



The ALL-STAR Newsletter

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Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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250 John Scott Highway

Steubenville, Ohio
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www.jcbdd.com

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JCBDD Renews Three-Year Strategic Plan

Goals Outlined around Mission, Vision to Build Sense of Community

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities has renewed its three-year strategic plan with a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving the organization and ultimately the services it offers.

The plan, which operates from Jan. 1, 2023 to Dec. 31, 2025, outlines goals centered around its mission and vision to build a sense of community. Information was sought from stakeholders, board members, employees, the individuals served, their families and guardians as well as private providers.

"The plan is a roadmap for the direction we want to take," said JCBDD Superintendent Michael Zinno. "We have a new mission statement, 'Building A Community of Belonging' but our vision remains the same, 'Recognize Ability.'"

JCBDD is looking to incorporate values such as encouraging creativity, working together, constantly learning, honest communication, respecting everyone, building connections and advocating for others.

The next steps are to determine short- and long-term action plans that need developed to address initiatives on a strategy map. Those include enhancing the working environment, improving operational efficiencies, improving customer satisfaction, improving residential housing and maintaining financial stability. The ultimate goal of strategic planning is to enhance daily service offerings for individuals, improving workforce effectiveness and satisfaction.

"A major initiative within the plan is around employee retention and satisfaction, building a better organizational culture and employee engagement along with employee training," Zinno said, adding that 140 people were cur-



The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities has approved its three-year strategic plan, which the public may view either in the JCBDD administrative office at the Jeffco Center in Steubenville or online at www.jcbdd.com and make comment until Feb. 9. Board members include, front from left, Melinda Aleksiejczyk, board President Stephanie Chester and Diane Gray. Back: Vice President Jim Padden, John Hunt, Chris Irvin and secretary Dr. Ed Florak.

rently employed at the site.

Another plan continues to help developmentally disabled individuals move into mainstream society by joining the workforce. Present-

ly, there are 25 individuals employed in the community and the goal is to increase the number by 5 percent each year. In addition, JCBDD wants to maintain appropriate financial reserves and Medi-

caid waiver allocations and find better residential housing for those it serves.

He noted that the plan helps put ideas into action.

"These are things that are always discussed and we continue to try to make progress as we can, but putting them into a strategic plan helps put them in focus," Zinno concluded. "We might be the largest county board of developmental disabilities in the region because we do a lot of non-mandated services such as Shaffer Plaza, Community Employment and the School of Bright Promise, so this makes the strategic plan even more important to move the organization forward."

The plan is available for review and public comment until Feb. 9 at the JCBDD administrative office in the Jeffco Center in Steubenville or online at www.jcbdd.com.

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***-JCBDD Superintendent
Michael Zinno***

EI Program Implementing Autism Assessments

Team members with the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention (EI) program have undergone autism assessment training and will now be able to implement testing for youngsters within the community.

EI Supervisor Neysa Rogers said a dozen team members underwent training in December at the Jeffco Center in Steubenville through the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) of Columbus. Two staffers have been certified but now the entire team will be equipped to conduct testing closer to home.

"We underwent Autism Diagnostic Education Project (ADEP) training on Dec. 8-9," she said, adding that ADEP helps educate families, healthcare professionals and others in screening for autism. "Through ADEP, we can use the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) to test and observe children ages 0-3. I also have two other staff members who are credentialed to test school-aged children."

Rogers said having the team trained benefits children and families within Jefferson County. If they suspect that their child may have autism, families will undergo testing locally versus traveling to places as

far as Wheeling, Pittsburgh or Akron, or even being on a waiting list for up to six months to obtain such services.

She said children are generally referred by a doctor or therapist, then staffers meet with families at the Jeffco Center for the observation or test since that location provides a quiet environment free of distractions for the child.

"Typically, there are red flags and children may have sensory issues, are non-verbal or are not socializing," Rogers added. "Once we receive a referral, we can administer the ADOS test."

The child is scored based upon specific criteria observed for his or her age, and after the observation is complete a physician must formally sign off on the recommendation. Rogers said the test is a very specific evaluation and results are accurate and reliable. In the meantime, the EI program will continue working with OCALI to implement the program and assessments should begin around March.

"This is all new to the Board of Developmental Disabilities," she continued, adding that OCALI representatives first made contact after learning about some of EI's services in the community.

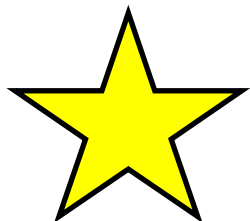
The EI program currently serves 72 children on individual family service plans (IFSP's) and coordinates services for another 15 kids across the county. A variety of services are already offered including special instruction by developmental specialists, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, vision and audiology services and mental health services, but this year all of her part- and full-time staff members were being trained in many areas using federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

She said the autism assessments will now add another layer to the program's capabilities.

"We used ARPA funds and bought ADOS tests and we'll be purchasing manuals to continue our learning," she added. "This expands our capacity and takes our service deliverables it to a new level. We test kids developmentally, but this gets the ball rolling for everything they need to get in place to succeed in school and other environments."

Parents seeking more information or assistance may contact Rogers at (740) 264-5812, Extension 1126, or email nrogers@jcbdd.com.

Getting to Know You...



Eddie Kostecki

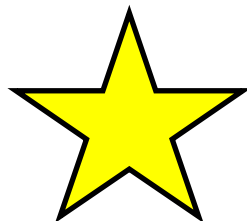


Eddie Kostecki has been longtime fixture with the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, serving as the facility manager for more than 32 years.

Kostecki, of Mingo Junction, oversees the maintenance of 17 buildings and properties owned by JCBDD.

After graduating from Mingo Junction High School, he attended various technical schools including the HVAC Trade School and Coast Guard Captain School and received several online certifications.

Kostecki is a relative Mr. Fix-It, but he truly relishes being a family man. In his spare time, he enjoys the outdoors, going to the gym, training athletes and spending time with his wife, Amy, and their family at their lake. Their brood includes two children that Kostecki said has "enriched their lives" with five beautiful grandchildren.



Eric Longo



Eric Longo is recognizable on the grounds as a member of the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities maintenance staff.

Longo, of Irondale, graduated from Edison High School in 2021 and joined the JCBDD this past April. His family includes mom Lindy and a brother, Evan, and he is the proud uncle to 1-year-old nephew, Kannon. He also shares the love with his dogs Mazy, Buddy, Lilly and Hotch, and his brother's dogs, Riley and Roman.

He enjoys collecting vinyl records and owns two signed albums, "Attention," by Shine Down, plus he attended several of the band's concerts in Toledo. Music definitely strikes a chord since he has spent the past few months taking bass guitar lessons. He added that working with JCBDD has definitely afforded him the opportunity to purchase a new red truck.