

Warren County Dreams

June 2023

A Word from Our Superintendent



I remember when I was growing up, my dad used to say that the older he got, the faster time seemed to go. As a kid, I couldn't understand how that could possibly be true. As an adult, I sure do understand it now. It is hard to believe that 2023 is just about half over already!

As you may be aware, Warren County is the third fastest growing county in Ohio. This growth is something we are experiencing here at the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities too. Since the beginning of 2018, the number of people we are serving has increased by 43%. This is just a little over five years, and three of those years were during a pandemic. We are pleased that we have been able to enroll all of the new people and meet all internal service needs that we personally provide, but like many areas around the country and state, we struggle to find employees to meet all needs for people. We are currently working on a market assessment of our salary schedules to determine where we are in relation to our competitors. We want to be able to retain and attract high quality employees in order to provide high quality services to people with developmental disabilities in Warren County and their families.

We are currently waiting for the 2023 – 2025 state budget to be finalized and approved by Governor DeWine. Every two years, the state legislature goes through the process to develop the budget, starting with the Governor, then to the House of Representative, next to the Senate, then to the Conference Committee, and finally back to the Governor. Our DD community has worked together to advocate for increased funding for higher wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). The Governor put money into his version of the budget for increased wages, and the House added additional funding into their version to increase the wages even higher. County boards of developmental disabilities pledged additional dollars to increase DSP wages by another dollar per hour, and the Senate supported this increase, while also maintaining the amount the House included in their version of the budget. We are appreciative of the support of the Governor and the legislators for agreeing that the DSPs who provide critical supports to people with developmental disabilities in Ohio need to be paid higher wages. We now need to make sure the funding stays in the final approved budget!

We are also waiting to see what other provisions will be in the final budget, as we know there will be some that will result in increased services for people, which is a good thing, but will also result in increased costs to us. So, we are continuing to update our budget to ensure we are prepared for the upcoming effects of these changes, both in the near future and the long-term budget.

As always, 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. You can also check out our website at www.warrencountydd.org or our Facebook page. Thank you for your support of the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities!

Individuals with disabilities honored and celebrated at WCBDD Open House

On Tuesday, March 14th, the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) was pleased



to host its annual Open Houses in honor of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Emceed by WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel, this year's theme, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, was inspired by "The Wizard of Oz" and featured presentations from enrolled individuals, Jennifer Jurin and Maggie Satterthwaite. The two presenters shared stories on the dreams they dared to dream, the road they took to reach their dreams, and the power within themselves to make their dreams come true.

Presenter, Jennifer Jurin, shared how despite her disability, she managed to make a tremendous amount of growth in the last few years. Last summer, Jennifer's growth was recognized by her employer, Goodwill, and she was named a recipient of the Goodwill EasterSeals Miami Valley Employment Independence Award, due to demonstrating exemplary efforts in accomplishing her personal goals. Jennifer began her career with Goodwill six years ago in their enclave employment program as an apathetic participant. Jennifer often struggled to remain on task, but that didn't stop the store manager from recognizing Jennifer's untapped potential. It was because of this potential, that Jennifer was hired on as an employee in 2017. It was five years into Goodwill's Employment Support and Retention Program, that Jennifer's abilities and independence truly blossomed. Jennifer has gone from hanging clothes, to interacting with customers, handling donations, answering the phone, and running the cash register; all responsibilities deemed just shy of a supervisory level!

Jennifer Jurin has gone from lacking motivation, to being an exceptional employee. Additionally, Jennifer leads a fun, fulfilling, and independent life. She receives drop-in services at home, engages in multiple recreational activities, including competitive dance, and is in a loving and healthy relationship with another individual enrolled in WCBDD services.

Presenter, Maggie Satterthwaite, shared that as she navigates life with a cognitive disability, she is grateful to have the love and support of her family. Additionally, Maggie related her life story to that of the "Wizard of Oz", and identified similarities between her and its characters. Much like Dorothy, Maggie views herself as a dreamer and uses her self-determination to achieve her dreams. An avid baseball fan, one of Maggie's dreams became a reality in 2016 when she was asked to be a part of the Mason High School Baseball team. Since then, Maggie has attended nearly every game and is known as their number one fan. Maggie's involvement on the baseball team was even a featured story on Channel 5 News! Other dreams that Maggie willed to come true, include earning her high school diploma, and securing employment in a job where she can contribute and feel safe. She stated that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the help of WCBDD and other Warren County professionals. Maggie Satterthwaite enjoys an active, robust, and well-rounded life that continues to grow her mind, body, heart, and spirit. From baseball and hiking, to serving as a member of the Voices Speaking Out self-advocacy group, to taking the necessary steps to obtain her driver's license and one day owning a green Jeep, there is no doubt about it, Maggie truly is a dreamer.

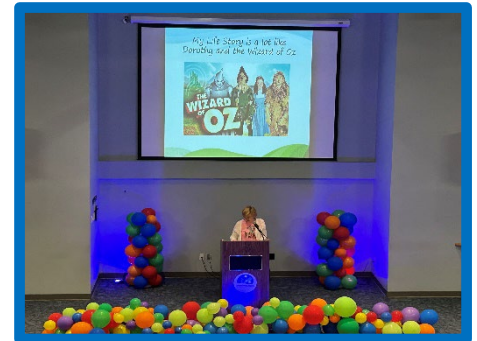
During the WCBDD Open House presentations, both Jennifer and Maggie were presented with a proclamation from Warren County officials, Commissioner Shannon Jones, and Judge Joseph Kirby, declaring the month of March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. In addition to Jennifer's and Maggie's presentations, WCBDD was fortunate to have Representative Scott Lipps as a guest speaker, and the Voices of Warren County choir as live entertainment. The Open Houses concluded with a Provider/Resource fair and a drawing for gift baskets. The proceeds from the raffle ticket sales will benefit the Voices Speaking Out self-advocacy group.



Pictured: Jennifer Jurin presents at WCBDD Open House



Pictured: (left to right) WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel, Maggie Satterthwaite, Jennifer Jurin, & WC Commissioner, Shannon Jones



Pictured: Maggie Satterthwaite presents at WCBDD Open House

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Outreach Efforts

Developmental Disabilities Awareness takes place in March every year, and is a statewide campaign to raise public awareness about people with developmental disabilities. Through this effort, the public will better understand the barriers individuals with disabilities face, and the ways in which they overcome such barriers to lead more fulfilling lives. In addition to its annual Open House, the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) engaged in various activities in an effort to promote visibility of those with developmental disabilities.

On March 1, 2023, the Voices Speaking Out Advocacy group had the privilege to attend the Developmental Disabilities Awareness and Advocacy Day at the Ohio Statehouse. With nearly 500 people in attendance, the event boasted a variety of speakers and offered participants the opportunity to meet with their local legislators to discuss critical issues, such as Ohio's ongoing DD Crisis, transportation, and the dire need to raise the wages of Direct Support Professionals. Voices Speaking Out members were honored to have the opportunity to meet with Senator Steve Wilson to express their concerns, and were very much inspired and



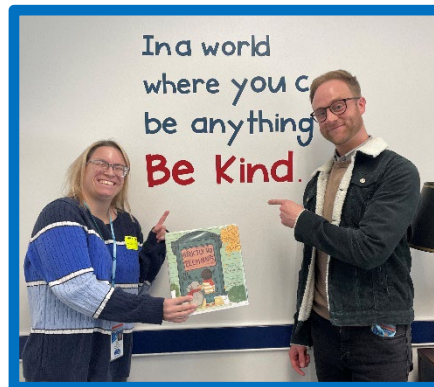
motivated from the day's presentations. Spectators of the group conversation complimented the advocates on social media stating, "They did an awesome job of explaining their concerns and advocating for their needs!"

The following week, the Voices Speaking Out members accompanied WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel, to provide an informational presentation of WCBDD services and supports to the Leadership Warren County Class of 2023. Leadership Warren County is a community leadership development program whose mission is to enhance individual leadership skills and provide knowledge about Warren County. The advocates did an admirable job of introducing themselves and offering the class insight as to what it means to be a member of Voices Speaking Out.

Lastly, WCBDD was pleased to visit elementary schools in Warren County to offer a special reading of the children's book "Strictly No Elephants", supplemented with a discussion on the importance of diversity and inclusion. The book tells the story of a young boy and his pet elephant who are excluded from a club for being different. The boy then decides to create a new club where everyone is welcome. WCBDD Community Relations Coordinator, Adam Jones and WCBDD Advocacy Coordinator, Ellen Hudson had the opportunity to visit Pennyroyal Elementary of Franklin City Schools on March 9th and 21st, accompanied by Voices Speaking Out members, Andy Mitchell and Kelley Castle. On March 28th, Jones and WCBDD Clerical Assistant, Kayla Wright, visited J.F. Burns Elementary of Kings Local School District. Wright, who also receives services from WCBDD, is a member of the WCBDD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. "The presentation was wonderful!" said, Cheryl Montag, Principal of J.F. Burns Elementary. She added, "Using the children's book as a springboard for discussion was excellent, and the amount of time was perfect to keep the students' attention."



Pictured: Advocates, Andy Mitchell and Kelley Castle facilitate a class discussion at Pennyroyal Elementary



Pictured: WCBDD Clerical Assistant, Kayla Wright (left) and WCBDD Community Relations Coordinator, Adam Jones (right), visit J.F Burns Elementary



Pictured: WCBDD Advocacy Coordinator, Ellen Hudson (left), advocate, Andy Mitchell (center), and WCBDD Community Relations Coordinator, Adam Jones (right), visit Pennyroyal Elementary

WCBDD Service Coordinator retires after 21 years of service



On Friday, March 31st, the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) held a Retirement Open House for Service Coordinator, Brenda Neeley. Known for her positive and supportive nature, Brenda has dedicated 21 years of service with WCBDD.

As an employee, Brenda served those on her caseload with an abundance of passion and grace. Brenda was admired by her coworkers for her wisdom, team-player attitude, and winning personality. In addition to being known for offering others positive and uplifting words at precisely the right moment, Brenda was also known for her creativity and sense of humor. Each time a Service Coordinator retired, Brenda was quick to offer them a proper send off, by creating funny jingles. The person retiring from WCBDD always left with a great feeling. It was because of these attributes that Brenda was recognized at the 2022 Agency In-Service as the Green Hat Award winner.

“Brenda was very devoted to every person, and considered her role as a Service Coordinator a privilege due to being able to serve children and adults,” said Service and Support Administration Director, Tony Hidy. He added, “Her commitment to the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities was unwavering, and her legacy will never be forgotten. Brenda Neeley is a wonderful person, and it was truly an honor for me to watch her shine doing something she was called to do.”

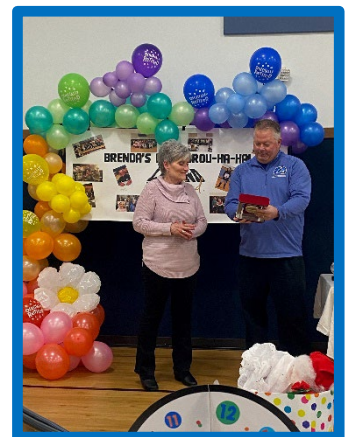
Thank you, Brenda, for your 21 years of service in assisting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to achieve what is important to them!



Pictured: Brenda Neeley is officially “off the clock”



Pictured: SSA Director, Tony Hidy, speaks from the heart at Brenda Neeley's Retirement Open House



Pictured: Brenda Neeley with HR/CR Director, William Caplinger

WCBDD offers egg hunt festivities to children and adults with disabilities

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) held its annual community egg hunt for children with disabilities on Saturday, April 1, 2023 at the Miracle League Field in Springboro. Though the winds were high and the temperature was low, children and



families braved the weather for the chance to collect from the more than 1,500 eggs scattered about the field. In addition to egg and prize collecting, and receiving temporary tattoos from Key

Behavior Services, participants had the opportunity be photographed with the Easter Bunny!



On Monday, April 3, 2023, WCBDD hosted an Eggstravaganza for enrolled individuals ages 14 and up, organized by Community Integration Coordinator, Rhonda Schutte. Like Saturday's community egg hunt, the Eggstravaganza took place at the Miracle League Field, but with much better weather! Those in attendance had the opportunity to create sock bunnies, compete in a wind-up baby chick race, and of course, collect eggs and redeem prizes.



WCBDD enrolled individual celebrates 30 years of employment with McDonald's

On Friday, April 21, 2023, Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) had the privilege of joining enrolled individual, Steve Sebastianelli, for his 30th work anniversary with the Loveland McDonald's. Steve was joined by his loved ones and the McDonald's team as they celebrated his tremendous milestone with balloons, goodies, and a delicious cake!



Steve has served as a Dining Room Attendant with the Loveland McDonald's since the early nineties. His responsibilities include cleaning and maintaining the lobby, re-stocking dining room supplies, unloading the delivery truck, assisting with grilling and frying products, and perhaps his favorite, interacting with the guests.

"The guests love Steve," said General Manager, Jessica Noble. Noble has worked with Steve for the past three years and describes him as fun and energetic. "He likes to have a great time while he's here, but he really takes care of the customers, and makes sure that everyone has a good experience when they come."

When asked about the benefits of hiring Steve, Noble stated, "Steve makes you think how to have fun in any situation, and how to make the best of any situation. No matter how things are when we are here, he can always make you laugh." Noble added, "If you are having a hard time, or are in the middle of lunch rush, he'll always make you crack a smile. You can apply that to anything in life. Even if things are hard, you can have a good time while you're doing it."

During his anniversary celebration, Steve was asked the reason why he has stayed with McDonald's for so long. With a big smile on his face, he replied, "I stay for the people."



Pictured: Steve Sebastianelli (center) is joined by Loveland McDonald's management team



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.

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 around 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 chooses 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. Check out the pictures below to see **Early Intervention in Action!**



During this home visit, the child and family, Occupational Therapist/Primary Service Provider and Developmental Specialist/Secondary Service Provider are working together to find a way he can practice sitting without his family or childcare providing all of the physical support. In the “bench-sitting” photo, the team focused on ways to increase the child’s core strength, by encouraging him to bring his arms/hands forward for fine motor play. All activities seen in these photos provide opportunities for face-to-face interactions, eye contact, and early communications. Even after the EI Service Providers leave, families can still utilize these activities and ideas in their everyday life!



During a home visit, a Developmental Specialist/Primary Service Provider suggested the idea of a “choice board” for the family to utilize to increase communication. In between visits, the parent created the choice board and started using it to help her child effectively communicate what she wants. Now, she is verbalizing “I want” and names the picture of her choice. The family sent the picture above to the Developmental Specialist in order to share the great progress!



During a home visit, the child and family, Physical Therapist/Primary Service Provider and Occupational Therapist/Secondary Service Provider, worked together on ways to use a couch cushion placed on the floor to work on “kneeling play” to help strengthen the child’s hips and arms. The Physical Therapist/Primary Service Provider also modeled how to help the child into a hands and knees position in preparation for crawling. All the while, the team used the child’s favorite toys to maintain motivation and attention to these play activities. Even after the EI Service Providers leave, the family can utilize these ideas in their everyday play!

Upcoming Socialization Opportunities:

In-Person Playgroup Opportunity!

We are excited to be back in-person and offering playgroups for children enrolled in WCBDD services ages birth to 3 and their parent/caregiver. Although the last few years have been challenging to safely maintain group, we are happy to be back and steady. The current session is full, but the next six-week summer session starts in July. ****Space is limited and registration is required****



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, July 11, through August 15, 2023
****Space is limited and registration is required****

Playgroup information:

- WCBDD Playgroup each Tuesday (within the WCBDD calendar) from 10:30—11:30 AM
- Activities such as story time, crafts, and song time
- Food/drinks are not permitted on the playground or in classroom
- Due to space limitations, only 1 (one) parent/caregiver per family
- Maximum 8 (eight) parent/caregivers and 8 (eight) enrolled children per playgroup. No siblings at this time.
- 3rd Quarter dates: Tuesday July 11, 18, 25; August 1, 8, 15
- Registration is required via email to: Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org
- Deadline for registration: June 30, 2023
- In order to allow opportunities for more families, any family registered for the April - June 2023 playgroup session may register for the next session, but will be placed on a wait list and notified after June 30, 2023 of the status of availability.
- WCBDD will take precautions based on the current COVID-19 Community Level in our Warren County area. From CDC Website- "At all levels, people can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal level of risk. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask". If Warren County Levels are 'Medium' playgroup employees will be required to mask. If levels reach 'High' there will be no playgroup during that time. 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, please email: Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org or call: 513-228-6487

Deadline for registration: June 30, 2023



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.)
- **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.)

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

Enrolled individual graduates from LEND

Thirty-one-year-old Greg Miller receives services from the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD). Greg is described as a hard worker who inspires others to do their best. He enjoys participating in adaptive baseball and bowling leagues, gaming, and going to the movies. In addition to



being a skilled ventriloquist, Greg also has his own YouTube channel titled, “Solving Autism’s Puzzle”, where he shares his personal experience with autism, as well as offers his insight and tips to others on the spectrum. Lastly, Greg is a recent graduate of the Cincinnati Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) training program, an accomplishment he holds close to his heart.

The Cincinnati LEND program is part of a national network of sixty LEND programs across the country that share a mission of improving the health of infants, children and adolescents with, or at risk for, neurodevelopmental and related disabilities including autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Affiliated with the University of Cincinnati and operating within Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC),

LEND focuses to increase the number of professionals with knowledge and skills, to provide evidence-based screening, diagnosis, and treatment of developmental disabilities, including ASD.

“On the surface, I pretty much look like any normal person. I have my own ups and downs here and there. I have my own talents I like to show everyone. Deep down, I’m someone who wants to be a part of a good cause,” Greg confided. “I want to be able to do things for the community, and by extension, the country, and by extension, the world. I want to be able to make a difference to people who really need that support.” Greg, who identifies as being on the spectrum, graduated from LEND this past May.

The LEND program provides over 300 hours of instruction over the course of one academic year and consists of five components: Leadership Seminar, Interdisciplinary Training Team, Core Course, Seminar

in Evidence-Based Methods, and Disciplinary Clinical Experiences. Upon completion of the LEND program, graduates walk away having become culturally responsive, family-centered interdisciplinary leaders who strive to improve the health and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities.

In addition to learning more about developmental disabilities and being a good leader, Greg shares that the LEND program taught him how to understand himself as a person, and how to make a positive impact on others. He adds that the most challenging aspect of the LEND program was sharing his vulnerability. “With having autism, I don’t really want to talk about it,” Greg admitted. “This program helped give me breathing room to look at my life. They basically helped me come out of my shell.”

Moving forward, Greg envisions a life for himself in which he is involved with additional organizations that advocate for people with developmental disabilities. He would also like to own a small business where he would be able to hire people with disabilities, who like him, possess a skill or talent. Offering up a few pearls of wisdom, Greg encourages others with disabilities to “Be true to what you feel. Take time for yourself. Be kind to yourself. Be able to understand your feelings, and be able to advocate for yourself on those feelings.” Greg concludes, “Give yourself the strength to be vulnerable, and you will see improvement on where you can go in life.”

WCBDD presents at OACB Spring Conference

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) recently presented at the Ohio Association of County Boards Serving People with Developmental Disabilities (OACB) annual Spring Conference held in Columbus, Ohio. The OACB is a non-profit organization that provides advocacy, communications, professional development, and technical assistance to all 88 of Ohio’s county boards of developmental disabilities.

WCBDD was hand-picked by OACB leadership to lead a session for the Community Outreach track, on ways county boards can improve their website to best meet the needs of individuals served. The presentation was led by WCBDD IT Manager, John Phelps, WCBDD Provider Development Coordinator, Angela Mason, and WCBDD Community Relations Coordinator, Adam Jones. The group highlighted key elements in creating a successful county board website which included an emphasis on cross departmental collaborations among divisions, accessibility, working with a web developer, and provider resources.

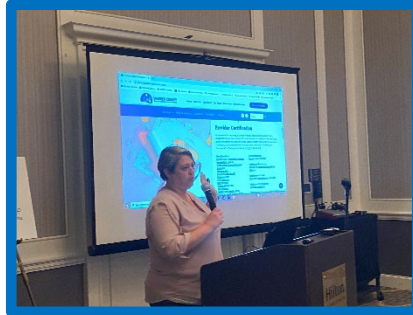


WCBDD Community Relations Coordinator, Adam Jones, served as a facilitator to an additional session in the Community Outreach track, entitled: “Developing DD Communications Resources.” Jones, a graduate of the OACB Executive Development Program (EDP), joined fellow graduates in facilitating a collaborative workshop with communications professionals in the DD field. The purpose of the sessions was to collect feedback on how to create and develop a county board communications toolkit, certification program, and mentorship program in order to educate, simplify, and unify communications across all 88 county boards.

The 2023 OACB Spring Conference entitled, “Cross-Pollination”, was attended by hundreds of DD professionals seeking information and education on new and exciting ideas occurring in the DD field.



Pictured: WCBDD IT Manager, John Phelps



Pictured: WCBDD Provider Development
Coordinator, Angela Mason



Pictured: WCBDD Community Relations
Coordinator, Adam Jones