

Published by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities
"Helping people to live, learn and work in our community"

FCBDD offers grant funding for changing tables

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is offering a grant program to assist public and private organizations and businesses with the cost of installing universal changing tables.

Many Franklin County residents and visitors to the Columbus area have disabilities that make it impossible for them to use the toilets in standard, or even ADA-compliant, restrooms. They need access to adult-sized changing tables to ensure a safe, private and hygienic experience.

"All too often, when changing tables are not available, people with disabilities miss events and activities, cut their outings short, or endure the indignity of having personal care tended on floors or in vehicles," FCBDD Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager said. "Public venues that provide this option help to make our community more inclusive for all."

Applicants must be public or private entities in Franklin County with facilities that are open to the public. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available, and must be expended in 2024.

The FCBDD funds are part of \$14.9 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money that is being distributed across 67 counties to invest in projects that support Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. About \$4.4 million is targeted to provide universal changing tables in public places throughout the state.



Because the conservatory has a changing table, bathroom breaks are accessible for all.



Kim Kirkwood-Boulter and son Aiden love visiting the Franklin Park Conservatory.

Jennifer Corcoran and Kim Kirkwood-Boulter, who advocate through Changing Spaces Ohio and also the Inspired Access Foundation, said Ohio's investment in universal changing tables is the largest by any state. "Our campaign began with our sons, Matthew and Aiden, and quickly spread through the developmental disability community and beyond," they said in a news release from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. Public officials "heard us and grasped the mission that real change can occur in Ohio."

To apply for a changing table grant in Franklin County, go to <https://fcbdd.org/changing-table-grant-opportunity/>

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month celebrated in March

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a time to celebrate the many ways people with and without disabilities come together to build strong, inclusive and diverse communities.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation recognizing March as DD Awareness Month to raise "public awareness of the needs and the potential of Americans with developmental disabilities" and to provide the "encouragement and the opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential."

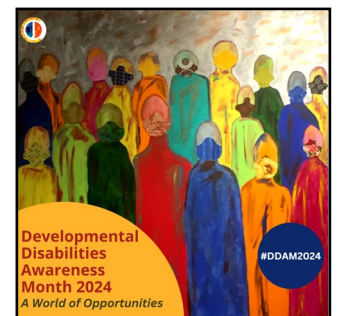
The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities encourages everyone – community leaders, elected officials, educators, employers and others – to learn about progress made and to consider barriers that people with disabilities still can face while striving to live, learn, play and work in their communities.

This year's Developmental Disability Awareness and Advocacy Day is set for 10 a.m.

March 12 at the Ohio Statehouse. For information or to register, go to

<https://ddohio.wordpress.com>

Also in March, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities and its partners nationwide work to create a social media campaign. Watch FCBDD's social media pages or post your own messages and photos using the #DDawareness2024 or #DDAM2024 hashtags.



Former FCBDD Superintendent Stephen G. Pleasnick, 1940-2024

The Franklin County disability community lost a longtime supporter and former leader with the passing of Stephen G. Pleasnick, who died on Jan. 26. Pleasnick had served as Superintendent of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities from 1973 to 1999.



"Steve provided outstanding and thoughtful leadership during some very challenging times," said Jed Morison, who recently retired as Superintendent/CEO at FCBDD. Morison also worked alongside Pleasnick as assistant superintendent.

He said Pleasnick was instrumental in establishing Ohio's Special Olympics program and served on its board for many years beginning in the 1970s. Pleasnick also was among the founders of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB), an organization that now represents and supports all county boards in the state.

At FCBDD, Pleasnick led the building of new facilities, assisted with the expansion of Medicaid funding, supported the establishment of Creative Housing and piloted case management services, which were later transferred from the state to county boards.

"Steve was smart, gutsy, well respected throughout Ohio and he had a great sense of humor," Morison said. "He surely will be missed."

Adam Herman, CEO of OACB, said Pleasnick and his colleagues had the vision more than four decades ago to unify the county system "under one banner" and put county boards on a strong, sustainable path. "Thanks to his vision and leadership, Ohio's 88 county boards of DD have helped people with developmental disabilities and their families thrive," Herman said. "Their success is a testament to Steve's incredible legacy, and our system is greater because of his leadership."

Pleasnick and his wife, Robin, had been living in South Carolina. In addition to his wife, he is survived by four children and seven grandchildren.

Brain injury survivor strives to inspire, empower others

After being struck by a car at the age of 11, Stewart Jones suffered devastating injuries. "I was given a five percent chance of ever coming out of a coma," he said. "I wish the doctors had been betting men, because I would have cleaned up."

Jones spent eight weeks in a coma and three months in the hospital. And then, despite the life-altering effects of a traumatic brain injury, he started on what he calls an "onward and upward" path. "I've written books of poetry, I've done speaking in Columbus and in D.C., I'm a certified human-rights consultant through the U.N.," Jones said.

"I've got two LLCs and I do not understand the meaning of the word 'no.'"

Jones, now 52, also is a paid member of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) for the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The committee, which is facilitated by Dynamic Pathways, reviews services and supports to make sure that restrictive measures are used appropriately, in positive ways and only when necessary to keep people with developmental disabilities safe.

"We decide if the restrictions go against the person's rights," Jones said. "I absolutely love it. My mission in life is to help others."

Other committee members and organizers say his perspective makes a huge difference. "It brings all the value," said Rachel Indurti, FCBDD Behavior Services Manager. "I've never experienced someone telling me that I can't do something, or have something, just because I have a disability."

Jones, who lives in Summit County, has been on the HRC for about a year. Last fall, he gave a presentation to FCBDD service coordinators and to clinical support services staff at the Ohio State University Nisonger Center on writing person-centered support plans with restrictive measures.

"I guess I look at cases differently because I see the person as a person first," Jones said. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to think of ways to help the person build dignity. If a person feels dignity, difficult behaviors lessen."

In one case, he said, a person had been denied access to home cleaning supplies due to safety concerns. A better approach was to help the person obtain non-toxic products. "You just need to shift your thinking a little," Jones said with a smile. "It's all about reframing."



**To learn more about Stewart Jones,
visit his website at <https://www.dreambuilding05.com/>**

Board President Marie Crawford advocates for families

After more than a decade as a member of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Marie Crawford remains crystal-clear about her mission. “First and foremost,” said Crawford, who is serving as Board President this year, “I am there for the families.”

Crawford and her husband are parents to three adult sons, two of whom have developmental disabilities: Peter, 32, has Down syndrome, and Patrick, 30, has autism and is nonverbal. Crawford knew from the beginning that making sure her boys would lead fulfilling lives meant taking on the role of advocate.

But you didn’t want to speak just for your own family, right?

I guess I always felt like I wanted to help others. If I have information, then I want them to have it, too. I’m not afraid to ask questions.

Some of your jobs put you in the parent-advocacy seat, and some have put you, literally, in the driver’s seat.

I can barely count all the jobs I’ve had! I always had to make the timing work with the boys. I was a Nisonger LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) trainee under Pat Cloppert, who also has sons with disabilities. She was my mentor. For a while I drove for Tri-Star, taking special-needs kids to schools and appointments. Now I’m a part-time bus driver for Worthington schools.



Pete and his nieces

How are Peter and Patrick doing?

They’re doing well; they live together in an apartment now. What’s interesting is that Peter has taken on the big brother role – he’s a good caregiver. Pat definitely knows everything that’s going on; he just doesn’t have the language. Pat goes to Spark and they are out in the community. Peter is active with Open Door and does the Pathways to Independence Doggy Daycare. He loves dogs. Animals are so good for our guys.

Any particular focus this year as you lead the board?

The world is changing – every day – for our folks. I really want to make sure that our families are finding, and receiving, good information and resources. I’m here for them. So I want us to be responsive.



Pat at West Central for a swim

You and your family obviously have faced many challenges. You still laugh a lot.

You have to! One day I had to call my husband home from work because the refrigerator door fell off. Pat had opened and closed it so many times, it just gave way. I couldn’t clean up everything and block two big boys from the kitchen at the same time. For us, that was a crisis.

Golf is a favorite pastime, you said. But it’s even more fun being a grandma to your older son’s two girls.

I love being their “Gam.” They always put a smile on my face and I can’t get enough of them. They love being silly with Uncle Pete!

Registration open, scholarships available for Ohio SIBS Conference

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is helping to provide scholarships for Franklin County siblings to attend the Ohio Siblings Conference and Retreat on April 13 in Hilliard.

The event will focus on leadership, self-care and supporting the larger disability community, and include a sibling panel, breakout sessions and a self-care workshop. Keynote speaker is Professor Meghan Burke of Vanderbilt University, who has done significant research with siblings and families of people with disabilities.

Email ohiosiblings@gmail.com for scholarship information. To register directly, go to <http://tinyurl.com/mszb4tea>



Franklin County Flyers make big splash at Polar Plunge

The Franklin County Special Olympics program had its best-ever showing at the 2024 Columbus Polar Plunge, with 56 people taking an icy dip in support of the athletes. The Flyers also were the event's top fundraising team.

"It was a great day, and the after-party was a lot of fun, too," said Ryan Phillips, Director of Special Olympics, Community Recreation and Aquatics at the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. "People new to the event were super excited, which is just what you want to see."

The Franklin County team was especially proud to have several athletes taking the plunge, including Max Damron, the first Flyers wheelchair athlete to plunge. "He loved it," Phillips said. "The first thing he said to us was, 'Next year!'"

Donations support year-round sports opportunities to more than 300 athletes at no cost to them.



Reminder: Franklin County Provider Fair set for March 27

People and families in need of waiver services and those who provide services can connect at this year's Franklin County Provider and Community Resource Fair. For details, visit <https://fcbdd.org/2024-provider-fair/> or scan the QR code below. The FCBDD Service Coordination Department also can help.

You're invited!

2024 FRANKLIN COUNTY PROVIDER FAIR

Wednesday • March 27 • 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Kasich Hall • Ohio State Fairgrounds • 717 E. 17th Ave.

HUNDREDS OF WAIVER PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES!

NEW THIS YEAR!

EXTENDED HOURS
BIGGER BUILDING
CHANGING TABLE

SCAN ME / SCAN ME / SCAN ME / SCAN ME / SCAN ME / SCAN ME / SCAN ME / SCAN ME





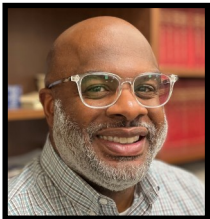
fcbdd.org/2024-provider-fair

Good For You

Notable achievements in the FCBDD community

Thanks to all the volunteers, donors and participants who supported the Franklin County Special Olympics program during the 2024 Columbus Polar Plunge. We greatly appreciate business sponsors Feazel, Encova Insurance, Merrill Lynch and Molo Sportsgear. And a shout out to FCBDD Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager and Service Coordination Director Lee Childs for being good sports in the Battle of the Chilly Toes!





Sean Patterson, FCBDD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion coordinator, recently marked the first anniversary for the new position and launched a blog on the agency's Intranet (Equity section). Sean is available to offer resources and support for staff, and to discuss ways to improve both employment culture and service to individuals and families. Thanks for this important work, Sean.

Mary Martin (Early Childhood) and Jeff Baird (I.T.) do a great job organizing periodic Red Cross Blood Drives at FCBDD Johnstown Road offices. The need is great, and donations help save lives. Way to go, Mary and Jeff!



**American
Red Cross**

Career Milestones

20 Years

Leonard Fears
Suzanne Flowers
Kim Treece

15 Years

Scott Holbrook
Lisa McKinley
Toni Noble
Timothy Voigt

10 Years

Joseph Francik

5 Years

Angela Jones
Lisa Robinson



West Central School nurse Sarah Eads arranged for an on-site visit from OSU Mobile Mammography to West Central. What a great way to help busy staff get their preventive screenings! Thanks to Sarah for her commitment to the health of both students and colleagues.



Former preschooler returns to Johnstown Road Dental Clinic as intern

Areeba Tanvir, an Ohio State University dental hygiene student, didn't expect to know much about the site of her new internship. But it turned out to be something of a homecoming.

Tanvir landed at the Johnstown Road Dental Clinic, which is housed in the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Childhood Education and Family Center. "When I walked in, I remembered," she said. "It was a very nice surprise."

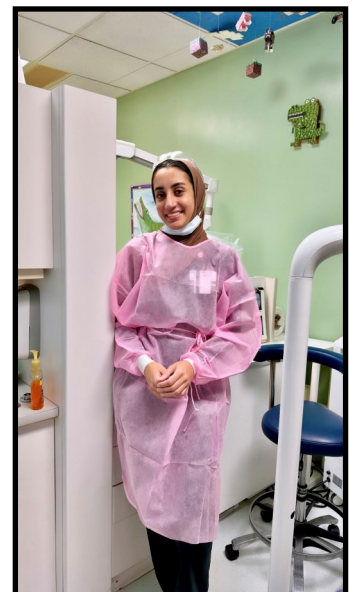
The 21-year-old had attended the center as a Head Start preschooler not long after moving to the United States from Pakistan. "So much was new to me, and honestly, this is where I learned most of my English," Tanvir said. "It's a wonderful program."

The clinic is a part of the OSU Nisonger Center, which offers an array of services and programs – including dental care – for people with developmental disabilities. Pediatric dentist Dr. Diego Solis, who has provided care for children and training for OSU dental students at the Johnstown clinic for two decades, was thrilled to welcome back a former student.

Solis and his staff have long been devoted to the social mission of the clinic, which handles more than 3,800 appointments each year. It operates on a sliding-fee scale so that children with and without disabilities are never denied care based on ability to pay.

"I love kids, and here you get so much joy out of what you do," Tanvir said. "It's very rewarding."

Solis recently asked Tanvir if she'd started singing to her patients, a practice that, he believes, can be both fun and calming for anxious children. "Almost," Tanvir said with a smile. "I'm humming."



Calendar

March, 2024

- 12 DD Awareness and Advocacy Day at the Statehouse Atrium, registration required. Go to: <https://ddohio.wordpress.com> to register.
- 21 FCBDD Early Childhood Education and the Mid-Ohio Food Collective Produce Drive Through from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the ECEFC Bus Lane (accessed via Marilyn Lane). For more details, contact Sarah Gillilan at 614-342-5803.
- 27 Provider Fair, Kasich Building at the Ohio State Fairgrounds. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- 27 Family Support meeting, Noon (12 p.m.) via Zoom. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details or click the following link to connect:

FCBDD Family Support Link:
<https://bit.ly/3JvZSUJ>

- 28 Franklin County Board of Developmental Board meeting, **12:30 p.m.** at 2879 Johnstown Road, Columbus. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details.

FCBDD Board Meeting Link:
<https://bit.ly/3JvZSUJ>

- 29 Staff Preparation/Development Day, West Central Schools and Early Childhood Education programs closed. Administration and Service Coordination open.

Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Marie Crawford, President
Samuel Davis, Vice President
Marci Straughter, Secretary
John Bickley
Dean Fadel
Michael Underwood
Karen Wilkins

Superintendent/CEO **Dot Yeager**

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



Staff all in for Early Childhood focus on professional learning

The Early Childhood Education Partnership at the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently held two professional development days, tapping into in-house expertise to provide hands-on programming for both center- and home-based staff.

Staff learned evidenced-based, interdisciplinary strategies for supporting the regulation of children as well as strategies to coach early intervention families, said ECE Director Dr. Kathy Lawton.

"The presentations were engaging and the content was selected based upon input from staff," Lawton said. "Our team is committed to continual learning!"



FCBDD beneficiary of Williams family gift

Efforts are underway to honor the memory of Ted and Jean Williams, longtime advocates and supporters of the local developmental disabilities community who named the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities as one of the beneficiaries of a revocable trust.

Jean, a former FCBDD board member, died in 2020, as did son Tom, who received FCBDD services. Ted passed away in 2023 and left \$285,000 to the agency.

"They were wonderfully supportive, and great volunteers, too," said Jed Morison, who recently retired as FCBDD Superintendent/CEO. "They were just very generous, good people."

Ted managed the printing facility at the Ohio State University and Jean was an artist. Tom, who was preceded in death by his sister Linda, contributed to many autism research projects and programs.

