

Warren County Dreams

April 2024

A Word from Our Superintendent



It has been a busy first quarter of 2024! We started off the year with the appointment of a new board member and the reappointment of two current members. We welcomed David Sparby to our board for his first four-year term. David is the first board member for the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities who is eligible for services. David brings his personal perspective as a recipient of services to the board, and that will be very beneficial to board discussions and decisions. We also had board members Lynn Bissell and Joel King sworn in for their second four-year terms in January. I look forward to working with all board members throughout this year and appreciate the volunteer time they put in for our organization and the people we serve.

Also in January, our board approved a new three-year strategic plan. The plan was developed using feedback received from focus groups conducted with people served, staff, providers, and board members; as well as from a survey that was sent to our mailing list. There are some required elements that must be included per the Ohio Administrative Code, and those elements are included in the new plan as well. The new strategic plan can be found on our website at www.warrencountydd.org.

In March, we celebrated Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. We held two open house sessions on March 5, 2024 where we experienced some wonderful presentations from people who have benefited from services from the WCBDD. There is more on this event later in this newsletter, and I encourage you to read all about it!

We received proclamations from the Warren County Commissioners, Warren County Probate and Juvenile Court Judge, and the Lebanon City Council during this month to proclaim March as Developmental Disability Awareness Month. We are so appreciative of the support we receive from elected officials throughout Warren County.

We look forward to the second quarter of 2024. If you need anything from us, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Service Coordinator, Early Childhood Primary Service Provider, Transition Coordinator, or call (513) 228-6400. In cases of emergencies, please call 1-800-800-6847. Thank you for your support of the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities!

WCBDD employee receives posthumous leadership award from MLK Community Coalition

On January 15, 2024, Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) employee, the late Olivia Forrester, was posthumously recognized by Lebanon's Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Coalition as a recipient of the "Adult Community Leader Award." Forrester passed away last September and was announced as a winner during the 39th Annual MLK Day Celebration, where she was honored for her community contributions in activism, advocacy, and awareness.

Raised in Knockemstiff, Ohio, Olivia Forrester graduated from Paint Valley High School, where she shattered the glass ceiling by becoming the first female wrestler on an all-male wrestling team. Even then was Forrester's proclivity for fighting inequities and removing barriers evident. These principles would only persist and prosper over time.



Forrester earned an associate's degree in liberal arts from Sinclair Community College in 2020, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Ohio University in 2021. Prior to this, she served in various nursing homes as a Home Health Aide, and later became the caregiver for her aunt. In 2022, Forrester accepted a position as a Service Coordinator with the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD). As a Service Coordinator, she assisted individuals with developmental disabilities in identifying their needs, then connecting them with the resources and services available to meet those needs.

It is apparent from her chosen line of work that Forrester was a born activist. She strongly supported equal rights for all, advocated for social justice, and proudly served as a member of the MLK Community Coalition. Forrester was heavily involved in her community, and raised environmental awareness by planning and organizing events and fundraisers for the MLK Lebanon Earth Day. Additionally, she organized and raised funds to ensure Caesar Creek became accessible for the Earth Day 5K, and was the creator and driving force behind the Stand-Up-To-Hate 5K fundraiser. From her passionate words, to even more passionate actions, there is no doubt that Forrester's leadership has made a lasting impression on the Lebanon community.

The MLK Community Coalition of Lebanon is an organization that focuses on building an inclusive network of individuals in order to strengthen and empower the community. Each year, the Coalition recognizes and awards people whose contributions promote social justice, diversity, and inclusion, thereby emulating the vision of Dr. King. The "Adult Community Leader Award" is presented to individuals who demonstrate a strong and growing commitment to service, as well as a sustained effort in advocating equal opportunities for all.

WCBDD Self-Advocacy group speaks with policymakers

The Voices Speaking Out Self-Advocacy group visited the Ohio Statehouse to advocate for the rights and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities on March 12, 2024.

Every March, the Developmental Disability Advocacy and Awareness Day event encourages advocates and policymakers to visit the statehouse and discuss issues important to Ohioans with disabilities.



Pictured (left to right):
Representative Scott Lipps and
advocate, Chris Tekulve

Ten advocates from Warren County attended the sold-out event and spoke with state representatives about their personal experience and struggles with a variety of impactful issues, including marriage and transportation.

Many individuals with developmental disabilities receive social security benefits to help them afford basic necessities. However, when two individuals get married and their joint earnings increase, the couple is at risk of losing benefits, meaning many couples with developmental disabilities do not get legally married.

The advocates also discussed how individuals with developmental disabilities lack sufficient access to reliable, accessible, and safe modes of public and private transportation.

The advocates confidently addressed these issues and more to Ohio State Representative Scott Lipps, who forwarded their challenges to Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Kim Hauck and Ohio Senator Steve Wilson. The advocates aimed to educate Ohio leaders about how state government services and policies can be improved, expanded, or strengthened on behalf of people with disabilities.

Before meeting with policy makers, the advocates watched as several presenters spoke of their personal experiences with disability, the importance of county boards of developmental disabilities, self-advocacy, and finding your personal pathway.

Although Ohio Governor Mike DeWine was unable to attend the event, he made an appearance through a pre-recorded video where he encouraged attendees to consider how your school, workplace, or community could be more inclusive.

“We must continue to work to make Ohio a more inclusive state,” DeWine said. “We will continue to create opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live up to their God-given potential. Our communities are better when people with developmental disabilities are included.”



New board member joins Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities is thrilled to welcome Lebanon resident David Sparby as the newest member of the board.

Sparby is a Minnesota native who moved to Ohio at 18 years old. He is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati with two degrees in Political Science and Government and International Relations and Affairs, along with five minors. He works as a Senior Healthcare Recruiter at Genie Healthcare.



WCBDD Superintendent Megan Manuel said Sparby is the first board member in Warren County to be eligible for services. Sparby looks forward to working with the board to act as a voice of change from within the organization.

“It’s amazing that I’m going to be able to talk, understand, and then input how to progress within DD from the perspective of someone who actually uses the service,” Sparby said. “I appreciate the opportunity to be here to show my experience, and hopefully, continue to make a difference.”

David Sparby was sworn in for his first four-year term at the Jan. 29 board meeting. Vice President Joel King and Secretary Lynn Bissell were also sworn in for their second four-year terms. All three members were sworn in by Board President Laurie Lupinetti.



All board meetings are open to the public and typically take place at 6 p.m. on the fourth Monday of every month at 42 King Way in Lebanon. The next meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on April 22, 2024.

Pictured (left to right): Board members, Joel King, Lynn Bissell, David Sparby, and Laurie Lupinetti

DODD Technology grant will enhance support options for WCBDD enrolled individuals

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) was awarded a grant to create a studio that will introduce smart technology to the individuals we serve.

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities offers an annual Innovative Technology Solutions grant to entities that aim to address existing gaps, promote the integration of technology, and enhance support options for Ohioans with developmental disabilities.

WCBDD Superintendent Megan Manuel said the board received a \$25,000 grant to create a Supportive Technology Studio, a space resembling a modern studio apartment featuring assistive technology to help individuals live independently.

“We very much appreciate the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities awarding the WCBDD this \$25,000 grant,” Manuel said. “This will allow us to provide the people we serve the opportunity to experience assistive technology that could help them lead more independent lives safely.”

The Supportive Technology Studio, which is scheduled to be completed this summer, will include:

- An iGuardStove, a safety tool that uses motion sensing to turn off the stove when no one is in the kitchen.
- A combined smart washer and dryer that can pre-measure laundry detergent, be controlled with a smartphone, and send text message reminders when the laundry is ready.
- A medication dispenser to give medication reminders to individuals and their caregivers.
- An Amazon Alexa to perform tasks, give reminders, and help with executive functioning.
- A tablet to facilitate communication.
- Adaptive gaming equipment to allow individuals with physical disabilities to play video games.

Kellie Hampton, WCBDD Remote Supports and Assistive Technology Coordinator, said the Supportive Technology Studio will give individuals hands-on experience with technology to, “explore what’s possible.”

Visitors will have the opportunity to learn firsthand about the technology’s functionality, the potential benefits, and its role in fostering independence.

For individuals who cannot visit the studio, WCBDD plans to create “Go-Bags,” that will contain portable assistive technology so that individuals can trial the technology at home.

The Supportive Technology Studio will also offer individuals a chance to practice using assistive technology and gain independence prior to using it in their own homes. With the use of simulated remote supports, teams will be able to observe and gradually fade in-person assistance with the use of assistive technology in the studio. Hampton looks forward to supporting all individuals served by WCBDD in exploring, identifying, and obtaining assistive technology solutions tailored to meet their needs.

With a shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), Hampton stressed the significance of exploring assistive technology and remote supports options as alternatives to increase a person’s autonomy, independence and quality of life.

About Hampton

As the Remote Supports and Assistive Technology Coordinator, Hampton explores technological solutions that promote independence and enhance the quality of life for those we serve.

Before working at WCBDD, Hampton earned a degree in Special Education from The Ohio State University and spent 12 years as an Intervention Specialist, where she worked extensively with assistive technology.

Hampton received a firsthand introduction to disability services when her daughter received support through the Help Me Grow program.



For more information about the Innovative Technology Solutions grant, remote supports, or assistive technology, contact Kellie Hampton at kellie.hampton@warrencountydd.org or (513) 256-3246.

Board of disabilities uses ARPA funds to enhance accessibility in Warren County

Warren County is one of 67 counties that will benefit from the \$14.9 million in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds distributed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Director Kim Hauck. The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) requested and was granted \$51,467. The funds will be used to enhance infrastructure at a local park, as well as purchase adult changing tables for public spaces.

“These investments are truly going to make a difference for people with developmental disabilities and their families by giving them more access to the communities where they live, DeWine stated in a news release. “People with developmental disabilities deserve opportunities, a reliable workforce, and an accessible state to live, learn, work, and succeed in.”

At Makino Park in Mason, accessibility and inclusivity stand at the forefront. The 35-acre park boasts a vibrant playground, an FCC mini pitch soccer field, a sheltered area, and accessible restrooms. Two adaptive ball fields (currently being built) will be the park’s latest addition.

Due to a partnership between Makino Park and WCBDD, the adaptive fields will soon include eight sufficiently spaced dugout benches. The benches will offer athletes who use mobility devices the opportunity to choose where they want to sit without physical or visual obstructions. Also included in the plans are four ADA-compliant picnic tables and one motorized device charging station. All items will be covered under the ARPA funds granted to WCBDD and will be installed by Nov. 1, 2024.

“We are very happy that we are once again able to partner with the City of Mason and Makino Park by funding specific features that will make the park even more accessible for people with disabilities,” said WCBDD Superintendent Megan Manuel.

Additionally, the ARPA funds will cover a total of seven adult changing tables of four different sizes. As Warren County is home to a multitude of community events and festivals, adult changing tables will be integral in providing reasonable accommodations to community members with disabilities.

“This will eliminate a barrier that some people have faced by not having the bathroom accommodations they need,” Manuel explained. “We look forward to partnering with local groups and organizations in order to loan the adult changing tables for events and activities that allow people with disabilities the opportunity to participate.”



Warren County residents discuss life with a disability and Star Trek at Developmental Disabilities Awareness Event

Speakers discussed self-determination, life with a disability, and finding inspiration in Star Trek at the 2024 Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) Open House. The open house was hosted on March 5, 2024, at the Warren C. Young Center in honor of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. WCBDD Superintendent Megan Manuel said DD Awareness Month started in 1987 to provide the encouragement and opportunities people need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential. 37 years later, she said the same goals hold true.

This year's open house was dedicated to Jamie Miles, Warren County resident, individual served by WCBDD, and a Star Trek fan. Jamie passed away in 2022, leaving a legacy of compassion, confidence, and resilience.

Presenter Glenda Miles, Jamie Miles' mother, described how Jamie's fascination with Star Trek translated into his life goals. Born with congenital rubella syndrome, Glenda was told by doctors that her baby would die before turning one year old. Jamie "audaciously" defied expectations and lived a life full of Star Trek conventions, learning new languages (some real, some alien), listening to Loverboy and Taylor Swift, volunteering, and spreading joy.



Pictured: Presenter, Glenda Miles speaks at WCBDD's 2024 Open House

Jamie was deeply inspired by the Star Trek motto, "Make it happen, embracing support, taking risks and proudly being himself. Jamie inspired the WCBDD to center the open house event around the motto and his love for Star Trek.

"He was confident in his abilities and his identity. He was encouraged to seek out new life- another way to say follow your dreams," Glenda said. "He was provided support to be his authentic and complex self. He felt safety. He felt appreciated. He felt belonging."

Glenda said WCBDD made a tremendous impact on Jamie's life by offering progressive leadership and respectful services.



Pictured: New board member David Sparby speaks at Open House

Presenter David Sparby, WCBDD's newest board member, described the self-determination needed to walk again after a life-changing spinal cord injury, proving that it's, "Possible to do the impossible."

Despite graduating from college with two majors and five minors, Sparby struggled to find a job post-graduation until he found an employer who would look past his disability. He spoke about the importance of judging a person for who they are, not by their appearances.

“I think that's an important thing for Disability Awareness Month is that we can reach out to people and educate them. Just because you may look different doesn't mean that you are any different than anyone else,” Sparby said. “We're all unique in our own way.”

Sparby said WCBDD helped him to achieve his dreams, inspiring him to participate on the board and act as a voice of change from within the organization.

Claire Ginn shared her experience with receiving services from WCBDD, from getting a job as an advocacy assistant at WCBDD to marrying her high school sweetheart.

Warren County Probate and Juvenile Court Judge Joseph Kirby and Warren County Commissioner Shannon Jones spoke and proclaimed March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

“I think it's important that all of us take a few minutes to recognize, not only how important the work is that you all do, but how important it is as a community that we work together so that those with disabilities lead fulsome lives- lives that are self-directed so that everyone in our community reaches full potential,” Jones said.

Over 150 people attended the two open house events. WCBDD organized a raffle drawing, giving away six gift baskets and raising over \$1,000 for the Warren County Special Olympics Program.

As the evening concluded, participants left with a renewed sense of commitment to advocating for inclusivity and support for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities will continue efforts to create a more accessible and inclusive community for all.

Early Childhood News

The Early Childhood Team at the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) provides support and services to families and their children under age six who are enrolled in services through WCBDD. They provide Early Intervention services, socialization events and parent/caregiver educational opportunities, and support education for the community.

Early Childhood Programs are a part of the Community Resources Division. Early Intervention (EI) services make up the largest portion of Early Childhood services they provide. WCBDD collaborates with the Warren County Educational Service Center (WCESC) to provide an impartial initial and annual eligibility evaluation and/or assessment of strengths and needs for all children referred to Warren County EI, or “Part C” services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The team also works together to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for the child and family.

WCBDD is the main provider of EI services for Warren County, providing service and/or support to approximately 400 children and families per month. EI services provided by WCBDD include Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Special Instruction, which is delivered by a Developmental Specialist. Team members can serve as a Primary Service Provider (PSP) or Secondary Service Provider (SSP) to the child and family, or part of the consultative team. All specialized services offered by WCBDD are delivered in environments that are located in the family's normal daily routines. The IFSP team selects these natural environment locations at the time of the IFSP development. The

providers utilize methods of coaching with the family and caregivers to build the capacity of the family to support the child during everyday life.

Early Childhood Annual Report of Services Provided:

DESCRIPTION	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Referrals to Team for EI Eligibility	359	437	501	499
Total Children Birth to age 3 served by WCBDD EI Services	511	561	649	655
Evals/Assessments conducted by WCBDD EI Service Providers	397	469	538	541
Total Home/Community Visits provided by WCBDD EI Service Providers	3,850	3,826	4,392	4,797
Referred from EI to DD services at age 3	81	52	100	96

In 2023, the Early Childhood Team hosted several social and educational opportunities for families and/or community partners including:

Toileting 101: Three sessions and 29 total number of parent/caregivers attended.

Professional Development/Community Awareness: Three professional development sessions for Warren County Early Learning Centers and one community awareness session for Warren County Family and Children First Council.

Birth to Age 3 Playgroups: 32 sessions, serving 25 children and their parents/caregivers.

Jingle Bell Rock Out: A holiday musical event featuring the Voices of Warren County was attended by 42 children and 20 adults.



Pictured: WCBDD Physical Therapist Jenny Wilson with child receiving EI services. Jenny is providing a demonstration on how to use a walker that the family received from local non-profit organization, *May We Help* (<https://maywehelp.org>)

Event, Support, and Educational Opportunities Survey

The WCBDD Early Childhood team is striving to provide events, supports, and educational opportunities for families in ways that meet the needs of families served. Having positive social opportunities and support is crucial for children and their families. For children, community connections can give a sense of belonging, help build resiliency, and build social-emotional skills. For parents and caregivers, being in touch with other adults through activities and events helps support your family and build relationships within your community.

The goal of the Early Childhood team is to continually provide ways for families to communicate their needs and interests. This enables the Early Childhood team to provide programming and information relevant to the needs of families served. To help WCBDD better connect families with opportunities important to them, please consider completing the survey by clicking the link below:

https://warrencounty.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8BN6STDtlq559ly


Upcoming Socialization Opportunities:

In-Person Playgroup Opportunity!


The Early Childhood team is excited to offer playgroups for children enrolled in WCBDD services ages birth to age 3 and their parent/caregiver. During the 60-minute group, parents/caregivers and their children have the opportunity to connect with one another while participating in a semi-structured playgroup that includes: outside play, story time, singing, and crafts. These sessions occur on Tuesdays and are led by WCBDD Developmental Specialists and the WCBDD Advocacy Coordinator. The sessions currently planned for 2024 are:

- Date: Tuesdays from April 30th – June 11th
- Date: Tuesdays from July 16th – August 20th
- Date: Tuesdays from September 17th – November 12th

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
 Time: 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
 Time: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.




WCBDD
Early Childhood Playgroup
Milo H Banta Center
410 South East Street
Lebanon, OH 45036



Children enrolled in WCBDD services ages birth to 3 and their parent/caregiver are invited to attend our Tuesday morning playgroup beginning Tuesday, April 30 - June 11, 2024
****Space is limited and registration is required****


Playgroup information:

- WCBDD Playgroup each Tuesday (within the WCBDD calendar) from 9:30 - 10:30AM
- 2nd Quarter dates: Tuesday April 30, May 7, 14, 21, (no Playgroup May 28) June 4, 11
- Activities such as storytime, crafts, and song time
- Water is permitted during playgroup, however, allowance for other food/drinks can be accommodated based on specific needs
- Due to space limitations, only 1 (one) parent/caregiver per family (Please contact us if there is a need for more than one caregiver)
- Maximum 8 (eight) parent/caregivers and 8 (eight) enrolled children per playgroup. Siblings under the age of 3 may also attend with the enrolled child and family, but must be registered prior
- Registration is required via email to: Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org
- Deadline for registration: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 (based upon availability)
- We ask that you help us keep each other safe by not attending during times that anyone in your family may have possible signs of a contagious illness. A health and safety check will be sent to all playgroup participants within 24 hours prior to each playgroup



For more information or to register for our playgroup (based upon availability), please email:
Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org
 or call: 513-228-6487

Deadline for registration: April 10, 2024



Please note that space is limited and registration is required by Wednesday, April 10, 2024 for 2nd quarter dates.

To register, please email carolyn.bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org

Open Playtime!

Starting in April, the WCBDD Early Childhood team will be launching a new opportunity called *Open Playtime!* When parents/caregivers and children play together, relationships are enhanced and family bonds are strengthened. Outdoor play allows children and adults to explore and interact while getting much-needed fresh air and exercise. Please join the Early Childhood team for *Open Playtime* at the Banta Center playground beginning Tuesday, April 30th from 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please be advised

that the indoor classroom may be used should inclement weather occur. Families of children birth to age 6 enrolled in WCBDD services are welcome to attend, as well as siblings age 6 and under. Though registration is not required, it is helpful. These sessions occur on Tuesdays and are led by WCBDD Developmental Specialists and Therapists, as well as the WCBDD Advocacy Coordinator. Dates of *Open Playtime* are listed below:

- Date: Tuesdays from April 30th – June 11th Time: 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



Supporting people with disabilities and their families
to achieve what is important to them



WCBDD EARLY CHILDHOOD *OPEN PLAY TIME!*

When parents/caregivers and children play together, relationships are enhanced and family bonds are strengthened. Outdoor play allows children and adults to explore and interact, all while getting much-needed fresh air and exercise.

Please join us for open play time on our playground! Beginning Tuesday, April 30 from 10:45AM—12:00PM children birth to age 6 enrolled in WCBDD services and their parents/caregivers are welcome to attend. Siblings under age 6 may also attend. Dates of open play are listed below.

WHERE: WCBDD Milo H Banta Center
410 S. East Street
Lebanon OH 45036

WHEN: Tuesdays from 10:45AM—12:00PM

- April 30
- May 7, 14, 21
- June 4, 11

WHO: Families of children birth to age 6 enrolled in WCBDD services



Our fenced-in play area:

- Promotes social skills through exploration
- Offers freedom of imagination
- Allows for interactions with other families and children.
- Offers more time outside to explore a new environment
- Provides an opportunity to exercise all senses through visual, auditory, and tactile elements

Our open play is supported by WCBDD Early Childhood staff. We will do our best to keep you updated via social media, etc. of any cancellations of our event (inclement weather, etc.). Parents/caregivers must remain on premises.

RSVP's are helpful, but not required.
Email: Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org



Sibshops comes to Warren County!

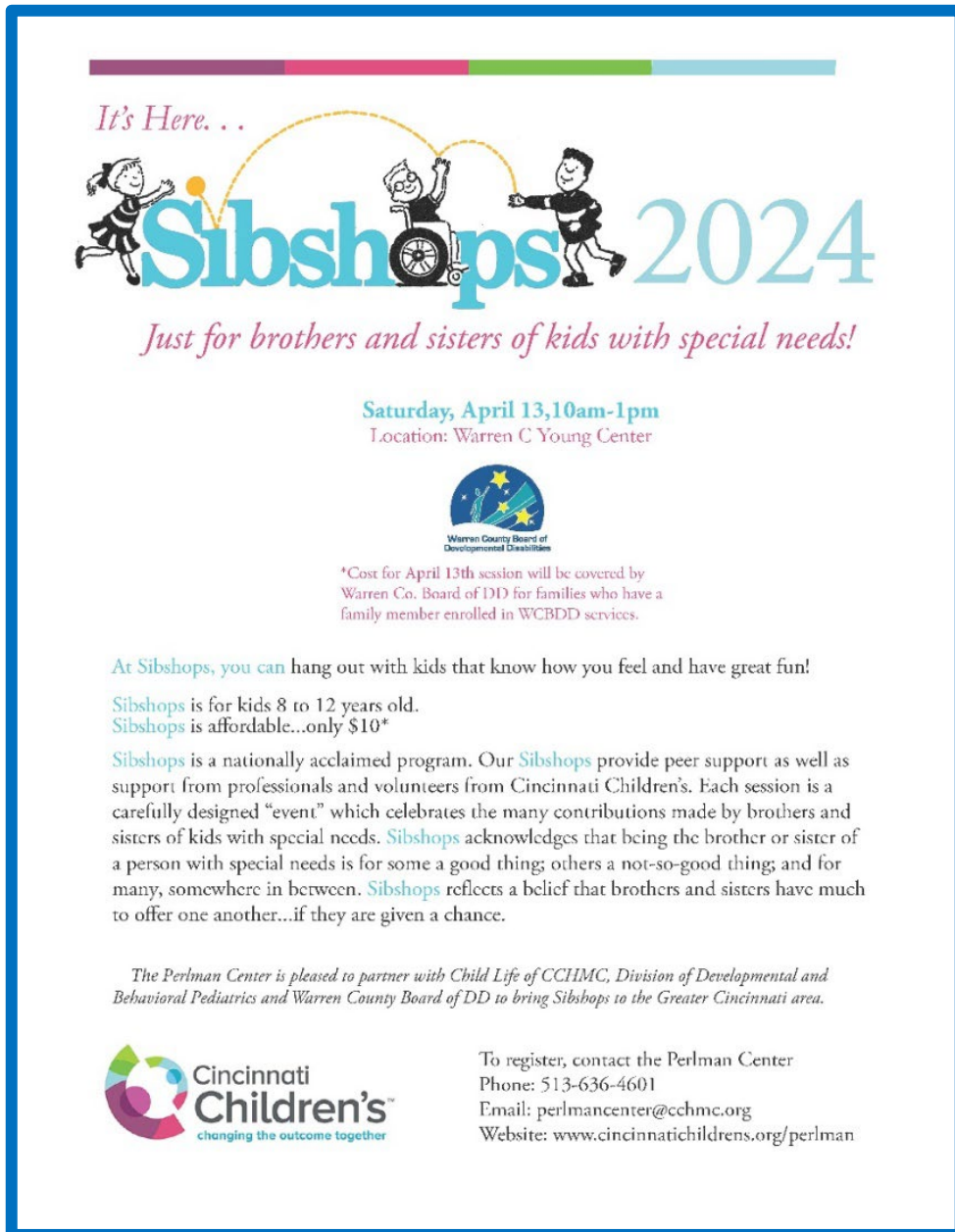
Sibshops is a nationally acclaimed program that provides peer support as well as support from professionals and volunteers from Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. Each session is a carefully designed “event” which celebrates the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledges that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is for some

a good thing; others a not-so-good thing; and for many, somewhere in between. Sibshops reflects a belief that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another, if they are given a chance.


At Sibshops, you can hang out with kids that know how you feel, and have great fun! Sibshops is intended for kids 8 to 12 years old and occur on Saturdays. WCBDD has collaborated with Cincinnati Children's Hospital to support offering a Sibshops session in Warren County. This session will occur on Saturday, April 13th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will be held at the Warren C. Young Center located at 801 Drake Road in Lebanon. The session will be free to siblings of individuals enrolled in WCBDD services.

The following sessions will be held at Cincinnati Children's MOB, located at 3430 Burnet Avenue, and will cost \$10:

- Date: July 13th Time: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Date: November 16th Time: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.




It's Here...



Sibshops 2024

Just for brothers and sisters of kids with special needs!

Saturday, April 13, 10am-1pm
Location: Warren C Young Center



Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities


*Cost for April 13th session will be covered by Warren Co. Board of DD for families who have a family member enrolled in WCBDD services.

At Sibshops, you can hang out with kids that know how you feel and have great fun!

Sibshops is for kids 8 to 12 years old.
Sibshops is affordable...only \$10*

Sibshops is a nationally acclaimed program. Our Sibshops provide peer support as well as support from professionals and volunteers from Cincinnati Children's. Each session is a carefully designed "event" which celebrates the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledges that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is for some a good thing; others a not-so-good thing; and for many, somewhere in between. Sibshops reflects a belief that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another...if they are given a chance.

The Perlman Center is pleased to partner with Child Life of CCHMC, Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics and Warren County Board of DD to bring Sibshops to the Greater Cincinnati area.



Cincinnati Children's
changing the outcome together

To register, contact the Perlman Center
Phone: 513-636-4601
Email: perlmancenter@cchmc.org
Website: www.cincinnatichildrens.org/perlman

Resource Corner:

Here are a few websites and resources we encourage you to check out!

- **Ohio Early Intervention** - <https://ohioearlyintervention.org/> (Information about Ohio's Early Intervention System.)
 - **Brief Overview of EI:** <https://ohioearlyintervention.org/what-is-ei>
 - **What Can I Expect?** <https://ohioearlyintervention.org/what-can-i-expect-in-ei>
- **Ohio Department of Children and Youth** – <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/> (Ohio's Early Childhood Programs and Services for Children and Families)
- **Zero to Three** - <https://www.zerotothree.org/> (Information and Resources on Child Development from birth to age three.)
- **Imagination Library** – <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/> (Sign up to have free children's books delivered to your home every month.)
- **OCALI** - <https://www.ocali.org/> (Information and Resources to inspire change and promote access to opportunities for people with disabilities.)
- **Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities** - <https://www.ocecd.org/> (The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) is a statewide nonprofit organization that serves families of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities in Ohio, educators, and agencies who provide services to them.)
- **Ohio Department of Education and Workforce/Special Education** – <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education> (The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce is a diverse team of passionate, education-focused professionals responsible for overseeing and enhancing the quality of education for each of Ohio's 1.7 million students.)
- **Pause for Parents, Play for Kids** – <https://pauseforparents.org> (Pause for Parents, Play for Kids is a 501c3 organization providing rest, support, connection, and fun to special needs kids and their families.)
- **Warren County Ohio, Libraries** – <https://www.co.warren.ohio.us/libraries.aspx> (Link to list of all Warren County Public Libraries.)

The Early Childhood Team looks to engage with you! Be on the lookout for updates. For any questions or additional information regarding Early Childhood Services, please contact:

Kelly Brooks, MS
Early Childhood Manager
kelly.brooks@warrencountydd.org or 513-228-6520

Angela Hensley, LSW
Early Childhood Manager
angela.hensley@warrencountydd.org or 513-228-6450

Miami Valley Gaming donates to Warren County Special Olympics

Miami Valley Gaming donated over \$7,000 to Warren County Special Olympics, aiming to make a meaningful contribution to the local community.

Craig Robinson, Miami Valley Gaming president and general manager, said Miami Valley Gaming patrons were given the option to donate their change to Warren County Special Olympics between December 14, 2023 and January 10, 2024. The charitable effort raised \$7,094.74.

“Everyone deserves the chance and opportunity to be the best that they can be,” Robinson said.

“Without exceptional organizations like Special Olympics and Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities, there would be too many people that could not find a way to excel or be productive in today’s environment.”

Robinson’s personal and professional connections to the Special Olympics Program inspired the charitable effort. Robinson said the Miami Valley Gaming team has several members who participate in Special Olympics. He also sits on the United Way Board with WCBDD Superintendent Megan Manuel, who advocated for the needs of the Special Olympics Program.

In addition to the donation from Miami Valley Gaming, WCBDD received several other donations to go toward Warren County Special Olympics, including:

- \$3,000 from the Ohio Knights of Columbus: St Mary's of the Assumption Chapter located in Springboro
- \$1,500 from Parent and Acclimate Provider Sharon Werner

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities sends a sincere thank you to every community member who has contributed and donated a combined almost \$12,000 to the local Special Olympics Program.

The Special Olympics spring season began with floor hockey on March 26, track and field on March 27, and bowling will start on April 7.

For more information about Warren County Special Olympics, contact Rhonda Schutte at rhonda.schutte@warrencountydd.org or (513) 806-3809.

