



Dateline

October 2024

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

Equipment, accommodations make voting accessible to all

As the new ADA coordinator at the Franklin County Board of Elections, Josiah Lanning wants people with disabilities to know that they can have the voting experience they want and need.



"We're working to build a bridge of communication," Lanning said. "The Board of Elections could have the best services in the world for individuals with disabilities, but if the people who need them don't know about them, are they really available?"

No matter a person's disability, Franklin County can provide a secure voting experience via absentee, early or Election Day voting, he said. Accessible voting equipment is available at all precincts. Staff members can assist, or voters may bring a helper if they cannot mark their ballot.

Lanning and others recently hosted an open house to answer questions and offer interactive voting demonstrations. Accessible voting machines feature audio ballots, Braille and tactile lettering, large print, high contrast and more. ASL interpreters are available at some locations.

"Today, many people have learned that through the accommodations available on our voting machines, they can have the same voting experience as anyone else," Lanning said during the open house. "We want them to know that equal access in the electoral process is a priority in Franklin County."

Terry Blosser is deaf-blind and generally has voted absentee, both in Ohio and Oregon. "I trusted my wife to mark what I wanted, even though we don't necessarily agree on everything," he said.

Now, after learning more about the equipment available in Ohio, Blosser is happy to have options for both absentee and in-person voting. "It's opening my eyes – no pun intended," he said with a smile. "Yes, it is."



To learn more about accessible voting or to register to vote by October 7 deadline, visit: <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/>

For the ADA coordinator at the Franklin County Board of Elections, email Jeffrey.Lanning@vote.franklincountyohio.gov or call 614-525-4092.

Community Star Awards set for October 16 at Polaris

The 2024 Community Star Awards will be held on Wednesday, October 16. The annual event, sponsored by the Citizens Committee for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, moves to a new location this year at the Polaris Hilton, 8700 Lyra Dr.

The committee invites supporters to gather for an evening of fun, dinner and to celebrate this year's winners.

Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and the awards program from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$50 per person with all proceeds benefiting the Committee. Zayne Harshaw and Blue Spectrum band, winner of the 2024 Columbus Blues Alliance Blues Challenge, will provide the entertainment.

Register online by October 1: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-fcbdd-community-star-awards-tickets-1009248518487>

For assistance with registration, please contact Beth Cimprich at ARC Industries: bcimprich@arcind.com or by phone at 614-479-2500.

2024 Community Star Award Winners

- Jane Taylor, Self-Advocate/Person Served
- Tonya Porter, Direct Support Professional (past)
- Mariann Brush, Direct Support Professional (current)
- Mike and Pam Doles, Parent/Family Member
- Carol Beverage, Early Childhood Staff
- Darla Hodo, Transportation Staff
- Upreach, LLC, Provider Organization
- Monica Wangler, Volunteer/Good Neighbor
- Dale Pugh, School Staff
- Debbie New, Administrative/Supervisory Staff
- Stephanie Perez, Service Coordination Staff
- The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Employer

Perspective: Start the conversation

Recently I read a book about ableism, specifically about ableism in the church. It included a nugget of research that is truly startling.

The author noted a 2018 study by the disability equality organization SCOPE that found 67% of people were uncomfortable talking to someone with a disability. Let that sink in. Two-thirds were afraid just to talk.

These past few years, I have been so frustrated that people on my caseload and others with disabilities often find it difficult to obtain employment – especially considering how very long ago (34 years!) the Americans with Disabilities Act became law. I had thought perhaps these employment struggles were an anomaly.

But alas, if people are uncomfortable speaking to those with disabilities, how in the world are they going to bring them onto their team, work with them on a daily basis, and make them a part of the team? How are employees with disabilities going to move up from entry-level jobs if it means working with even more people who aren't comfortable talking to them?

The answer I came up with is that people with disabilities, and their allies, may need to be starting the conversation. One of the reasons I use humor so much in my day-to-day life is, well, to stay sane. But humor also is a tool to make people comfortable talking to me. This is a residual effect of me feeling like an outcast and trying to put people at ease from the time I was a small child. I suppose it's also why I am not shy. But you don't necessarily have to use humor. You just need to start talking.

I want to honor the job developers who assist people with disabilities in finding and keeping jobs. They often start conversations with employers – who then realize the potential of a candidate they might otherwise have passed by.

Denise Blackburn-Smith was born with cerebral palsy. She has been a service coordinator at the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities for 16 years.



Tech Ambassadors available for events, education

Want to learn how technology can boost independence and enhance daily life for people with developmental disabilities? The Ohio Tech Ambassador Network can help.

Two of the network's 14 ambassadors spoke to the Central Ohio Self-Determination Association in September, discussing and demonstrating apps and other forms of technology to assist people who are blind or vision impaired.

Tech ambassadors are people with disabilities who provide information, demonstrations and host events throughout the state on all kinds of technologies, from assistive devices to remote support services. Franklin County DD board member Marci Straughter is an Ohio Tech Ambassador.

To learn more, visit

<https://ohiotechambassadors.org>

To connect with Franklin County DD about remote support, email

remotesupport@fcbdd.org



Franklin County expands advocacy opportunities

Franklin County DD is advocating for change, from within. The agency's longstanding Self-Advocate Advisory Council is working to expand both its membership and horizons with a fresh, fun and collaborative approach.

"Advocacy is critical to the people we serve," said Ryan D. Phillips, Director of Communications, Advocacy and Community Relations. "It's a part of everything we do – from expressing our likes and dislikes on an ISP or grocery list to effecting policy change in our governments and provider agencies."

Franklin County DD serves more than 13,000 people every day, and Phillips wants to engage more of them in advocacy efforts: building skills, promoting independence, exploring technology for creative problem-solving, celebrating successes, volunteering and launching service projects to support our community.

The overall aim is to help people find their voice and have the confidence and tools to use it. "The people we serve have incredible stories to share, insights to bring and value to add to their communities," Phillips said. "We are taking a holistic approach to finding those opportunities and preparing our self-advocates to take full advantage of them."

The next meeting of the Self-Advocate Advisory Council is set for 10 a.m. to noon on December 12 at Franklin County DD, 2879 Johnstown Rd. For more information on joining or supporting the group, email ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org



Good For You

Notable achievements in the FCBDD community

Congrats to Goodwill Work and Community Services (WCS) for hosting a fun and informative open house in its wonderful new space in the former ARC North building at 6633 Doubletree Ave. WCS recently moved from Groveport after its building there was sold.

Thanks to the KiDDS Foundation for the \$35,000 donation in support of the Johnstown Road Dental Clinic, a partnership between the Ohio State University Nisonger Center and Franklin County DD. The KiDDS Foundation strives to provide dental care for children here and throughout the world.

We appreciate the Columbus City Council resolution on Direct Support Professional Recognition Week in September. And thanks to self-advocate Christine Brown for making sure these essential workers were honored.



Career Milestones

20 Years

Kris Gundy
Hallie Hale

15 Years

Nancy Jones
Anne Watson
Jonathan Zuhosky

10 Years

Regina Hollingsworth
Jessica Stacy
Toi-Lin Vanhorn

5 Years

Shannon Caeshu
Darin Easley
Brady Inman
Valerie Messmer
Denice Morrison
Nicole Nawman
Melissa Powderly

Debbie New ending long happy career in ECE

Even after 44 years, Debbie New never has thought of her career as a job. She's more apt to describe her dedication to the Franklin County DD Early Childhood Education (ECE) program as a joy. "It's a love," she said.

New, an associate director for program operations, is retiring on October 4. She joined the agency as an occupational therapist and soon moved to ECE, where she helped oversee the development of a thriving, inclusive program and renovated building on Johnstown Road.

"This building is built for children," she said. "Every space is an opportunity."

Former ECE director Becky Love, who worked with New throughout their careers, said New is known for her hard work, kindness and loyalty to the agency. "We'd often

tease her that she wore rose-colored glasses," Love said. "But she really was so positive."

New and her husband plan to travel and to spend more time with their two grown children and six grandchildren. She said she's always thrilled to hear about progress and growth made by young children who took part in early intervention and early learning programs through the Early Childhood Education Partnership.



"Parents will tell us, when their kids go on to their schools, their children are the first to help others," New said. "And a lot of it's because of what they learn here."

Open Door breaks ground on new sensory park

An accessible play space with sensory equipment, a sports park and garden-framed outdoor theater will soon be available to people served by Open Door Columbus and the broader disability community.

The nonprofit disability provider recently hosted a groundbreaking celebration for the Mirolo Sensory Park, which supporters say will feature "life-changing pieces of sensory equipment."

Rebecca Sharp, Chief Executive at Open Door, said people served by her agency challenged leaders to break down barriers and create a wonderfully accessible, inclusive space for all to enjoy. "To see this come true, you're witnessing a dream," she said during the groundbreaking.

The Mirolo Charitable Foundation is contributing up to \$250,000 for the project, which will take shape next to Open Door and its intermediate care facility on the West Side. It's expected to be completed next year. Open Door says the park will provide opportunities for sensory stimulation and therapeutic resources, including space for outdoor events and performances.

Dot Yeager, Superintendent/CEO at Franklin County DD, spoke at the groundbreaking and said the project is a great example of "what it means to be person-centered. It's a pleasure to be here and to celebrate inclusion."

To learn more about the Sensory Park, visit <https://opendoorcolumbus.org>



Calendar

October, 2024

- 2-4 Synergy Conference at the Kalahari Resort and Conference Center in Sandusky, Ohio
- 16 FCBDD Community Star Awards at the Polaris Hilton. Registration required. Social Hour from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and Awards Ceremony and Dinner begins promptly at 6:30 p.m. Contact Beth Cimprich with ARC Industries at 614-479-2500 or bcimprich@arcind.com
- 17 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
- 24 Franklin County Board of Developmental Board committee meetings and regular board meeting. 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>

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



Franklin County DD wants your feedback

Don't forget to make your voice heard by completing the Franklin County DD 2024 Community Survey by the October 4 deadline.

Responses to our brief, anonymous survey will help us know how we are doing and identify ways to improve. Feedback also helps guide the development of the agency's annual action plan, which will be shared with the community.

To take the survey, scan the code below or go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DNF5V87>

To request a printed copy, for assistance with language or other accommodations, email ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org



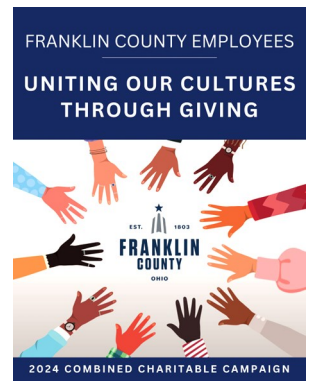
Franklin County DD kicks off Combined Charitable Campaign

The Franklin County DD Combined Charitable Campaign is aiming to raise \$55,000 this year to help nonprofit organizations meet important community needs.

All Franklin County employees have the opportunity to take part in the workplace charity drive, supporting causes of their choice through payroll deductions or one-time donations. Staff members should have received a link to the ePledge giving portal, which also includes a resource guide.

Service Coordination Director Lee Childs is leading the agency campaign. Department coordinators can answer questions or provide paper forms:

Ryan Phillips (Administration/Communications/Legal/Fiscal);
Larry Macintosh (Administrative Services);
Sarah Gillilan (Early Childhood);
David Ott (Human Resources);
Travis Sherick (IT);
Mike Boyce (Facilities Management);
Jake Turner & Jaycie Templeton (Service Coordination);
Emma Snailham, Mary Posey & Amy Kulow (Transportation);
Kelly Bowers (West Central School)



Community Survey

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities wants to hear from you!

Responses to this brief, anonymous survey will help us know how we are doing and identify ways to improve. Feedback also helps guide the development of our annual action plan, which will be shared with the community. **Please complete and return by Oct. 4 to FCBDD Communications, 2879 Johnstown Rd., Columbus, OH 43219.** For assistance with language or other accommodations, email ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org

1. What is your relationship to Franklin County DD?

- Person receiving services
- Parent or guardian of the person receiving services
- Direct service provider
- Partner agency staff member
- Other (specify) _____

2. What program area affects you the most?

- Service coordination
- Waiver provider services
- Early intervention/Early childhood education
- School-age and transition services
- ICF (intermediate care facility) services
- Other (specify) _____

3. Do you feel that Franklin County DD staff treats you with courtesy and respect?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

4. Does Franklin County DD answer your questions and provide helpful information?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

5. The last time you contacted a Franklin County DD staff member, how quickly did you hear back?

- Same day
- 1-2 days
- 3-5 days
- More than 5 days

6. How satisfied are you that your voice is heard and that you can make decisions about your life? (If you are responding on behalf of a person receiving services, answers should reflect their views.)

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not satisfied

7. How important is it for you to be informed about employment opportunities for people with disabilities?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

8. How important is it for you to learn how technology, such as assistive devices and remote support services, can help people with disabilities?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the programs and supports provided by Franklin County DD?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not satisfied

10. Please use this space to tell us what we are doing well, where we need to improve, or anything else you would like to say.

If you would like to speak to us about your experience, please contact Ryan Phillips at ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org; Rita Price at rita.price@fcbdd.org; or call 614-342-5161. You also can provide your contact information below and we'll reach out to you.

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____



2024 COMMUNITY STAR AWARDS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024

NEW LOCATION - Polaris Hilton • 8700 Lyra Drive, Columbus
Social Hour (Cash Bar) • 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Dinner & Awards • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
\$50.00/ Person • \$400.00/ Table of Eight

Please join us for an opportunity to recognize some outstanding people who contribute to our community, to celebrate their achievements and visit with friends. The venue is fully accessible and there will be a universal changing table available.

2024 COMMUNITY STAR AWARDS

PLEASE R.S.V.P. BY OCTOBER 1ST

Name(s): _____ Address: _____

(Please Print)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Chicken Piccata OR Eggplant/ Spinach Cannelloni (Vegetarian)

Other dietary needs (i.e. gluten-free, vegan, etc.): _____

Enclosed is a check for \$50.00 x per person to help support Citizens Committee for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. *Please do not send cash.*

Enclosed is \$400.00 for a table of eight* (8) to help support Citizens Committee for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. *Please include the names of the eight (8) attendees for your table and their meal choice

I have accessibility or accommodation needs (please indicate): _____

You can register online at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-fcbdd-community-star-awards-tickets-1009248518487>

Make checks payable to: Citizens Committee for Persons with DD

Send to: **2024 Community Star Awards**
Attn: Beth Cimprich, ARC Industries
2780 Airport Drive, Suite 450, Columbus OH 43219