



# The ALL-STAR Newsletter

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Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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## Through Our Eyes Contest Winners Lauded

Local schoolchildren teamed up with adults with developmental disabilities for the second-annual Through Our Eyes Art Contest in March, and winners were recently lauded for their creative efforts.

The contest, which was sponsored by the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, included students in grades 3-8 from Indian Creek, Steubenville and Toronto designing drawings while participants in the PALS Chrysalis Health community program colored the renderings. Among the schools involved were Hills, East Garfield, Pugliese West and Toronto Elementary, McKinley STEM Academy, Wells Academy and Harding and Indian Creek Middle Schools.

Each school team is comprised of four students, and each team created a painting following the theme "Connected" incorporating scenes of people with and without disabilities. The students and PALS members met to discuss a design before creating the artwork, which was then displayed at the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County Main Library during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March. A team of judges scored the entries according to contest criteria while the public could also cast a vote online for a community choice award.

At the conclusion, the Hills Elementary fourth-grade team was the judges' overall winner as well as the first-place recipient for grades 3-4 while Indian Creek Middle School sixth-grade artists gained first place in both the grades 5-6 and 7-8 categories. McKinley STEM Academy third-graders were second in the grades 3-4 category and Harding Middle School seventh-graders earned second place in the grades 7-8 event. Finally, Toronto Elementary fourth-graders received the Community Choice accolade.



Winners were recently announced for the second-annual Through Our Eyes Art Contest sponsored by the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Local students teamed up with participants in the PALS Chrysalis Health community program to design pieces for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March with the theme "Connected." The Hills Elementary fourth-grade team was the judges' overall winner as well as the first-place winner for grades 3-4 category. Pictured are, from left, JCBDD Employment and Community Navigator Cookie West with Hills students, from left, Tiegan Chaffee, Anastasia Henderson, Katelin Moscato and Leveynah Selman.



Indian Creek Middle School took the grades 5-6 and 7-8 categories and pictured are, front from left, Jessah Skeen, Kimble Cooper and Morgan McCumbers. Back row: Cookie West, Cora Barcalow, Vennessa Yarnovic, A'bionah Jones, Raenika Smith, Alexis Dylewski and art teacher Renee Brothers.

Cookie West, JCBDD employment and community navigator, meaning. recognized all of the participants for their efforts and said the con-

(Continued as CONTEST)

“It was absolutely amazing,” West said. “When speaking with school personnel, the project did exactly what we wanted it to do, which was to build better connections. It created organic and natural opportunities for students to connect with people with different abilities.

“Often there is an awkwardness to interactions because of the unknown; however, I’ve seen time and time again the best remedy for those situations is generating opportunities to share common interest. A majority of the time, students don’t look at their peers as being any different—but not so much for adults with disabilities—and we wanted to help build positive interactions. Therefore, students will have those interactions to tap into as they move throughout life.”

She added that some students have loved ones with developmental disabilities who helped make the process easier for others and she was grateful for that.

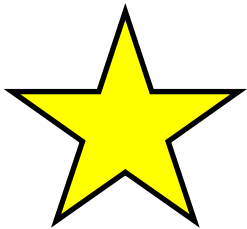
PALS Program Director Amanda Muscari concurred, saying PALS members loved to be a part of it.

“When the drawings came, they were excited to see what the students had drawn and put their signature on them with their painting,” Muscari added. “It’s a great way for us to spread advocacy and it helps the students to see [the differently abled] are just like us.”



**Toronto Elementary School fourth-grade students received the Community Choice Award through public voting online. Pictured are Cookie West with, from left, Brayden Anderson, Madalyn Moore, Jaslin Galloway, Zander Carlson, Noah Shultz and Ezra Ostroff.**

## Getting to Know You...



**Erin  
Loy**

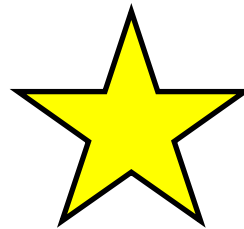


Erin Loy has played an active role in helping little ones make big achievements through the Early Intervention program at the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

A Richmond native and graduate of Edison South High School, Loy currently resides in Pleasant Hill. She graduated from Ohio University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and has worked with the EI/Help Me Grow Program for nearly 22 years. Loy said the program has been located in 10 offices for four different agencies but is currently lodged at JCBDD. She began as a service coordinator and later served as project director but now acts as a developmental specialist. Most of her young clients are on the Autism spectrum.

In her spare time, she loves to watch football and enjoyed both watching and playing softball, plus she likes any music which fits her mood. Loy counts the Dave Matthews Band among her favorites and also listens to classic rock songs.

She is also president of the Big Red High School Band Boosters and the head uniform organizer as well as a band chaperone. Loy’s family includes her husband of 22 years, Jay, daughters Isabella and Mia, who attend Big Red, and cats Spencer, Peanuts and Kitty.



**Jacob  
Watt**



Jacob Watt will achieve a major milestone this month as he dons his cap and gown and graduates from Buckeye Local High School.

The son of Christy and Michael Watt of Dillonvale, his family also includes siblings Dalton and Kylie. Watt receives assistance through the Service Support Administration and said his SSA has connected him with supportive resources to help him.

While at BLHS, Watt made the grade as a member of the National Honor Society, where he performed community service, and has been active with the Meadowbrook Church of God. Meanwhile, he has been part of the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities’ summer youth program for two years and hopes to earn part-time work at a local library.

Watt has some big plans once he obtains his diploma, including attending West Liberty University to study visual arts.

“I want to study art because I’ve always been fascinated by it, especially in animated films and books. I want to experiment with different art styles to hopefully work as a graphic designer, visual artist or illustrator,” he said.

Watt also enjoys drawing, coloring, bowling, watching movies and TV and spending time with his furry friends, dogs Jack and Milo and cats Willow and Carlie.