

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

Franklin County DD introduces new logo

Starting this month, the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is rolling out a new logo.

Bold, bright hues of teal and gold show off an outline of the state, a star pinpointing our location in the Columbus area, and a shortened version of the agency's name: **Franklin County DD**.



"We hope it catches on," Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager said. "Our full name is a mouthful, and there really hasn't been an acronym that is both easy to say and that makes our identity clear."

Officially and legally, the agency name remains the same. Franklin County DD is one we'll use more casually and conversationally, with an aim toward boosting public awareness of our mission to promote inclusion and accessibility for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Since 2009, the Franklin County DD logo has been based on a pencil-drawn montage of faces by renowned artist Martha Perske. She began creating her lifelike drawings of people with disabilities in the early 1970s to illustrate newsletters and books written by her husband, the late Robert Perske, a chaplain and a passionate advocate for the rights of people with developmental disabilities.

"I love the history of it, but younger families might not relate as much," Gary Tonks, President of the Arc of Ohio, said of the Perske logo. "We know that a lot of disabilities are invisible, especially autism."

Tonks knew Mr. Perske well and says the drawings, like the couple's work, always were meant to promote acceptance and inclusion. And for many families at the forefront of the disability-rights movement, the so-called "Perske prints" resonated. "For our older generation, it's an acceptance of who your child is and that it's okay," Tonks said. "The pictures are everywhere."



It will take a while for Franklin County DD to update or replace existing signage with the new logo, which is much easier to reproduce than the highly detailed Perske drawing. Documents, business cards and online changes will happen sooner.

When Franklin County DD began using the Perske logo, Ohio had just changed state law to remove the words *mental retardation* from the names of county boards. Prior to that, the agency's logo design showed the letters "FCBMRDD" between horizontal, parallel lines.

The name change was a victory for self-advocates, including many in Franklin County. "Let's hope that attitudes continue to shift," former Superintendent/CEO Jed Morison said at the time, so that communities "consider the person first rather than the disability."

Franklin County DD welcomes new MUI manager

Eric Horvath, an experienced investigator who spent more than 27 years with Franklin County Probate Court, recently joined Franklin County DD to lead the agency's MUI Department.

He and the MUI team also are moving from Service Coordination oversight and will report to Legal Counsel Gwynn Kinsel. "Any internal investigative arm of an agency should have some separation," Kinsel said. "It just makes sense for MUI to be under Legal."

MUI, an acronym that refers to a Major Unusual Incident involving a person served by Franklin County DD, is a high-volume department that handles more than 1,500 reports each year. Incidents vary widely, from abuse and neglect to unexpected hospitalizations and accidents.

"I look forward to bringing a fresh set of eyes to how we conduct investigations," said Horvath, who began his new job on Nov. 29. "Part of my training right now is to sit back and listen and learn, and everyone has been so gracious."

Franklin County DD Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager noted that, while at Probate Court, Horvath and his investigators routinely collaborated with Franklin County DD, the ADAMH Board of Franklin County, the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging, APSI (Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc.) and several law enforcement agencies.

"Eric brings lots of knowledge and experience," Kinsel said. "We had a great working relationship in the past, and we're very happy to have him here at our agency."

A Columbus native, Horvath lives in the Eastmoor area with his wife, daughter and son. He said he loves the idea of building on his public-service career while leading a team that deals directly with Franklin County residents with developmental disabilities.

"We're all in this together as a community," he said. "Looking out for each other, and our neighbors, is important."



***In memoriam:* Franklin County DD staff member Yaw Osei**

Friends and colleagues are remembering Yaw Osei, a former IT specialist who became a much-loved and respected member of the Franklin County DD Information Technology Department. Osei died in a car accident on Nov. 22.

"He was the nicest, most humble person you could ever meet," said IT Director Travis Sherick. "If he had a million problems going on, you'd never know it. Yaw was all about serving others."

Osei started out as a consultant to the agency and had been a full-time information technology specialist for nearly five years. Because the majority of his work was done through the IT service desk, he interacted with hundreds of his Franklin County DD colleagues.

Though computer snags and problems are often frustrating, the customer experience with Osei was always the opposite. "Even if Yaw couldn't resolve the issue right away, customers walked out of there feeling heard," Sherick said.

Osei, 63, is survived by his children and by his wife. He was celebrated during a memorial service on Dec. 20.

Dozens of people contacted the IT Department with kind words, thoughts and cards after Osei's passing. Sherick and others said Osei taught by example. "The thing I hope to incorporate is his humbleness, and to learn when to slow down," Sherick said. "Yaw took on anything that was asked of him, and he did it in such a calm, thoughtful way. He was reliable, and had so much integrity."



Franklin County DD Provider Fair returns April 16

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities will host its annual Provider and Community Resource Fair on

Wednesday, April 16.

The event again takes place in Kasich Hall at the Ohio Expo Center and State Fairgrounds. Hours are from 1 to 7 p.m.

Stay tuned for more details for providers, community organizations, people with disabilities and families.

Advocacy spotlight

Special Olympian explores self-advocacy role

As a medal-winning athlete, manufacturing worker and dedicated family man, Chad Contreras keeps busy. But he's still finding time to learn more about the power of self-advocacy.

Contreras recently took part in a three-day Project STIR Leadership Training held in Dublin. Then he attended the December gathering of the Franklin County DD Self-Advocate Advisory Council, along with his grandmother, Janet Potenza.

Both even stayed late to fill out the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council state plan public survey, which helps guide state efforts to promote inclusion for Ohioans with disabilities.

You've really jumped into a lot of new things, Chad. What do you think so far?

I like going to these meetings. I liked meeting new people.

What's your take, Janet?

He's really blossomed and developed. From his time in Special Olympics to these latest activities, it's wonderful to see.

Give us a fun fact about Chad.

He loves to try new foods. He's not picky; he'll try just about anything. The spicier the better.

At the advocacy meeting, everyone shared a few goals, right Chad?

Yes. I'd like to be better in sports and Special Olympics. And I'd like to start a book club.

You had one, too, Janet.

I said my goal would be to live to at least 100 so that I can continue to be with Chad and in the presence of all these wonderful people. I'm honored to be his grandma.



Charting the LifeCourse workshop, showcase set for February



Registration is open for the 2025 Ohio Charting the LifeCourse Showcase, featuring both a Beginners Workshop and a Showcase Day. Events are supported by the Family Resource Network of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce.

Charting the LifeCourse was created to help people and families of all abilities and ages develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live.

- ◆ February 19: Beginner's Workshop (\$50). The aim is to gain a foundation in the Charting the LifeCourse framework, principles and tools.
- ◆ February 20: Ohio Showcase-Stories of Use and Impact (\$125). Dr. Al Condeluci will deliver a keynote on culture, community, and the importance of storytelling. Hear people share personal stories of how Charting the LifeCourse has shaped their lives.



For more information and to register:

<https://bit.ly/4gLfBa>

DUBLIN CITY SCHOOLS

2025 SUMMER PROGRAM FAIR

Come check out summer programs for children with disabilities. This is a free event and open to all of Central Ohio. No reservation needed.

JANUARY 18, 2025



9:30AM-12:00PM

5175 Emerald Pkwy
Dublin, OH 43017



Good For You

Notable achievements in the Franklin County DD community

We're so grateful for the generosity of our community, including partner organizations, staff and families, who stepped up to provide gifts for people served by our agency. From plush toys and action figures to accessible dolls and gift cards, there was a lot for Santa to deliver! Special thanks to the U.S. Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, the OSU College of Medicine's Disability Advocacy Coalition, University Women's Club Toymakers group, the Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club, the Franklin County Guardianship Service Board and our own staff members for all they did to grant holiday wishes.



Thanks to all who contributed to the Franklin County Combined Charitable Campaign. Our agency staff members pledged \$40,698 to help meet community needs in 2025!

Career Milestones

35 Years

Eileen Steele

25 Years

Carrie Schatz

20 Years

Stephanie Watkins

10 Years

Tracy Boyd

Keyana Jackson-Rash

Melissa Longworth-Crisp

Nicholas Mynatt

5 Years

Melissa Boyd

Whitney Brofford-Swope

Erica Cobbs

Angela Rennick

Daniel Snapp

Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Marie Crawford, President

To contact the Board President by e-mail:

boardpresident@fcbdd.org

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.

The following staff contribute to the monthly publication and distribution of *Dateline*:

Amy Magginis **Rita Price**

Jennifer Cunningham **Carla Maynard**

News releases, story ideas, and suggestions should be sent to:

Rita Price, Communications Coordinator
2879 Johnstown Road
Columbus, Ohio 43219
(614) 342-5161 FAX (614) 342-5001
e-mail: rita.price@fcbdd.org

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

www.fcbdd.org



Calendar

January, 2025

- 1 Happy New Year! All county facilities closed.
 - 6 FCBDD Early Childhood and West Central classes resume.
 - 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day -- all county facilities closed.
 - 22 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>
- 23 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.
 - 23 Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Annual Organizational Board meeting and regular Board meeting, at 1 p.m. at 2879 Johnstown Road, Columbus. Committees to meet at Noon (12 p.m.) Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details.

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

