



# The ALL-STAR Newsletter

May 2022

Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Issue 36

## Jefferson County BDD

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## How Are We Doing?

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## Students, PALS Team up for "Through Our Eyes"

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month capped off with local schoolchildren and members of the PALS Chrysalis Health of Steubenville painting pictures of kindness and inclusion.

Alex "Cookie" West, community facilitator for the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, said the annual "Through Our Eyes" campaign in March addressed what it is like to live with a disability in an effort to foster understanding. Pupils in the Indian Creek Local and Steubenville City School Districts participated in events throughout the month and one activity paired students from Hills, Wells Academy and Harding Middle with clients of PALS on an art project where the children designed pictures for the adults to color, paint or add other unique touches. Their renderings were exhibited at the main branch of the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County and judged by local educators and community members, but residents also had a chance to cast a virtual vote on March 29-31 on the JCBDD Facebook page. There were three divisions for elementary school (grades 3-4), junior middle school (grades 5-6) and middle school (grades 7-8), and each division received first place honors with one overall Community Choice winner. Honorees included Wells Academy, third- and fourth-grade winners and overall judges' pick; Harding Middle fifth- and sixth-grades, junior middle school winners; Harding seventh- and eighth-grades, middle school winners; and Hills Elementary fourth-graders, Community Choice.

But West said the real reward was having the kids and individuals collaborating for a good cause.

"The kids were phenomenal working with their PALS teammates. Overall, they were very creative and took it very seriously," she added. "These students worked with someone with different abilities and did it organically."

(Continued as TEAM)



The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities and PALS of Steubenville teamed up for "Through Our Eyes," where area students designed pictures which the adults then painted. The creations were displayed at the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County's main branch for judging and awards went to Wells Academy, Harding Middle School and Hills Elementary. Pictured with the students are Cookie West, JCBDD community facilitator; Mindy Aleksiejczyk, JCBDD board member and an event judge; and Amanda Hinerman, Harding Middle art teacher.

# JCBDD Gains Three-Year CARF Accreditation Renewal

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities has received a three-year accreditation renewal as it continues to provide quality care for the individuals it serves.

JCBDD's Community Employment Services (CES) obtained the renewal from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International, an Arizona-based independent nonprofit accreditor of health and human services, following a review of the CES on Nov. 4-5. CARF officials conducted an internal examination of the program and its business practices through online interviews with stakeholders as well as a site survey and thorough review of submitted documentation regarding employment supports and job development. At the conclusion, the accreditation was reupped through May 31, 2024.

CES Specialists Renee Pastre-Hanlin and Angela Goodrich said CARF focuses on advancing the quality of services to meet the needs for the best possible outcomes. Pastre-Hanlin said CES was the only office in the program to gain the distinction.

"We're very happy and excited. We worked very hard and continue to work hard between surveys to provide the excellent services that we do," she added. "CARF accreditation signals a service provider's

commitment to continually improving services, encouraging feedback and serving the community. Providers that meet CARF's standards have demonstrated their commitment to being among the best available."

"It takes a lot of hard work over the three years and feels really great to be recognized for providing such wonderful services," Goodrich commented.

That sign of quality is important when considering services and CARF International has surveyed hundreds of thousands of programs worldwide since it was founded in 1966. According to the findings, CARF officials noted JCBDD's substantial conformance to the accreditor's high standards which helped it gain the renewal.

"[JCBDD] is well positioned to continue to deliver quality services to the persons served and appears to be in a strong financial position and endowed with a stable workforce committed to the success," the decision stated. "[JCBDD] has earned a three-year accreditation. The leadership team and staff are complimented and congratulated for this achievement."

JCBDD Superintendent Michael Zinno praised CES for their accomplishment and said it was a sign of their ongoing efforts to help individuals to the utmost ability.

"When you get accreditation from an outside agency, it's a source of pride for the organization. I'm proud of our CES and it's ultimately about the people we are helping with transition and employment. Not every county board is accredited by CARF and we're proud that our board will continue with CARF and provide employment services."

## TEAM (Continued from Front)

Jamey Shannon, art coordinator for PALS Chrysalis Health, collaborated with the school districts and said about 10 clients traveled to the schools to work with the kids.

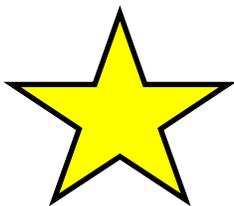
"The kids and clients were sitting together and collaborating on ideas of what to paint, and the kids drew pictures and we painted them."

She said the adults enjoyed their experience and developed a real connection with their young counterparts.

"My clients loved it and some were just excited to go to the schools," Shannon added. "I really think they enjoyed working with the teachers and students."

She hoped to continue it in the future.

## Getting to Know You...



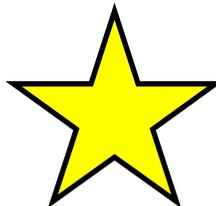
**Regina  
Fluharty**



Regina Fluharty is rising through the ranks at Shaffer Plaza with an opportunity for another promotion in the future.

Fluharty, a Toronto resident, was recently named an assistant Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional (QIDP) but will receive her associate's degree in applied sciences for social work from Eastern Gateway Community College this summer. She plans to pursue her bachelor's degree, after which she will qualify to become a full-fledged QIDP. Her work history has been synonymous with helping people with different needs. The Pennsylvania native began at McGuire Memorial in New Brighton and spent eight years with Opportunity Homes before joining Shaffer Plaza more than a year ago.

Meanwhile, she and her wife of one year, Monique, are busy raising their brood of five kids aged three to 14. The family adopted their fifth child this month and spend much of their time at the children's sporting events. Fluharty also was involved with the Columbiana County Special Olympics and is excited to view local athletes in action.



**Amelia  
Taggart**



Amelia Taggart is excited to graduate.

She will complete her rite of passage on May 19 with a mixture of enthusiasm and sadness as she leaves the School of Bright Promise. She said she will miss her teacher Rick Finney, her aide Jennifer Halm, her friend Patrick, her classmates and even Principal Jane Bodo and Children Services Director Dr. Georgia Pavlic-Roseberry.

She looks at Halm, whom she calls "Jenna."

"Will you miss me?" she asks.

"Yes," Jenna replies, adding that she has seen Amelia grow over the past decade. "She's been my one constant and has been for 10 years. She's been my best friend here."

But Amelia is also happy. She looks forward to attending the PALS Chrysalis Health where she enjoys playing ball, coloring and meeting people, as well as spending time at home in Toronto. She is the daughter of Dee Rawson and Brian Taggart and the sister to Maddie and Sydney, plus she loves watching hockey, listening to country music and bowling.