and was well liked by students and staff. According to Principal Mike Ross, "Tom was one of those people who was always ready to help and he was friends to students and staff alike. He will be missed."

Jim Leake was a Rehabilitation Engineer at ARC West. Previously, Jim worked at ARC South and ARC East. In addition to doing a great job, Jim always provided leadership with special campaigns, such as Operation Feed and Combined Charities. He was a true gentleman and a friend to all who had the good fortune to know him.



Jim Leake

Our sympathies are extended to the friends and families of both Tom and Jim.

## Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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**Linda Craig**, Vice-President  
**John Bickley**, Secretary  
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The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities does not discriminate in employment or services on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or disability.

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Information about the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is always available on the internet at:

[www.fcbdd.org](http://www.fcbdd.org)

## Calendar

### December

- 1 Harmony Project Concert (with ARC Industries singers participating) at the Ohio Theater.
- 2,3,4 Ohio Association of County Boards Convention, Hilton Easton. For more information please call 431-0616 or visit [oacbdd.org](http://oacbdd.org).
- 5 On-Site Crews Holiday Party at Crowne Plaza, 6500 Doubletree Avenue.
- 7 Living Skills Center at Northeast Center closed. (will reopen on December 8th)
- 7 Public hearing on FCBDD's Annual Action/ Strategic Plan and IDEA, 2879 Johnstown Road, 4 p.m.
- 10 Self-Advocate Advisory Council, 2879 Johnstown Rd., 10 a.m.
- 14 ARC Industries Board of Trustees meeting, Kemba Financial in Gahanna, 11:30 a.m.
- 16 Family Support meeting, 2879 Johnstown Rd., 9:30 a.m. Meeting is open to all family members.
- 17 ARC East Holiday Party at Xenos, ESD Holiday Party at Creekside, Gahanna
- 18 ARC North Holiday Party at Crowne Plaza, 6500 Doubletree Avenue, ARC West Holiday Party at Xenos, Bixby LSC Holiday Party at Bixby Living Skills Center
- 21 Winter begins.
- 21 Northeast Center Holiday Party at Northeast Center
- 23 Winter recess for ECE and schools. Classes resume January 4th.
- 25 Merry Christmas! All county facilities closed.
- 28-31 Winter recess for adult services. Programs resume January 4th.

## Save the date for the next Provider Fair

'Provider Palooza' is the title of the next Franklin County Provider Fair, which will be held on Wednesday, March 30, 2016 from 1:00-6:00 p.m. at the Lausche Building at the Ohio State Fairgrounds.

Registration forms will be mailed out the first week of January, 2016.