



The ALL-STAR Newsletter

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Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Superintendent's Message: Looking Forward

As Superintendent of the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, I am pleased to present our 2020 Annual Report.

Please take a few minutes to get a better understanding of our programs, achievements and challenges by visiting www.jcbdd.com to view the report.

Despite being what could be described as the most difficult time in our program's history, we

have moved forward and continued to support our provider network, employees, individuals, families and our community. I am proud that our program continues to be both a provider and administrator of developmentally disabled services.

I want to thank everyone that makes the county board what it is today. We were able to move beyond the obvious issues of 2020, and I am looking forward to 2021 and meeting the challenges that

lie ahead. We will continue to focus on improving community integration, supporting our private provider network, improving available services, expanding housing options and increasing community employment opportunities for the individuals we serve. To accomplish these important initiatives will take the entire DD community, which includes the county board, the private provider network and the community at large.

Respite Program Offered for Developmentally Disabled Kids

Developmentally disabled children in Jefferson County have a place to recreate with a new respite program at the School of Bright Promise.

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, in cooperation with the ENGAGE program, is offering a venue at the Steubenville site with potential plans to expand in the future. The first session was held May 22 and the respite program currently aids about five to six children and includes crafts, sensory experiences, water play, motor activities, music and other fun and enriching activities. It is manned by school staff who have CPR certification and are professionally trained to work with autistic and other special needs children, plus they follow all policies and rules through the JCBDD and Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Hopes are to expand with another program day on Wednesdays as well as during the summer months with two groups for ages 1-9 and age 10-17.

The program was created in response to a great need that one SBP teacher hoped to fulfill. Kindergarten teacher Amber Ankrom had received queries about an option for the kids which would also give their parents and guardians some free time on their own. After noting a lack of available resources, Ankrom took the initiative and asked JCBDD officials to assist with the

new endeavor.

"I was first approached last summer by one of the mothers who was looking to get back to work. She asked if I knew of a childcare center that worked with kids with autism," Ankrom said. "More conversations occurred with other mothers and I couldn't provide an answer about places which provided care for children with disabilities. They didn't have anyone to turn to. I asked if they reached out to [JCBDD Family Liaison] Tammy Cain to see if someone was available and I think she also saw the need for something."

Ankrom said the issue weighed on her heart and led her to contact JCBDD Superintendent Michael Zinno about offering services through the School of Bright Promise. Further talks occurred with officials with ENGAGE, a program operated through the Jefferson County Family and Children First Council, which provided funding to make it happen. A team organized the program and Ankrom and Cain both said feedback has been positive.

"One of the mothers immediately sent me a message saying when she pulled up to the school, her son was so happy to be here," Ankrom commented. "She said what a difference it made for him and she hoped it worked because we need this."

"It is hard at times to find people who understand the specific needs

of the population we serve. Our families know that should their child need behavioral or emotional supports that our trained staff can assist them where they are. One of our parents was unable to make it and cannot wait until the next day to send her child," Cain added.

Cain is also the JCBDD representative with ENGAGE, which was formed four years ago through the county Family and Children First Council with the Jefferson County Educational Service Center acting as its fiscal agent. Other community agencies take part in the committee and work with FCFC coordinator Linda Trushel to help support children in the area.

"Working with the ENGAGE team has given us the ability to find unique and creative ways to get services for our families. We are able to work together and combine resources to help in more and creative means," Cain said. "Not all of the families I serve are part of ENGAGE. My goal is to build relationships with our families to help them to feel like they have an ally in their journey with their child."

Trushel, coordinator for the Jefferson County Family and Children First Council, which oversees ENGAGE and early intervention, said ENGAGE sees children between the ages of newborn to 21 involved

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with multiple agencies. When the panel learned that such assistance for special needs kids was lacking, they wanted to get involved.

"The JCBDD said they would open the school building and get providers to help and ENGAGE pays the staff to watch the children," she explained. "It's exciting because we've had this shared goal and had to get people qualified to care for children with special needs. We hope to continue this after the summer and give parents and children something to do. That's what the Family and Children First Council is all about, to get together and share resources."

Melinda Aleksiejczyk, a JCBDD board member and parent of a special needs child, agreed the program was much needed for families around the county. She noted that parents may have a child with multiple health and development issues who have difficulty finding appropriate childcare or that some respite caregivers may not have the skill and knowledge to help those with special needs.

"As the parent of a special needs child, I know the extra stresses that come with multiple health issues. You have a child that depends on you for care and daily needs that often goes beyond typical parenting. A respite program allows families of a special needs child to take a much-needed break without worrying if that child will be safe and taken care of," she said. "We as special needs parents cannot be the best caretaker for our child if we do not have a moment to reset. There are so many who feel alone and overwhelmed in their journey, and this program not only gives them a little time to take a break but gives them a feeling that they are not alone. The Jefferson County

BDD has recognized a way to provide additional support to families in ways of a respite program that has never been done before."

She said parents get a break and the children have fun opportunities in a familiar, safe place to socialize with current friends and make new ones. On a personal note, she said her son had an enjoyable experience while she got to spend some rare quality time with her stepdaughter.

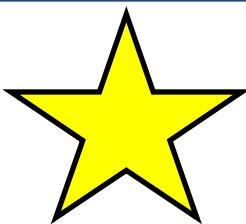
"This program is fantastic all the way around. As a board member, I am proud to be part of an organization that continues to find ways to support families and children in our area and makes it happen."

Meanwhile, Zinno was glad to see organizations working together to provide another service for the children.

"This respite program we partnered for is for youth and their families to give both some respite. Parents can leave the children with specially trained individuals; that's what's so special about the program. ENGAGE is providing the service but we are operating it at the school. It's not a one-on-one service and we've got a team at the school," Zinno concluded. "We have a gym and a playground and we have the equipment, and parents can feel comfortable knowing they can do errands or have a rest. They get time to do something they typically can't do because they are carrying for their special needs child. All of the pieces were there and it was a matter of putting them together."

For more information about respite services, contact Cain at (740) 264-5812.

Getting to Know You...



**Renee
Pastre-Hanlin**

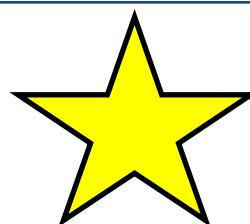


Renee Pastre-Hanlin has made it a mission to successfully integrate youth and adults into the community and its workforce.

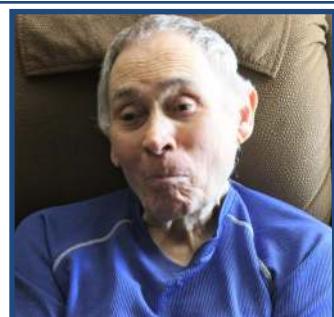
Renee, a Bloomingdale resident, began as an aide at the School of Bright Promise before filling a position as an employment specialist with the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Community Employment Services. She has held the role for the past 27 1/2 years and, along with fellow CES Specialist Angela Goodrich, receives referrals through the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and works with adults on community-based assessments to job coaching and placement, plus she helps teens transitioning from school to work.

"I really do love my job. I've learned so much about people working in the community," Renee said. "I feel like my greatest accomplishment is seeing students advance and grow into adulthood. It's a great feeling knowing that we can assist them with being successful in a job, obtaining their driver's license and being a part of the community!"

She also enjoys being with her family, which includes husband Brian, daughter Sarah, grandchildren Sam and Ellie and her two rescued chihuahuas, Ava and Zoey.



**Clarence
Holland**



Clarence Holland holds the distinction of being Shaffer Plaza's longest resident.

He has lived at the facility since January of 1982 but hails from Marietta. Clarence has been known to regale staff members with stories about the good old days. He loves to talk about growing up on a farm and describing how he busily baled hay, as well as spending his spare time fishing or playing with his cousins near the railroad tracks.

He eventually relocated to Steubenville and moved to Shaffer, where he lived more independently and even held a job. Clarence cleaned and performed janitorial duties at the rest area along Ohio 213 in northern Jefferson County until his retirement in 2014.

Clarence celebrated his 80th birthday in April and now spends his moments relaxing and watching television, counting Western shows among his favorites. He also enjoys going to car shows or talking about cars, motorcycles and trucks while other pastimes include listening to Rock 'N' Roll music and dining at local restaurants.

Clarence has become an integral part of Shaffer Plaza Apartments and has made a lot of friends at the facility.