

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

## 'Our consumers were our heroes' Psychology staff starts new chapter with ARC

The Psychology Department at the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently marked the end of a decades-long journey – then quickly began a new one – moving from the public agency to a private nonprofit organization.

FCBDD psychology staff transitioned in July to positions at ARC Industries, a disability-services provider that is adding behavioral health services. People who have been receiving counseling through FCBDD will be able to continue at ARC.

"We're working to serve the whole person – the body and the mind," said Anthony Hartley, Chief Financial Officer at ARC. "When this opportunity arose, we jumped at it."

Current and former psychology staff gathered for a farewell celebration, reflecting on advances in the field and on the resilience of people served. "Our consumers were our heroes," psychology assistant Randy Cuenot said. "We came to work in challenging circumstances, but never discouraging circumstances."

Psychologist Jeff Marinko-Shrivers first worked for FCBDD in the late 1980s, when many people with developmental disabilities still lived in institutions. Expertise in dual diagnosis, the finding that people have both disability and mental illness, was emerging.

For too long, mental health conditions that might respond to treatment had been misunderstood or "masked" by perceptions of the disability. "These were not things to change overnight," Marinko-Shrivers said. "But we made good progress."

Depression, anxiety, psychosis and difficult behaviors began to be managed with new and better medications. "We started to see more and more people moving into group homes and supported-living situations," Marinko-Shrivers said. "We could work with them on social skills and jobs."

Over the years, federal policy encouraged county boards to shift away from providing direct services in favor of privatization. FCBDD, which has worked closely with the Ohio State University Nisonger Center to bolster behavioral support, appears to be the last county board to end its in-house counseling services. Marinko-Shrivers, Cuenot, and psychology staff Patrick Keenist and Rick Robertson will move to ARC as office space is ready.

Cuenot feels proud of the department's accomplishments. "Everyone gave of themselves," he said. "I always enjoyed being at the double doors when my consumers came in – and when they left."



Psychology staff members Rick Robertson, Patrick Keenist, Randy Cuenot and Jeff Marinko-Shrivers show off their FCBDD Good For You awards.

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## FCBDD welcomes Joe Petrarca to new administrative role

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently selected Joe Petrarca to serve in the new position of Director of Educational and Shared Services. Petrarca oversees School and Transition Services, Transportation, Facilities, Human Resources and Information Technology.



A veteran educator, Petrarca started out as a speech-language pathologist and last served as Associate Director of the Office for Exceptional Children at the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. He said he's happy to have landed in the county board system.

"The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities has a really strong, positive reputation," he said. "I've always been impressed by the commitment the staff has to serving kids. There's an openness to seeing things in new ways."

Petrarca said he always knew he wanted to work in "a helping field," and first considered geriatrics before a love of language nudged him toward speech pathology. A former resident of northeast Ohio, he has served as an administrator at the school district level and in educational service centers as well as the state.

# West Central adds classes, staff, plus a furry friend

The 2024-25 school year begins Aug. 21 at West Central School and Transition Services, where several familiar faces are joining the school team.

They are moving to West Central after working in what are known as collaborative classrooms in local school districts. The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is phasing out that classroom structure, which positioned FCBDD employees in South-Western City Schools classrooms, teaching and working with students who have developmental disabilities.

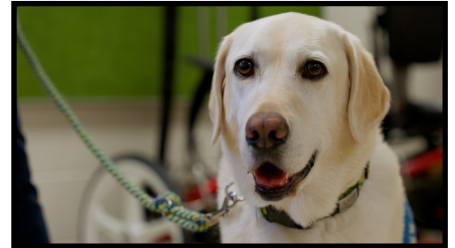
“We want to keep our focus on transition-age students 14 to 22,” West Central Principal Rebecca Holthaus said.

Four collaboratives previously operated by FCBDD will be staffed by the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, under contract with South-Western. Two others, at Park Street Intermediate School and Jackson Middle School, are to transition after this school year.

FCBDD once staffed many classrooms in South-Western and other districts, including Bexley and Reynoldsburg. As federal and state policies encouraged more-integrated settings for students, FCBDD shifted its school-age program to specialized transition services.

Almost all staff members from the closing collaboratives will be at West Central; two joined the ESC to remain with their current classrooms. “West Central is growing; we have 102 students, and more on the way,” Holthaus said.

Lion, a facility dog who has been in a collaborative with teacher Patti Saniel-Banrey, also is returning with her to West Central.



# Franklin County Flyers shine brightly at Summer Games

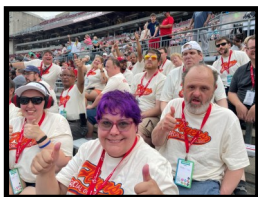


More than 150 athletes and coaches represented the Franklin County Special Olympics program during the 2024 Summer Games, held at the end of June at Ohio State University.

“It was another fantastic year in the books, this time with an extra-special spotlight on our older, veteran athletes,” said Megan Bender, Manager of Special Olympics at the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Special Olympics Ohio honored the oldest athletes in each sport during Opening Ceremonies at Ohio Stadium. Four of those “Distinguished Athletes” were Franklin County Flyers, including the oldest athlete at the games. They are: David Brown, 81, softball and athletics; Murriel Thompson, 80, bowling; Steve Segal, 66, swimming; and Will Hart, 65, powerlifting.

“It was just a good, solid event,” said Bender, who recently took over as manager of the Special Olympics program at FCBDD. “Our folks did a great job, and they’ve got more ribbons and medals than we can count. We all had a lot of fun.”



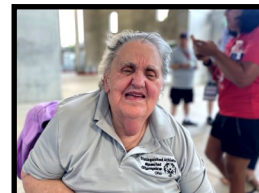
Summer Games  
2024



Steve



David



Murriel



Will

# Explore technology solutions at TechSummit 2024

The Ohio State University Nisonger Center, in partnership with Assistive Technology of Ohio and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, is hosting TechSummit 2024 in Columbus.

Registration is open for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual conference, set for Aug. 16 at the Marriott Columbus OSU.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from experts and technology adopters, and can explore technology

solutions for themselves. The event focuses on technology use and how it can benefit people with developmental disabilities.

For more information and to register, please visit [go.osu.edu/TechSummit](https://go.osu.edu/TechSummit)

For questions, email [Jordan.Wagner@osumc.edu](mailto:Jordan.Wagner@osumc.edu) and Cc [Xiaoya.Zhang@osumc.edu](mailto:Xiaoya.Zhang@osumc.edu)

**Staff spotlight**

# Service coordinator Leonard Fears focuses on the ‘heart work’



No matter how many screens of text or pieces of paper he sifts through, Leonard Fears always reminds himself of the people behind the information.

“No one is a number,” Fears, a service coordinator at the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, said with a smile.

State Rep. Ismail Mohamed of northeastern Franklin County recently sponsored a special recognition of Fears in the Ohio House of Representatives for his dedicated service and contributions to the community. Fears has been with FCBDD for 20 years.

“He’s my boots-on-the-ground type service coordinator, sort of an old-school social worker,” said Scott Smith, Fears’ supervisor at FCBDD. “He gets out there, and that is his strength. He talks to people. Leonard picks up the contextual things you can’t get in an email or even a phone call.”

Brian Hill, a service coordination supervisor who nominated Fears for their department’s You’ve Been Caught (Doing Something Nice) award, said his colleague is appreciated for all “the heart work” he does on behalf of many. Fears said he simply asks himself, “What if that was me?”

### You say you discovered your love for social work in Youngstown, where you grew up.

Yes – I worked in group homes, and that was my passion. When I first went to college, I was an art major. That didn’t pan out.

### Do you work with a certain population?

I have 55 families; my caseload is traditional kids – those that are non-waiver. It’s very important to connect people with needed resources. A lot of people don’t even know what guardianship means.

### Obviously, making contact in-person is a priority for you.

If I haven’t heard from you, I’m going to stop by. When you go into someone’s house, you’re not there to judge. You’re there to see what they need. Sometimes families just need some encouragement or direction.

### Being a service coordinator can be a demanding job, right? What keeps you motivated?

If you work on the grassroots part, you learn a lot. A big part of the reason I’m doing this work is because God has blessed me.

## Good For You ~ Notable achievements in the FCBDD community

We greatly appreciate the Arc of Ohio’s big delivery of more than 1,000 toys to benefit kids and families in our Early Childhood programs. Some of the first recipients had just visited our on-site dental clinic, making a trip to the dentist a lot more fun and rewarding!



Thanks to everyone who contributed to the agency’s Operation Feed campaign. We donated \$2,881 and nearly 200 pounds of food and hygiene items to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective. Shout out to the generous staff at West Central, who came up with a big chunk of our total.

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Highlights for Children recently gave our Early Childhood programs dozens of magazines and books, including a great supply for the 3 and under crowd. We love that so many of the popular High Five magazines and books are bilingual (mainly English and Spanish). Thanks, Highlights, for this very important gift!

Community connections are important, and we’re grateful to Anne Russell – Service Coordination and Community Engagement supervisor – for representing FCBDD at many resource fairs and local events. Love the pic with Columbus Police Chief Elaine Bryant!



## Career Milestones

### 30 Years

Jodi Dayan  
Elizabeth Gibson

### 20 Years

Kimberly Batts  
Kelly Bowers  
Beth Robinette  
Amy Yenkin

### 15 Years

Tim Smith  
Natasha Swartz

### 10 Years

Nicole Hatfield  
Gregory Marinelli  
Freedom McDonald  
Sharon McJanett  
Kelsey Ripper  
Lynette Thomas  
Rozalyn Trego  
Courtney Wente

### 5 Years

Stefania Celli  
Jacqueline Conant  
Melanie Cundiff  
Marlene Eloissant  
Tasha Hunter  
Florence Momoh  
Sanders Ridgeway  
Alexandria Rolander  
Kathryn Sopira  
Chad Welling

## Register now for the 2024 Synergy conference

Registration is open for this year's Synergy conference, set for Oct. 2-4 at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions center in Sandusky, Ohio.

Synergy focuses on creating collaborative experiences among people with and without disabilities. The aim is for participants to have fun, drive positive change and help communities to embrace new perspectives and solutions.

A limited number of stipends are available; participants also can use Self or Level One Medicaid waivers to pay for registration fees (but not for hotel costs).

For questions, email [admin@synergyohio.org](mailto:admin@synergyohio.org)

For more information, videos and to register, go to <https://synergyohio.org>



## Charting the LifeCourse session offered online Aug. 1

Families, people with disabilities and professionals are invited to an online information and training session on the Charting the LifeCourse, a framework to help individuals and families of all abilities and ages develop a vision for a good life.

The training will show participants how to use the course to assess, plan, identify services and supports, select appropriate providers and coordinate. The aim is to make it easier to explore and think through questions that lead to positive plans and experiences.

The three-hour training, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 1, is sponsored by the Family Resource Network of Ohio ([www.FRNOhio.org](http://www.FRNOhio.org)) and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. CEU credits are available for professionals. Presenter is Barbara Sapharas, Ohio Ambassador and National Team Member for the Charting the LifeCourse.

Register for the Zoom session at: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ut4s29>



## Dateline

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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

### July, 2024

24 Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Family Support meeting, 12 Noon (Zoom)

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

25 Franklin County Board of Developmental Board committee meetings, regular board meeting and board member inservice. Board meeting to begin At **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>

### August, 2024

15 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.

19,20 ECE and School staff returns - Staff Preparation/ Development Days.

21 First day of classes at West Central School.

21,22,23 ECE Program Service Days – Parent Visitation (No Transportation)

26-30 ECE Program Service Days – Parent Visitation (No Transportation).