



The ALL-STAR Newsletter

April 2021

Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Issue 30

Jefferson County BDD

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JCBDD Recognizes Employment Partners

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities is giving a shout out to area businesses and organizations that have provided jobs for the differently abled.

Representatives of JCBDD's Community Employment Services have been visiting sites throughout Jefferson County and in West Virginia and presenting certificates honoring them for being employment partners. More than 30 groups are being recognized including Em-Media, UPS Store, Kroger in Steubenville and Wintersville, Intrigue Salon, DeNoon Lumber, Burger King, Best Western Inn at Franciscan Square, Prodigal Daughter, Bellevue Pool, Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, Harbor Freight, Applebee's, Apollo Professional Cleaning, Jefferson County Juvenile Justice Center, Parkhurst Food Services, Jefferson County Humane Society, Walmart Distribution Center, Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County, the city of Steubenville, McDonald's in Steubenville and Toronto, Pastre's Service Station, Lowe's, King's Family Restaurant, Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Jefferson State Lake, Friendship Park, Beatty Park, School of Bright Promise and Aracoma Park. CES Specialist Renee Pastre-Hanlin said it was the first time the partners have been honored but they have greatly benefitted the people that JCBDD serves. In recognition of Developmental Disabilities Awareness and Advocacy Month in March, representatives wanted to tout employment partners for their willingness to "Recognize Ability," as was the theme for this year's observance, and open their doors to provide employment opportunities. The honor was also spurred by the support businesses have given to individuals during the COVID pandemic.

"With Developmental Disabilities Month and after looking back on the year of COVID, we felt the need to reach out to the employers and recognize them for the support they gave our individuals throughout the

pandemic," said Pastre-Hanlin.

She noted that 25 individuals are employed at the sites in a variety of entry-level positions, from making candles and fast food to performing janitorial and retail work and even serving as cafeteria aides.

CES provides people with disabilities job opportunities in the community to enhance their social, emotional and vocational needs. Pastre-Hanlin works with fellow CES Specialist Angela Loppe-Goodrich to assist individuals with finding jobs, as well as offering summer youth career exploration and work experience programs for students ages 14-22. They also help with job coaching, community-based assessments, permit tutoring and job development and CES focuses on such key areas as work adjustment, pre-employment transition services and travel training. Meanwhile, Alex "Cookie" West serves as employment and community navigator and helps with the planning, coordinating and monitoring of employment-related support to job seekers, serving between 100-150 students and about 20 adults throughout the year. West works collaborates with Pastre-Hanlin and Loppe-Goodrich, and as employment navigator she works directly with school district personnel to help special education students aged 14-22 in their transition from high school to adulthood. As community navigator, she informs, educates and partners with the organization, agencies and community at large to raise awareness and foster community inclusion for people with disabilities.

The department receives referrals from the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), a state agency that empowers Ohioans with disabilities through employment, disability determinations and independence. OOD provides counseling and guidance to individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment to jointly choose an employment goal based on strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, capabilities and interests. This is accomplished through its Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) and Division of Disability Determination (DDD). A fourth area is the Division of Employer and Innovation Services (EIS), which is responsible for establishing and maintaining partnerships with employers.

Officials noted that all people, regardless of disability, deserve the opportunity for a full life in their community where they can live, learn, work and play aside each other through all stages of life. People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities need varying degrees of support to reach personal goals and establish a sense of satisfaction with their lives.

"Every person has abilities, skills and talents to enrich the community and the people around them. We envision a time when every person with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities has an opportunity to explore and interact in the wonderful communities in Jefferson County," officials stated. "One of the most empowering steps a community can take is providing a pathway. It not only helps people with disabilities feel fulfilled and valued, but it shows the ability to understand and work with them in a meaningful way. To assist persons with all types of disabilities to achieve their maximum level of sustainable independence as contributing and equal participants in society has been always been a top priority for the JCBDD."

Pastre-Hanlin was thrilled with the ongoing partnerships and hopes to grow them even further.

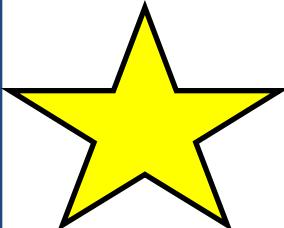
"It is our honor for CES to work with each of the businesses to develop a partnership," she added. "We are very excited to extend this bit of gratitude. It is important for our individuals to be integrated and valued in their community, and these businesses allow that to happen. The partners are the key to enhancing and developing their fullest potential in the community. We are excited to build new partnerships in the future."

Through Our Eyes

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities invited schools and the community to take part in activities for "Through Our Eyes: Simulation Day." Activity packets were distributed and students at Steubenville City Schools and Indian Creek Local Schools were among the districts taking part for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month for March. Children at East Garfield Elementary, Pugliese West and Wintersville Elementary learned what it was like to have developmental challenges such as visual and hearing impairment, mobility issues and difficulty communicating. Pictured is Tali Purdy, a second-grader at East Elementary, attempting to write while blindfolded with a mask. Cookie West, JCBDD employment and community navigator, said the events helped youth gain an understanding of being differently abled.



Getting to Know You...



*Kim
Dunlope*



Kim Dunlope knew he had something special the first time he worked at the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and it brought him back for another 28 years.

Dunlope, a Wintersville native who now resides in Salineville, will retire on April 30 and reflected fondly upon his experience with the differently abled.

"I was working at Gill House and they had an opening for a case manager at Shaffer Plaza. I applied and wound up getting it," he said. "I worked there for six months and took another job."

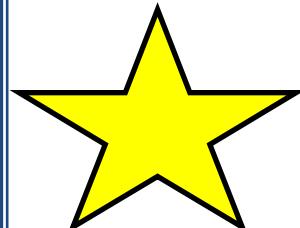
He knew something was amiss when he realized how much he enjoyed being at Shaffer.

"It was a wonderful place to work. I knew when I left after those six months that it was a mistake. I really felt like I belonged here. You get so close to everyone because you end up being their surrogate family."

Dunlope returned and eventually worked his way up to become manager of the three buildings, which he held until more than a year ago. He's interacted with hundreds of people during his tenure and currently serves as a service and support administrator (SSA) for JCBDD. As he winds down his time, he said he will miss the experience.

"It's been great. I've had great relations with my co-workers and I will miss interaction with [the consumers]."

He is unsure of what lies ahead but said he will enjoy spending time with his son and animals, which includes his pet parrot, Paco. Dunlope will simply relish the next chapter of his life.



*Jessica
Brokaw*



Jessica Brokaw loves to work.

When she arrives each day at AEP in Steubenville to serve as a custodian, she has a routine of grabbing her coffee and getting into a zone with her tasks. She likes her job so much that she has been known to call for rides on snowy days when she could simply relax and enjoy a day off.

Brokaw will also say she is not very talkative, but others admit she has come a very long way. When she first started at the business three years ago, she was not as interactive. Perhaps it's the sense of independence she derives from earning her keep and being a part of society, but it definitely makes her happy.

She also has made friends both through PALS and the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities as well as AEP, where she likes to joke with her co-workers, Maxwell and Chris, the latter whom she refers to as "Mr. Clean."

The Mingo Junction resident lives with her mom, Georgeanna, and cousin, Michael, and is also an aunt to sister Jennifer's three children, Faith, Jasmine and Brandon.

When she is home, Brokaw loves to watch MTV's "Ridiculousness" and ride her bike for exercise. She also considers herself a good artist and likes to pick up a paintbrush.

She recalls her time at the former Jeffco Training Center and Jeffco Workshop and performing custodial work for ODOT, saying those experiences led to her job as a substitute at AEP which eventually parlayed into full-time employment.

"It's been doing pretty good. It helps me keep busy a lot," Brokaw said. "I like earning money and helping my mom."