

# Dateline

January 2026



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

## For Panera worker, support leads to long-term success

Though his previous job wasn't a good fit, Evan Koloski didn't give up hopes of being happily employed. He just needed to find a place where the pace and the people felt right.

"It worked out for the best," Koloski said, "because I ended up here."

The 27-year-old has now been a staff member at the Hilliard-Mill Run Panera for the past six years. He's dedicated, dependable, and popular with both customers and colleagues.

"You're the backbone of my back of the house," general manager Mary Stormont told Koloski on a recent weekday morning.

Franklin County DD service coordinator Jasmin Chatman said the relationship between Koloski and Stormont is clearly a key to his success. It has helped him to establish the kind of employment "longevity" that can be elusive for many in the disability community.

"Mary is such a kind person, and she's just the most supportive manager," Chatman said.

Stormont said the gains are mutual, as she learns from Koloski, too. "You definitely know when Evan's not here," she said. "People expect to see him."



Koloski loves theater and spends some of his time rehearsing and performing with Open Door Stage & Screen, an inclusive, artist-led ensemble that features performers with and without disabilities. "We all go to his shows," Stormont said. "Evan does a great job combining his two worlds."

At Panera, Koloski tends to the coffee and tea, wipes down tables and takes out the trash. He doesn't prepare food or run the register, and that's fine by him. He knows he can ask for help if needed.

"Sometimes I might pause. People might ask me if I'm okay," Koloski said. "I am; I just might need a reset."

Chatman often smiles when she sees Koloski and Stormont working together. "My son is on the spectrum, and I pray that one day he finds a Mary," she said.

## Free crisis prevention and support training offered in 2026

The Franklin County DD Service Coordination Department is excited to announce multiple dates for crisis prevention and support training in 2026.

Classes are free and open to all, regardless of prior crisis intervention experience. Each one-day session covers crisis prevention and intervention procedures, with special focus on the Positive Culture Initiative and trauma-informed care. Certificates and CEUs are available.

Registration opens six weeks prior to the session, and location will alternate between the agency's service coordination offices at 1600 Watermark Dr. and the administration building at 2879 Johnstown Rd.

The six training dates for 2026 are **January 9, March 13, May 8, July 10, September 11 & November 13**

Registration is open for the January training: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., January 9, 2026

at Franklin County DD Service Coordination Dept., 1600 Watermark Dr.

Register now at <https://bit.ly/3y7xuuz>

Questions? Email [crystal.schneider@fcbdd.org](mailto:crystal.schneider@fcbdd.org)

# Keith's Law, Blue Envelope program make emergency response more inclusive

People with a medically diagnosed communication disability can now enroll in a database that connects to the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS).

During interactions with law enforcement, such as traffic stops, LEADS will notify the officer that someone in the vehicle may have difficulty communicating. Supporters of the new law, known as Keith's Law, say it can help reduce potential misunderstandings or problems.

Enrollment is voluntary and does not include specific information about the type of disability. Participants can be drivers, or passengers riding with a provider or other third party.

Another voluntary option in Ohio is the Blue Envelope program, which does not require LEADS enrollment. The program makes it easier for people with developmental disabilities to convey basic information during interactions with law enforcement and emergency personnel.

Blue Envelope packets allow participants to fill out information about their disability and/or medical conditions, along with a copy of ID/driver's license, vehicle registration and insurance, that can be given to a law enforcement officer during a traffic stop or for first responders in the event of an accident. The packets also include wallet cards and car decals.

To learn more about the Blue Envelope program, including where to pick up packets at Franklin County DD, visit <https://fcbdd.org/blue-envelope-program/> or call 614-342-5161.

To learn more about Keith's Law and LEADS enrollment, visit <https://ood.ohio.gov/laws-rules-and-policies/laws/communication-disability-law>



## Service Coordination teams celebrate by volunteering



Franklin County DD Service Coordination supervisor Kate Taylor and behavior services manager Rachel Indurti decided to celebrate the holidays with a team volunteering activity at the Mid-Ohio Food Collective.

Staff members sorted food and other essential goods for distribution to pantries and other organizations across Mid-Ohio's 20-county service area. Teams also got a behind-the-scenes tour of the facility to learn more about the giant food bank and its mission.

Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to give back to an organization that supports so many in our Franklin County DD community. The team members include: Trevor Stone, Andrea Goodwin, Alexis Frazier, Chris Fusner, Jay Chiocca, Maddi Butler, Misti Sellers, Peg O'Grady, Silicia Hedges, Gabriela Leon, Kelsey Stolar, Lindsay Smith, Kyle Stoltz and Callie Leyland

## Advocacy spotlight: Community Star Award winner shines

Samantha Perry had a great year of advocacy in 2025, including winning a Franklin County DD Community Star Award in the self-advocate category. *Dateline* caught up with Perry—known to her friends as Sam—during a recent meeting of the Franklin County DD Self-Advocate Advisory Council.

She also was recognized last fall for contributing artwork to the *Birds of Inspiration* mural at APSI (Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc.), where she once was a guardianship client.

### What does self-advocacy mean to you, Sam?

It's learning how to speak up for yourself, learning how to take responsibility, and learning how to get the proper provider. And it's learning how to become your own guardian, which I did.

### Is that one of your biggest accomplishments?

It is. The attorney who used to be my guardian said, 'You do very well advocating for yourself.' He said to have fun, and remember, 'With great power comes great responsibility.' I think that's a line in *Spider-Man*.

### Now that you've tackled guardianship, what's a new goal?

Learning how to drive. I've got my temps, and we're looking for driving schools. Not online. I'm a hands-on learner.

### What advice do you have for others who want to take more control over their lives?

Keep advocating, and keep your focus on what you want to accomplish. If you do that, the sky's the limit!



# Good For You

*Notable achievements in the Franklin County DD community*

Congratulations and warmest thanks to Carl Mulberry, who is retiring (mostly) after 50 years of dedicated service to children and families who use wheelchairs. Mulberry is the former owner of Columbus Medical Equipment (now National Seating & Mobility), and one of the nation's true pioneers in adaptive seating. "Carl is so special," said Tiffany Hanna, a parent who attended Mulberry's retirement party along with her daughter, Phoebe. "The difference is that he understands kids with complex needs."



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Here's hoping longtime Franklin County DD teacher—and new retiree—Patti Saniel-Banrey returns for visits now and then with her four-legged assistants, Lion and Blondie. Lion served as a Canine Companions facility dog in the classroom, and Blondie was a therapy dog. We were lucky to have them all on staff!

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***We're grateful to our generous staff, community members and local nonprofit organizations for all they did to provide extra support to families and individuals in need during the holiday season. We appreciate everyone who donated gifts and time.***

Thanks to all the families who shared their heritage, food, traditional dress and more during International Night at our Early Childhood Learning Community. The event, which includes a potluck meal, is a wonderful, long-running tradition at the center. And our Early Childhood Education and Family Center hosted an International Night gathering, too. Love it!



## Career Milestones

**35 Years**  
Carol Middaugh

**10 Years**  
Timothy Wilmer

**5 Years**  
Pamela Harrell  
Alisha Myles  
Emily Patrick  
Rita Price

## Perspective: My not-so-super superpower

While shopping and walking around at a store recently, I once again used my superpower. It was amazing! Poof, I was invisible!

My ability to remain unseen comes up so often that other superheroes like Batman or Superman could probably learn a thing or two from me. I think I am called to use my superpower more often than those superheroes, and, as they say, practice makes perfect. So I am just about at the top of my perfection ceiling.

Here is how it works: I will be moving along, looking at something, and people will walk right in front of me. It's very much as if I am not even there. Sometimes they rush to get in front of me, as apparently, they feel that I am too slow.

Then what often ends up happening is that I run into the people who have rushed in front of me. They invariably say something like, "Oh, you're fine," or some other phrase meant to make me feel as though our bumping into each other was my fault.

No, dear readers, it is not my fault when you speed up to get in front of me and then I run into you. At best, that reflects your poor planning skills. At worst, it is inconsiderate and maybe even dangerous.

Though I sometimes use a walker when I'm out, nothing beats my trusty wheelchair for true invisibility. People really don't see me then! Maybe it's too taxing for them to look down a bit? I am not sure why using a wheelchair frequently causes people to ignore me; all I know is that it happens. Getting around in a wheelchair is much easier for me than walking, but I always have to factor in, and prepare for, the invisibility factor.

A friend once told me that people ignore me so it won't seem as though they are staring at me. Maybe she's right.

I often leave these situations wondering if I one day I'll be able to put down my cape for good. I'd happily surrender my superpower if it meant I could walk (or roll) around noticed, like most everyone else. Maybe someday...

*Denise Blackburn-Smith was born with cerebral palsy. She is an intake specialist at Franklin County DD.*



# Self-advocates invited to 2026 meetings

Interested in learning more about self-advocacy? Would you like to meet others in the Franklin County DD community? Consider joining the Franklin County DD Self-Advocate Advisory Council this year!

Meetings take place each month (except for July) and are open to all self-advocates receiving services from the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Topics and activities vary, from legislative advocacy and voting rights to social activities, pizza parties and more.

To receive meeting notifications or to learn more, contact Ryan Phillips, Director of Communications, Advocacy and Community Relations, at [ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org](mailto:ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org) or call 614-342-5984.

Meetings typically are held from 10 a.m. to noon at Franklin County DD, 2879 Johnstown Rd.

## 2026 Self-advocate Advisory Council

|                    |                      |                     |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>January 15</b>  | <b>May 14</b>        | <b>September 17</b> |
| <b>February 26</b> | <b>June 11</b>       | <b>October 15</b>   |
| <b>March 19</b>    | <b>July (no mtg)</b> | <b>November 12</b>  |
| <b>April 16</b>    | <b>August 13</b>     | <b>December 10</b>  |

# Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Information about Franklin County DD is always available on the internet at:

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



# Support the Freezin' Flyers in the 2026 Polar Plunge

Franklin County Special Olympics athletes, staff and supporters are gearing up for the 2026 Columbus Polar Plunge, set for Saturday, February 7 at a new location: Fortress Obetz, a sports and entertainment complex in southern Franklin County.

Taking part in the plunge or donating to Freezin' Flyers Polar Plunge team helps support the more than 300 Franklin County Special Olympics athletes who compete in sporting events year-round, at no cost to them. The Polar Plunge is one of the organization's biggest fundraisers.



Check-in starts at 9:30 a.m. on February 7, followed by opening ceremonies, awards and a costume contest at approximately 10:40 a.m. Plunging starts around 11 a.m.

To support the Flyers' team, go to

<https://support.soo.org/goto/FreezinFlyers26>

For event details or to register to plunge, visit <https://sooh.org/polar-plunge/> and click on the Columbus Polar Plunge tab.

# Calendar

## January, 2026

- 1 Happy New Year! All county facilities closed.
- 5 West Central classes resume.
- 6 ECE center-based programs resume.
- 7 Franklin County DD 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>
- 14 Franklin County DD Early Childhood Learning Community (**ECLC**) and the Mid-Ohio Food Collective Produce Drive Through at 4:30 p.m. at ECLC, **4141 Rudy Road**, Columbus, 43214. For more details, email Gretchen Uhl at [gretchen.uhl@fcbdd.org](mailto:gretchen.uhl@fcbdd.org)
- 15 Franklin County DD Self-advocate Advisory Council, meets at 2879 Johnstown Road, 10 a.m. Contact Ryan Phillips for details by email at [ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org](mailto:ryan.phillips@fcbdd.org) OR by phone at 614-342-5984
- 15 Franklin County DD Early Childhood Education (**Johnstown Road**) and the Mid-Ohio Food Collective Produce Drive Through at 4:30 p.m. in the ECEFC Bus Lane (accessed via Marilyn Lane). For more details, email Sarah Gillilan at [sarah.gillilan@fcbdd.org](mailto:sarah.gillilan@fcbdd.org)
- 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. All county facilities closed.
- 22 Franklin County DD Organizational and Regular Board meetings, at 5 p.m. at 2879 Johnstown Road, Columbus. Board committee meetings begin at 4 p.m. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details. **FCBDD Board Meeting Link:** <https://bit.ly/3JvZSUJ>