



School Scoop

...By Crystal Payne, Education Director/Principal

The 2025-26 School Year Is Off to a Fantastic Start!

We have had an exciting first month of school, filled with learning, growth, and special experiences for our students. Our elite team of educators has been working hard to create opportunities that support both academic and personal growth. Staff have completed annual medical and safety training, and we have begun piloting the Everway/Unique curriculum, which connects students to general education through ODEW's Extended Learning Standards. We continue to partner with Cardinal Therapy in providing personalized therapy sessions for our students.

Enrichment Activities

This first month has been packed with fun! Students enjoyed art, music, library visits, softball, and even a field trip to the Akron Zoo. Wednesdays are extra special with the return of "Piano Man" Mr. John Oster, who amazes us each week with his musical talents. We are also excited about our new partnership with the Holmes Center for the Arts (HCA). Through their "Traveling Art Cart" and class trips to HCA, our students have explored creative opportunities through music and art. Many students have participated in Buddy Softball, and we kicked off the season with a spirited pep rally! We have also welcomed back the Holmes County Library's monthly Story Hour. Ms. Michele has kept our students captivated with her lively storytelling.

Field Trip Fun

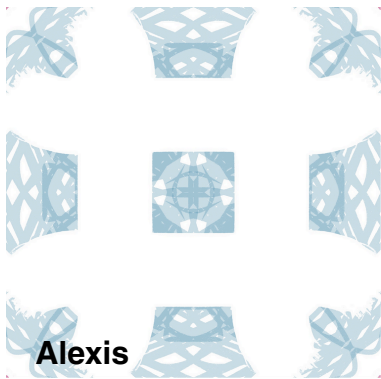
One of the biggest highlights so far was our trip to the Akron Zoo! Students enjoyed the bus ride, seeing animals up close, eating lunch together, and a joyful carousel ride (a clear favorite!). It was a beautiful day, full of smiles and memories. Special thanks to the efforts of teacher Grant Fox and those who participated in last spring's Pepperoni Roll fundraiser for making this trip possible.

Looking Ahead

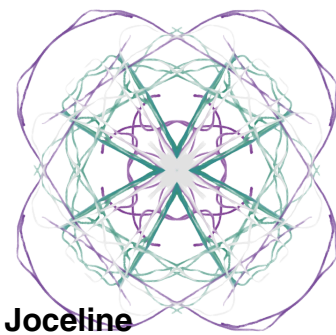
With such a strong start, we are excited about what is to come! Plans are already underway for family-centered holiday events and more enriching learning experiences throughout the year. We can't wait to see what else this school year will bring!

By Crystal J. Payne

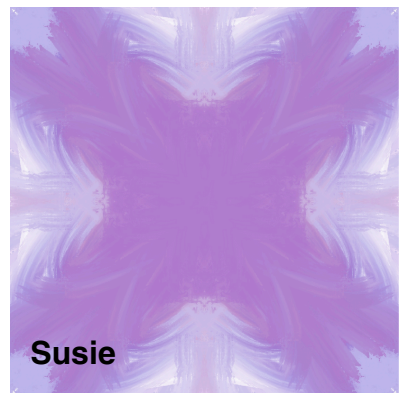
Education Director/Principal



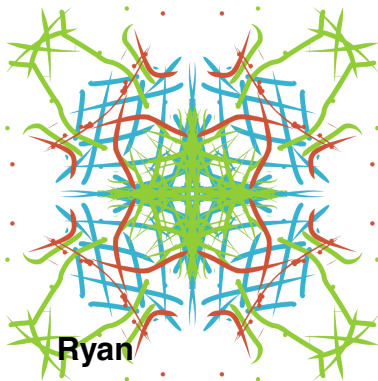
Alexis



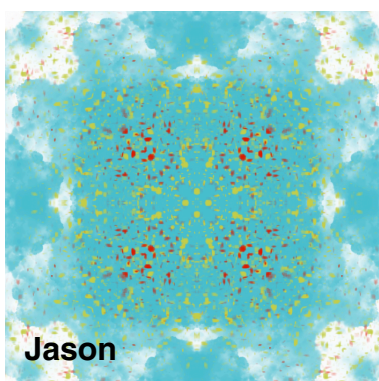
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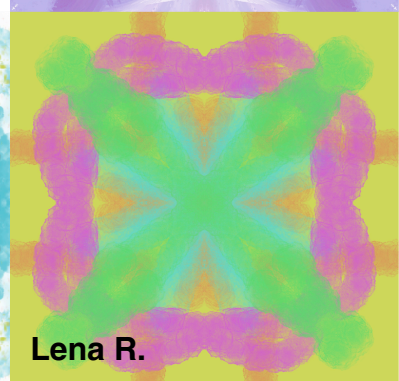
Susie



Ryan



Jason



Lena R.



Early Childhood and Playgroup Update

...By Monique Jacobs, Early Childhood Director

Why Sensory Boxes and Water Tables Are Beneficial for Young Children

Children learn about the world through their senses—touch, sight, sound, taste, and smell. For young children, sensory play is more than just fun—it's a critical part of healthy brain development. What is one simple, powerful tool to support this growth? A sensory box or water table.



What Is a Sensory Box or Water Table?

A sensory box or water table is a container filled with materials and objects designed to stimulate a child's senses. From dry rice, sand, water or beans to textured fabrics and scented items, the possibilities are endless. Items can be themed—like “apples/autumn,” “under the sea,” “animals”—or simply a mix of textures and colored items for children to explore.



The Holmes County Early Childhood Department hosts a monthly playgroup which often features a sensory/water table as pictured above. All children up to 5 years old are invited to join the next pumpkin themed playgroup, October 6, 10:00 a.m., at the HCBDD. We hope to see you there!



Service Years Photo

...By Curtis Goehring, HR/Business Director

5 Years:

Ella Hilty

10 Years:

Marianne Mader

20 Years:

Kelly Shaw

25 Years:

Jeanette McVay

Lori Frank



Personnel Update - Summer Activity

...By Curtis Goehring, HR/Business Director

The Personnel Department has been very active this summer with both departures and new hires.

We begin by acknowledging several resignations in the Transportation Department. Over the summer, we said goodbye to Paul Troyer, our mechanic who had been with the Board since December 2000, as well as two of our bus drivers, Carrie Ford and Heather Wagers. We sincerely appreciate their dedication and service to the individuals we support. Paul is transitioning to the private sector, while Carrie and Heather will continue their careers driving for a local school district. We wish them all the best in their next chapters.

We were also saddened by the resignation of Kim Weaver due to health reasons. Kim served as an Early Intervention Service Coordinator and was deeply respected by her colleagues and the families she worked with. Her passion for the role was evident, and she will be greatly missed. We extend our heartfelt wishes for her recovery and well-being.

On a brighter note, we are pleased to welcome three new team members to Holmes DD: Crystal Payne (Educational Director), Danielle Yoakem (Bus Driver), and April Miler (Facility Maintenance Worker). Each brings valuable experience and enthusiasm to their roles, and we are excited to have them on board as they contribute to our mission.

Finally, we are grateful to Lisa Hochstetler for transitioning from her role as an SSA to become a Service Coordinator in the Early Intervention Program, filling the position previously held by Kim. We appreciate Lisa's willingness to take on this important role and are confident she will make a meaningful impact.



Superintendent Update

...By Marianne Mader

♥ A Fresh Start to the School Year

The beginning of the school year always brings new energy and endless possibilities. It is wonderful to see our students and staff return and already diving into learning and growth!

📈 Annual Report Approved

At the August 2025 Board meeting, the Holmes DD Board officially approved the 2024–2025 Annual Report, reflecting a year of progress, partnerships, and community impact

☀ Key Highlights (June 2024 – May 2025)

- 301 individuals received services, with the largest group being infants and toddlers (ages 0–3) in our Early Intervention Program.
- 23 children attended the Holmes DD School, continuing our commitment to education.
- 13 adults with developmental disabilities are now employed in the community, with 4 joining the workforce last year.
- Kyle Snyder made history as the first person with a developmental disability to serve on our Board.
- The Holmes Advocacy Group volunteered at events including Open House, Costumes & Candy, Mothers Club, Family Fun Night, and the Spring Festival.
- New activities included American Sign Language classes, monthly bowling outings, and sensory-friendly events like a visit with Santa and an egg hunt.
- 81% of funding came from property taxes paid by Holmes County residents.
- Voters passed the Holmes DD renewal levy in November 2024—thank you for your continued support!
- Employee engagement survey results show high satisfaction with benefits, career development, workplace relationships, and overall environment.

🤝 Community Partnerships

We proudly collaborated with many local organizations, including:

- Holmes Center for the Arts
- Historic Downtown Millersburg
- OSU Extension
- Sycamore Run
- Holmes County Public Library
- Crissey Pool
- Spare Time Lanes
- Harvest Ridge
- The Farm at Walnut Creek
- Holmes County General Park District
- Northside Church
- Martin's Creek Church
- Duncan Theater

🔧 Provider Support

Holmes DD continues to contract with MEORC to offer training, certification assistance, and compliance preparation for 35 providers across Holmes County.

📖 Learn More

To read the full 2024–2025 Annual Report, visit our [website](#) or contact our office—we'll be happy to send you a copy.



Advocacy/Employment/Bucks Update

...By Cindy Boals, Community Employment & Advocacy Worker

Our Holmes County Ohio Special Olympic Athletes went to Columbus again this year to compete at the Ohio Special Olympics Summer games. This was held on the weekend of June 13th, 14th and 15th. We had 10 Athletes compete in bowling and 9 Athletes compete in Track and Field events such as Mini Jav, Standing long jump, walks and dashes. Everyone did amazing and we all now have more fun memories of our experience.

The Athletes/Advocates have been busy this summer learning as well as volunteering. They got to learn from Shannon Winings from MEORC about many different types of technology that can help us in our everyday life as well as assist us in learning new skills to help us become more independent.

On August 23rd the Athletes/Advocates got to be part of the Holmesville Homecoming Parade. Everyone that was able to join had a lot of fun and we got to see many friends in the crowd who we missed seeing. Let's face it, it is also a lot of fun getting to throw candy and souvenirs at the children in the crowd.

For the Annual Open House here at the Holmes County Board the Advocates started the evening having a brief meeting where we talked about what we felt was interesting or important going on in our area and world. It is nice hearing how we all stay up on current events that may or may not affect us.

After the meeting came the fun part, getting to run the games for those who came to enjoy the evening of social time and for the tour of the building. The Students got to show their families where their rooms were then they came out to test their skills at the carnival type games. Looking at the smile on everyone, I am not sure who had more fun with the people running the games or those who played.



Public Service Announcement: HCAHC Membership

HCAHC (Holmes County Association for Handicapped Citizens) is a nonprofit, non-political organization whose purpose is to raise and distribute funds to improve the quality of life of individuals eligible for Holmes DD services and their families. Proceeds from the Annual Spring Festival and Auction provide all of their funding. Decisions regarding how funding is spent are made by HCAHC Trustees who are elected by HCAHC members. Each year, members pay annual dues which afford them a wide variety of supports and services. Each family may use \$2500/year for respite if they have 1 child with DD; \$3500/year if they have 2 children with DD. Each family can receive transportation reimbursement when they take their loved one with a disability to medical appointments and therapy appointments, or if the family member is attending HCAHC/Mothers Club activities. HCAHC also provides grants to families to help meet the unique needs of their loved one. Lastly, HCAHC provides financial assistance to Holmes County Special Olympics, agencies serving people with developmental disabilities, Mothers Club, Share-A-Christmas, Buddy Softball and pavilion upkeep. If you want more information about HCAHC, feel free to contact Tina Detweiler at tdetweiler@holmesdd.org or (330) 674-8045 x 201.

Update from Day Program Providers

Lynn Hope Industries

We are excited to share what Lynn Hope has been up to during the summer months. We have successfully completed several orders for our customers, and we are incredibly thankful for their ongoing support of Lynn Hope Industries and the opportunities they provide.

When we weren't filling orders, we engaged in various activities, including crafts, movie nights with popcorn, and several cooking sessions. We prepared in-house lunches and desserts such as spaghetti dinners, taco-baked potatoes, pepperoni rolls, fresh salads, chocolate yogurt sundaes, yogurt bars with fruit, and much more. These activities serve as a chance to learn about healthy choices and clean cooking practices. Additionally, we made several trips into the community for volunteering, shopping, thrifting, enjoying walks on the Rails to Trails, dining out, and some sightseeing. We look forward to many more enriching experiences!

— Sherry Mackey



Thanks to a generous agency grant from the HCAHC, Sacred Ground is now offering a monthly respite night for any adult 18+ with disabilities in Holmes County. These events are from 6-8pm at Grace Church in Berlin with transportation available upon request. Participants can expect to have a fun night with friends, snacks, and games while caregivers are welcome to join in the fun, mingle in the parent room, or have the evening to make plans of their own. Upcoming respite nights are scheduled for Tuesday October 13, Monday November 4, and Monday December 8. Please call (330) 403-9075 and select option 6 with any questions or to RSVP. We hope to see you there!





The Holmes County Service and Support Administration **Department - Getting Back to the Basics** *...By Mimi Lawhead, SSA Director*

If you have a loved one with a developmental disability, you don't have to navigate the system alone. We're here for you. At the Holmes County Board of Developmental Disabilities, our Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) are dedicated to helping families like yours find the care, resources, and support you need to thrive.

What Is an SSA?

An SSA is more than just a coordinator, they're your partner in care. They'll walk alongside you, helping you understand your options, build a plan, and connect with the right services. Whether you're just starting out or facing a new challenge, your SSA is here to guide you every step of the way.

How We Can Help

We take the time to listen to your family's needs and create a personalized Ohio Individual Service Plan (ISP). From there, we help connect you with services such as:

- Therapy
- Housing support
- Job coaching
- Adult day programs
- Medicaid waivers

We also monitor progress to ensure services are working well, advocate for inclusion and independence, and support you through life's transitions—like moving from school to adult services. In times of crisis or emergency, your SSA will be there to help with planning and support.

Who Can Get an SSA?

If you qualify for our County Board services, you can request an SSA. To qualify, you must:

- Live in Holmes County
- Have a developmental disability
- Complete an eligibility assessment

If you're unsure about eligibility or just want to talk, please reach out. Our team is happy to answer your questions and guide you through the process.

Let's Talk

You are not alone. Our SSAs are here to help your family thrive and ensure your loved one receives the care and support they deserve.

If you have questions or would like to meet with us, please call 330-674-8045 and ask to speak with someone in the SSA Department. We're here to help—every step of the way.



MEET THE STAFF: Crystal Payne

Where do you live...city/town- Wooster

Family info - I am the eldest of 3 kids with 2 younger brothers. I am originally from Knox County, OH, but moved to Virginia when I was young. My parents still live in Virginia. I have a large extended family in Knox Co. I have two sweet Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Duke and Daisy, who keep me on my toes and love to give cuddles!

How long at HCBDD - Going on 3 months and loving it!

What is your role at HCBDD - Education Director/Principal of the school-age program

What do you think is the most important part of your job? - Serving the students and families of Holmes County by providing a high-quality school program that is focused on individualized learning, measured personal growth, and specialized life skill development for each student.

What is an accomplishment you are proud of? - Completing a significant portion of my doctoral degree and progressing in my professional goals

What is something you are looking forward to - Fall activities in Holmes County—beginning with our school trip to the Farm at Walnut Creek!

What are some of your Hobbies/Activities - Walking my pups, watching Ohio State Football (Go Buckeyes!), bike rides on the Trail, reading, journaling, baking, and keeping up with friends and family far and near!

What is your Favorite Book and/or Movie - Currently, I am enjoying a great daily devotional, New Morning Mercies, by Paul David Tripp. Among my favorite movies are Pride and Prejudice and The Lord of the Rings.

What is something people would be surprised to know about you? - I put ketchup on my tacos! It's delicious!!

Upcoming events

...Sharon Allison, Developmental Specialist

Special Needs Day at the Farm

Special Needs Day at the Farm in Walnut Creek is on October 1st, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 4147 County Road 114, Sugarcreek, OH 44681. The event includes a trail with animals and features a Universal Changing Table for accessibility. Additionally, the station will be available for the Fall Festival at the Farm from October 3rd to 5th.

Autism and Special Needs Parent Support Group

Join the first Autism and Special Needs Parent Support Group meeting on Thursday, October 2, at Jitter's Coffee Shop from 6:30-7:30 PM. Enjoy coffee, discussions on relevant topics, guest speakers, and resource sharing. Meetings occur the first Thursday of each month, with October focusing on self-care, November featuring a guest speaker, and December on thriving during the holidays. For questions, contact Sharon Allison at 330-674-8045 ext. 229. All are welcome!

Changing Station at Antique Festival

Holmes DD would like to highlight that there is a Universal Changing Table available to anyone attending the Antique Festival on October 3rd - 5th. This table can be located in the public restroom at the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Visitor Center on 6 W Jackson St, Millersburg, OH 44654. The restroom is available from 8 am - 8 pm for those attending.

October Bowling Night

Social Bowling on Saturday, October 11th, at Spare Time Lanes in Millersburg! We'll be bowling from 6:00 to 7:30 PM at 39 Logsdon Ave, Millersburg, OH 44654. Enjoy one or two games for just \$4 each, with a shoe rental fee of \$2.50. Come out and have a great time!

Fridays in October

Holmes Center for the Arts (HCA), Fridays in October from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Join us at their facilities, 5200 OH-39, Millersburg, OH 44654. Open to everyone aged 6 and above, enjoy engaging sessions featuring art, music, theater, and dance in a friendly atmosphere that encourages learning and exploration.

Costumes and Candy

The second annual Costumes and Candy will take place on October 18th, from 10 to 11:30 am at 8001 Township Rd, Holmesville, OH 44633. The community is invited to a safe, festive atmosphere featuring a wagon ride, candy and non-food treats, and a bouncy castle. The event will also be wheelchair accessible and provide a Universal Changing Table.

Mothers Club/ Buddy Softball

...Naomi Weaver, Plain Community Liaison

Mothers Club

In August we had our annual Open House / Family Fun Night. The evening consists of tours of our facilities, games and prizes for the children, a pulled pork meal provided by the Holmes County association for Handicapped Citizens, and an evening of Fellowship with other families of special needs individuals in Holmes County.

This year we also had our first annual “Buddy Softball” practice game on the same evening.

Mothers’ Club had two “Mom’s Meet” events scheduled in September, but no big Mothers’ Club event due to the Buddy Softball Games that we were hosting in September. A Hearty “Thank you” to all who participated, and all who attended to support our teams. The community has exceeded our expectations! Thank you again!!

Upcoming Events in October: Wednesday, October 8, 2025 @ 9:30 am

Mom’s Meet at Day Break Bistro in Millersburg

Wednesday, October 22, 2025,

Thrift Shopping in the forenoon with Lunch at “Jitters Coffee House,” and a “Feelings of my Heart Coffee Hour.”

Happy Fall to all!!

Naomi



All-Stars Buddy Softball

We are excited to introduce All-Stars Buddy Softball! There are 27 athletes with special needs from Holmes County playing ball ages 8 and up. This inclusive program provides opportunities for fun, friendship, and teamwork. Players are paired with volunteer “buddies” who support them on the field, ensuring that every participant can safely and confidently enjoy the game. The games are played at the Oasis Youth Center which features wheelchair accessible turf fields. This program is about so much more than softball—it’s about building connections, boosting confidence, and celebrating each player’s unique abilities. Families, friends, and community members are encouraged to come out and cheer on our All-Stars. Buddy Softball will be played again in 2026!



HOLMES COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

8001 TOWNSHIP ROAD 574

HOLMESVILLE, OH 44633

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The mission of the Holmes County Board of Developmental Disabilities

is to support individuals in living meaningful lives.