



# The ALL-STAR Newsletter

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Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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## Jefferson County BDD

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### How Are We Doing?

Take Our Survey and Provide Your Feedback at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QYTSKN7>

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## Superintendent's Message

### JCBDD's Vision: Recognize Ability

First, I would like to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May the joy of the holiday season bring you peace and happiness.

As I mentioned last month, our strategic plan is now final and board-approved. We will be sharing the plan in January and having listening sessions with our different departments. One of the items I'm most excited about is only two words which represent our vision: RECOGNIZE ABILITY. It is simple yet so indicative of how we need to function as a program. Whether you are in early intervention, preschool, school-age, transportation, SSA, Shaffer Plaza, administration or community employment, it is appropriate to recognize ability in not only those we serve but in each other.

Another piece of the plan that will require our

focus is employment. After attending the annual Ohio Association of County Boards Conference in Columbus, I have a renewed belief that a significant change is needed.

I am starting a small workgroup within our board that will analyze all aspects of employment within the organization. It is imperative that the vision and values we desire are present in all facets of the hiring and retention processes, including advertising, interviewing, orientation and training and ongoing education. We want to ensure that we attract and retain individuals who have the desire to truly care for those we serve. We can all make a difference when we recognize ability.

Look for the plan to be sent in the next week or so and I look forward to sharing it with you in person.

## West Presents at OACB Conference

Helping special needs individuals live and work among society is the goal of the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities and one of its officials discussed how similar agencies can take an active role in making that happen during a recent conference.

Alex "Cookie" West, JCBDD employment navigator and community facilitator, was among the presenters during the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Association for County Boards Conference in Columbus on Dec. 5, joining the likes of Gov. Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Director Jeff Davis to address about 2,000 people representing county board superintendents, employment navigators, early intervention officials, employment providers, services and supports administrators (SSA), administrative personnel and a range of organizations and agencies that provide services to individuals in the developmentally disabled community within all 88 state counties. Other presenters for the event included Bridget Gargan, executive director of the OACB, and Alison Circle, customer experience officer



**Cookie West, employment navigator and community facilitator for the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, was among the presenters during the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Association for County Boards Conference in Columbus on Dec. 5.**

for the Columbus Metropolitan Library.

West focused on "Interagency Planning: Reducing Red Tape for Job Seekers" and how groups could come together to ease the burden for special needs individuals wanting to join the workforce. She was

invited to speak by Dave Mitchell, employment navigation technical assistance liaison for OACB and project manager for the Mid-East Ohio Regional Council (MEORC).

(Continued as WEST)



### ***Church Donation Aids Student Safety***

Weirton United Methodist Churches, which includes three churches in the parish, raised funds to acquire seat belt covers for students at the School of Bright Promise. The covers denote special needs children who may be riding in family vehicles during emergencies and inform safety personnel that the occupant has special needs and may not respond or possibly resist care. Pictured with the items are, from left, school Principal Jane Bodo, Pastor Carol McKay and instructional aide Alyssa Wilson.

“He is my mentor and a point of contact for my positions process,” she explained. “He expressed that I had created and accomplished a lot in the short amount of time that I have been in this position. Being able to present was an extreme honor since this event is attended by representatives from all over the state of Ohio.”

Her subject matter detailed how job seekers must navigate complicated support systems on their employment journeys and it’s the agencies’ job to guide them.

“I spoke about how agencies can cut through red tape on the job seekers’ behalf by listening, collaborating and sharing knowledge among support organizations,” she noted. “Five years have passed since Ohio’s county boards received a federal mandate to transition nearly all Medicaid-funded direct services to private providers. With that transition now complete or nearly complete in all but a handful of counties, many boards are starting to ask important questions about the future role they will play in the lives of the people and families they serve. We as a county board just completed a three-year strategic plan and we are truly focused on all of the customers we serve. Our goal is to engage with them and provide the best possible experience. With the future of our new location [at the former Jeffco Workshop building], I believe we can really provide everything to expand, explore and enhance our services.”

West was also approached at the conference to share her insight with the employment navigation team in Franklin County and plans to speak there in the near future.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Michael Zinno was pleased to see West and the JCBDD represented during the conference.

“I am proud of Alex and our program. Having OACB ask Alex to present at the annual convention says a lot about her and our program,” Zinno commented. “Once a year, leaders from around the state converge in Columbus to share and learn from others.”



## ***Calendar of Events***



- Dec. 1: Make Your Own Sundae (Shaffer A); Make Christmas Lists (Shaffer B); Oglebay Festival of Lights (Shaffer C)
- Dec. 2: Business Professional Women Mtg. (Employment Navigator/Community Facilitator); Music Practice (SBP); Christmas Movie & Cocoa (A); Decorate (B); Walk @ Mall (C)
- Dec. 3: Prime Time Senior Center Advisory Board (EN/CF); Music Practice (SBP); God’s Choice Church Party (A)
- Dec. 4: OACB Conference (EN/CF); Music Practice (SBP); Bowling @ Steel Valley Lanes (A&B); Hot Cocoa & Movie Night (C)
- Dec. 5: OACB Conference (EN/CF); Music Practice (SBP); Nutcracker Village (A); Make Christmas Cards (B); Just Dance on Wii (C)
- Dec. 6: Family & Children First Council (EN/CF); Game/Craft Night/Make Christmas Gifts (A)
- Dec. 7: Steubenville Christmas Parade (A); Bake a Holiday Pie (B); Make Gingerbread Houses (C)
- Dec. 8: Christmas Movie Night (A); Make an Ornament (B); PJ Party with Christmas Movies (C)
- Dec. 9: Visit Edison HS (EN/CF); School Behavior Mtg. and Music Practice (SBP) Christmas Lights Tour (A); Festival of Lights (B); Crafts (C)
- Dec. 10: JCBDD Leadership Team Mtg. & Kiwanis (EN/CF); Human Rights Mtg. & Music Practice (SBP); Movies @ AMC Theater (A); Visit Nutcracker Village (C)
- Dec. 11: Jeff. Co. Chamber of Commerce (EN/CF); Lions Club Christmas Party (SBP); Bowling (A&B); Reindeer Games (C)
- Dec. 12: Music Practice (SBP); Shaffer Christmas Party at SBP
- Dec. 13: JCESC Special Educators Directors Mtg. (EN/CF); Music Practice (SBP); Game Night (A); Resident’s Choice (B&C)
- Dec. 14: Resident’s Choice (A); Nutcracker Magic Parade (B&C)
- Dec. 15: Visit Nutcracker Village (B); Festival of Lights (C)
- Dec. 16: Visit Buckeye Local HS & Regional Coordinated Planning Conference Call (EN/CF); Music Practice (SBP); Christmas Movie & Cocoa (A); Resident’s Council (B); Resident’s Choice (C)
- Dec. 17: Kiwanis (EN/CF); Safety Mtg. & Music Practice (SBP); God’s Choice Church Party (A); Festival of Lights (B); Board Games (C)
- Dec. 18: Music Practice (SBP); Bowling (A&B); Wii Bowling (C)
- Dec. 19: Multi-Agency County Transition Youth Team and JCESC County Transportation Team Mtgs. (EN/CF); Watson Mtg. & Christmas Program (SBP); Make Christmas Cookies (A); Plan Christmas Dinner (B); Craft Night (C)
- Dec. 20: M&M Party (A); Movies & Popcorn at Home (B); Resident’s Council (C)
- Dec. 21: Resident’s Choice (A); Deliver Cookies to Homes A&B (C)
- Dec. 22: Resident’s Council Mtg. (A); Decorate Cookies (B); Movie and Cookies (C)
- Dec. 23: Holiday Break Begins (SBP); Crafting (B)
- Dec. 24: Build a Snowman (A); Christmas Eve Preparations (B)
- Dec. 25: MERRY CHRISTMAS!**
- Dec. 26: Plan New Year’s Party (B)
- Dec. 27: New Year’s Crafts (A); Festival of Lights (B); Plan New Year’s Party (C)
- Dec. 28: Board Games (C)
- Dec. 29: Sundaes on Sunday (B); Resident’s Choice (C)
- Dec. 30: Resident’s Choice (A)
- Dec. 31: New Year’s Eve