

## Warren County Dreams

February 2022

### A Word from Our Superintendent



I hope you have had a good start to your 2022! After the most recent surge in COVID cases, the numbers now thankfully seem to be decreasing again. At the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities, we have continued to provide services to individuals with disabilities and their families. We have taken precautions and have offered to meet with individuals and families virtually rather than in person for home visits, assessments, monitoring, team meetings, etc., if that is what they would prefer. We wanted to continue to offer services, but wanted to do it in whatever way families and individuals were most comfortable. We are hopeful that cases will continue to drop and that we are able to get back to more typical service delivery and events soon.

We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to hold most of our in-person agency events this year. We hope that our first event will be our Open House in March to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Our plan is to hold this event in conjunction with our provider fair, as we have done in the past. We have scheduled this for Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Warren C. Young Center. We will be sharing more specific information as we get closer to this event, as it will be pending the state of the pandemic as we get closer.

In early December, the Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Jeff Davis, announced that he would be retiring as of December 31, 2021. Director Davis had served as the Director since being appointed by Governor DeWine in January 2019. We appreciate everything Director Davis did for our system and people with developmental disabilities over his three years serving in this role, especially during the two years he served during a worldwide pandemic. Governor DeWine announced that Kim Hauck, who was serving as a Deputy Director for DODD, would replace Director Davis on January 1, 2022. Director Hauck has spent many years in our system, including working for a provider, county board, and DODD. I look forward to working with her in her new role!

I appreciate your patience and cooperation as we continue to navigate through our new world in this pandemic. 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 or our Facebook page. Thank you for your support of the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

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### Voices Speaking Out advocacy group attends the 2021 Synergy Conference

In early October, the Voices Speaking Out self-advocacy group had the privilege of attending the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Synergy Conference in Sandusky, Ohio. This year's conference was held at the Kalahari Resorts and Conference Center and included informative sessions that focused on residential, direct service, day services, social work, management, and service coordination for people with developmental disabilities.

Participating advocates included: Delores Kirby, Claire Ginn, Maggie Satterthwaite, Woody White, Annee Martin, Kelley Castle, Andy Mitchell, Jose Ventura, Aaron Bowman, and Advocacy Assistant, Rachel Rice.

Rice, who is also a member of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC), was featured in the Fall issue of its Digital Newsletter, *“DD Council Connection,”* where she shared her thoughts on the 2021 Synergy Conference.



“The best thing about the conference was meeting people with disabilities and those that support them. I learned about mental health and what stress can do to your body, and how to relieve it. I also learned about lots of ways to eat smart,” Rice stated.

Currently serving as the Chair of the Council’s Children and Health Committee, Rice was also named Vice-Chair of ODDC.

“I was excited and a bit shocked at my announcement as Vice Chair of ODDC, but it means a lot to me,” Rice expressed. “My duties will be to fill in if the Chair cannot be at the full council meeting, and help the Chair as needed.”

“Being on the council means a lot to me,” Rice added. “It is enjoyable and allows me to feel like I help a lot of people. I learn new things that I can take back and use to help those in my community.”

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### Enrolled individuals share their “green thumb” at Makino Park

On October 9, 2021, individuals enrolled in services with the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD), had the opportunity to share their “green thumb” by participating in a planting service project at Makino Park. The service project was organized by the Mason’s City Team One program, a leadership group comprised of representatives from each department in the City of Mason.

Individuals, staff members, guardians, and providers alike, collected on the soft soil to receive a cup of planting seed. Participants milled about the bare field, sprinkling and spreading the seed into the soil. Planting equipment and a light breakfast was provided by City Team One. After the planting project was completed, City Team One gifted each participant their very own water bottle.

Makino Park, located in Mason, encourages and hosts interaction and recreational opportunities accessible to individuals of all abilities. The park includes the Common Ground Playground, an inclusive playground that boasts an innovative, educational, and interactive environment to promote social engagement and sensory opportunities for children, veterans, and seniors. Makino Park is also home to the FCC Field. The mini-pitch soccer field is specifically designed for accessibility, including larger doors, and special surfaces for better wheelchair mobility.

The land on which Makino Park is built, was previously owned by WCBDD. WCBDD donated the land to the City of Mason for the purpose of building a park that was accessible to all.



Pictured: Advocacy member, Kelly Castle



Pictured: Mother and son work together to plant seeds



Pictured: Each participant received a give-away water bottle

### WCBDD Annual In-Service celebrated virtually

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) celebrated its Annual Agency In-Service on October 15, 2021, virtually, as a safer alternative to meeting in person during the ongoing pandemic. Employees participated in the Zoom call consisting of agency and strategic planning updates presented by Superintendent, Megan Manuel, team building break-out groups, and an awards ceremony.

In addition to celebrating employee work anniversary milestones, and employees with perfect attendance, the ceremony recognized and awarded staff and community members who have demonstrated exemplary services to the agency. Congratulations to the following award recipients:

*Green Hat Award* – Carol Heil, Community Resources Director

*Extraordinary Employer Award* – The Mason Courtyard Marriott

*Friends of DD Award* – Jill Mays of Production Services Unlimited, Inc. and Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coach, David Showalter

*The Dave Farmer Award* – Jef Bengal, Transition Specialist

*Creativity Award* – Angela Brinker and Lindsay Graves, Provider Development Coordinators

*Above & Beyond Award* – Robert Abbott, Travis Fields, and Mike Virelli, Maintenance Specialists

*Superintendent Award* – Beth Roberts, Occupational Therapist, and Rebecca Bryant, Service Coordinator



Pictured: Superintendent, Megan Manuel (right) and Employer of the Year Award recipient, The Mason Courtyard Marriott



Pictured: Superintendent, Megan Manuel and Superintendent Award recipient, Rebecca Bryant

### Teen with disabilities works as a “script reader” for McCluskey Chevrolet

Kyle Mounce, age 18, receives services from the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD). He is a student at Lebanon High School and has interests in music, entertainment, and broadcasting. Kyle’s aspiration in life is to one day host his own talk show. Over the summer, Kyle took one step forward towards his life goal. Through a family connection, Kyle was hired as an on-camera “script reader” for McCluskey Chevrolet, a position he secured by auditioning.

Kyle’s uncle, Joel Chandler works in the McCluskey Chevrolet media department. Chandler introduced Kyle to department manager, Greg Bennet. “I liked what I saw right away,” Bennett commented. After viewing Kyle’s audition, Bennett reached out to company owner, Keith McCluskey, to request approval to hire Kyle. The request was granted.

As an employee (and face) of McCluskey Chevrolet, Kyle is responsible for reading car descriptions off a teleprompter, which are then edited by Chandler, and uploaded onto the dealership’s YouTube channel. “Kyle is doing a great job, and we have gotten positive feedback for his on-camera work,” said Chandler. Kyle films up to forty scripts per week. When asked if he ever gets nervous in front of the camera, Kyle proudly said, “You have to have the self-confidence and perseverance to get in front of the camera.”

This is not the first time Kyle has been seen on camera. At age 13, Kyle was the featured soloist in a music video produced by the “Everybody is a Star Foundation”, a production company based in California. A year later, his singing ability earned him an interview spot on Q102 Radio. A year later, Kyle sang the National Anthem in front of thousands at a Cincinnati Reds game. Though Kyle’s confidence and ease on camera is evident, that does not discount the work he has put in to get there.

During the 2019-2020 school year, Kyle participated in a bi-weekly Job Class, offered by the WCBDD Transition Program. The program provides students with the necessary tools to transition from school to the adult world. Time spent in this program enables students to enhance their social and employment skills, as well as critical thinking and decision-making abilities.

“They have given me the skills that I need for when I become an adult like my parents, and what to do and what not to do, and what employers are looking for when you are going into the work place,” commented Kyle. Additionally, the program has helped Kyle improve his eye contact and listening skills.



Pictured: Enrolled individual, Kyle Mounce

Kyle continues to grow his skills at McCluskey Chevrolet thanks to the support from his uncle. Each week, Chandler educates Kyle on different studio equipment in order to prepare him for the broadcasting industry. “I want to show him how to edit,” said Chandler, then added, “Kyle keeps shining more and the more you put upon him to grow, the more he’s grown.”

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### Individuals continue their growth and development through WCBDD resources

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD), provides services and supports to over 2,000 people in Warren County who have developmental disabilities, through Early Intervention, Community Resources, Employment Services, Social, Recreational, Residential, Service Coordination, and other programs. The board remains steadfast in its mission to support people with disabilities and their families to achieve what is important to them. Below are some examples that highlight how enrolled individuals have benefited from available WCBDD resources.

Careers with Peers Council (CPC), a professional networking group for career-minded adults enrolled in services, was provided with first-hand Workplace Safety and Personal Awareness training. The training was facilitated by full-time Police Officers, Dan Dean and Kevin Watson.

Officer Dean and Officer Watson are also co-founders of Gard Self Defense Solutions, a self-defense and active violence training company. Thanks to their expertise, CPC members were privy to valuable information regarding how to identify potential First Responders in an emergency situation, as well as how to survey the room for exits, and identify objects that may be used for self-defense. Additionally, members learned ways to avoid being viewed as a “weak” target, and the importance of exercising caution when using rideshare apps, and other transportation resources.

The Voices Speaking Out advocacy group received a personalized CPR training from the WCBDD Provider Development Team. The training was facilitated by Provider Development Coordinators, Lindsay Graves and Angela Brinker, and provided the 9 members in attendance with helpful tools in Emergency Situations. In addition to hands-on CPR demonstrations, the group learned about AED use, First Aid, choking, and more.

Enrolled individuals, Ishika Sharma and David Wood obtained their driver’s licenses by successfully completing the Capabilities Driving Training, funded by WCBDD. In addition, both individuals utilized the WCBDD Vehicle Grant Program, and are now proud car owners.



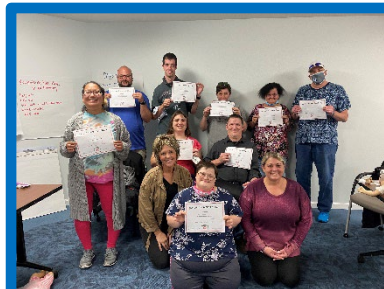
From networking and driver's education, to wellness and personal safety, WCBDD continues to offer valuable resources in an effort to promote the growth and development of individuals served.



Pictured: Enrolled individual, Ishika Sharma



Pictured: Officers Kevin Watson (left), and Dan Dean



Pictured: Advocacy members and Provider Development Team



Pictured: Enrolled individual, David Wood

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### 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.

During the fourth quarter of 2021 (October- December), the collaborative Early Intervention team, which includes service providers from WCBDD and Early Intervention Service Coordinators from the Warren County Educational Service Center, received **104** referrals for initial eligibility, provided **122** developmental evaluations and/or assessments and developed Individualized Family Service Plans for qualifying children. The EI Developmental Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologists and PLAY Project Consultants for the PLAY 3-6 program, delivered **819** home or community visits during this period through both technology and in-person service. The Early Intervention team continues to meet weekly via Zoom with all providers and service coordinators to discuss referrals, assign teams, schedule and coach each other.

#### Upcoming Socialization Opportunities:

##### ***Virtual Playgroup***

Check out our virtual playgroups:



**Warren County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities**

**Early Childhood**

**2022 Virtual Playgroup**

We would like to invite you and your family to attend our virtual playgroup beginning Thursday, February 3 through Thursday, March 31, 2022. Our Thursday virtual playgroup activities will include:

- Story time, sing-a-longs, movement activities and craft ideas
- Each virtual playgroup is approximately 20 minutes
- Families of children through age 5 currently enrolled in WCBDD may attend
- Our Virtual Playgroup is hosted by WCBDD Early Childhood staff
- Virtual Playgroup will be held Thursday @ 3:00 PM on the dates noted below and you may sign up for as many dates as you wish

Virtual Playgroup will be held:

- ⇒ Thursday 3:00 PM - February 3, 10, 17
- ⇒ Thursday 3:00 PM - March 3, 10, 24, 31

How do I sign up? It's easy! Register via the following link:  
[https://warrencounty.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_71wOJ5iv4k9hcwu](https://warrencounty.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_71wOJ5iv4k9hcwu)

Prior to each virtual playgroup, you will be sent the Zoom invitation and agenda for that respective date!

Questions? Please email: [Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org](mailto:Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org)

**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.)
- **The Inspired Tree House** - <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/> (Child development resources and creative ideas to promote child developmental skills.)
- **Imagination Library** – <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/> (Sign up to have free children's books delivered to your home every month.)
- **Sesame Street** - <https://www.sesamestreet.org/> (Games, videos, art ideas and resource information for children and families)
- **OCALI** - <https://www.ocali.org/> (Information and resources to inspire change and promote access to opportunities for people with disabilities.)

The WCBDD Early Childhood team will continue to strive to provide the safest, best, and most productive services possible during this continued time of increased concerns regarding COVID-19 and other contagious illness.

For any questions or additional information regarding Early Childhood Services, please contact:

Kelly Brooks, MS  
 Early Childhood Manager  
[Kelly.brooks@warrencountydd.org](mailto:Kelly.brooks@warrencountydd.org) or 513-228-6520

### WCBDD holiday drive-thru brings joy to enrolled children and their families

On December 4, 2021, the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) Early Childhood Division held a holiday “drive-thru”, as a way to safely connect with enrolled children and their families. The drive-thru entitled: *Breakfast from Santa’s Elves*, took place at the entrance of the Milo H. Banta Center, and invited families of children birth to age six to visit with WCBDD staff while remaining in their vehicles.

Families entering the drive-thru were eagerly greeted by youth group members from the Camp Lebanon Retreat Center, then warmly welcomed with coffee, juice, and donuts served by WCBDD staff members.

As families enjoyed their breakfast, they were serenaded with holiday tunes sung by the Voices of Warren County, a choir comprised of adult individuals enrolled in WCBDD services.

The *Breakfast from Santa’s Elves* drive-thru received favorable feedback from the families in attendance, referring to the event as a “great time.”

In addition to providing holiday cheer, each child was gifted a stuffed furry friend, compliments of the Milford PetSmart, and a story book for the family to share.



Pictured: Little Kendra receives her stuffed animal friend



Pictured: WCBDD staff with Camp Lebanon volunteers



Pictured: WCBDD Occupational Therapist, Stacie Wallace with a bundle of friends

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### Voices of Warren County sing at the Lebanon Rotary Holiday Luncheon

On December 16, 2021, the Voices of Warren County performed as a special guest to the Lebanon Rotary Club Holiday Luncheon. Members of the Rotary Club dined on meals provided by Chick-fil-A, as they enjoyed the musical stylings of the talented singers led by WCBDD staff member, Ellen Hudson.

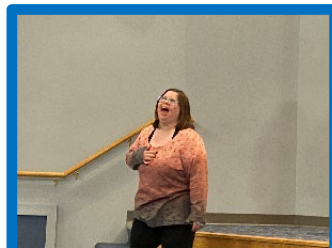


Group numbers included holiday favorites such as *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree* and a very playful rendition of the *12 Days of Christmas*. Featured soloists, Molly Baldwin charmed the crowd with her exuberant *Hit Me with Your Best Shot*, while Jordan Auriana warmed hearts with a thoughtful *Where Are You Christmas?*

The singers were received by an extremely pleased audience as all Rotary members extended a standing ovation, and an enthusiastic round of applause.

Congratulations for a joyously superb performance to singers:

Molly Baldwin  
Annee Martin  
Shane Galley  
Claire Ginn  
Jordan Auriana  
Kyron Collins  
Jamie Patrick  
Delores Kirby



Pictured: Soloist, Molly Baldwin



Pictured: WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel, Board member, Barry Riley, Advocacy Coordinator, Ellen Hudson, and the Voices of Warren County



Pictured: Soloist, Jordan Auriana

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### WCBDD employee earns leadership award from MLK Community Coalition

On January 17, 2022, Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) employee, Ellen Hudson, was recognized by Lebanon's Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Coalition as a recipient of the "Adult Community Leader Award." Hudson was announced as a winner during the 37<sup>th</sup> MLK Celebration, where she was honored for her contributions to the community through her work with the Voices of Warren County, a choir comprised of adults with disabilities.

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.

Throughout her career, Hudson has devoted many hours in developing and nurturing the choir. She continuously seeks out different opportunities to showcase the choir in order to share its diverse talents with the community. This determination was best illustrated when the Voices of Warren County competed in the World Choir Games, and international choir festival held every two years on different continents. Thanks to Hudson, the choir had the opportunity to perform at the 2012 World Choir Games, located in downtown Cincinnati.

In addition to the choir, Hudson serves as the Advocacy Coordinator to the WCBDD Voices Speaking Out self-advocacy group. The group meets monthly to promote the independence and inclusion for people with disabilities, and engages in multiple service projects throughout the year. Hudson is also a co-facilitator for the Next Chapter Book Club, a nationwide program that offers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities a fun and engaging way to participate in their communities through reading.



Pictured: Voices of Warren County at 2012 World Choir Games

Known for her mentorship and humility, Hudson is described as a quiet leader and advocate for those still finding their voice. She is a champion of the people, who very much exemplifies what it means to be a community leader.

“Ellen cares so much about the people we serve and providing them with opportunities to be involved in their communities,” expressed WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel. “I’m so pleased that Ellen was honored with this well-deserved award,” Manuel added. “She is a wonderful employee and a tremendous asset to our agency and to people with developmental disabilities.”

Upon receiving recognition for her recent accolade, Hudson (true to character), humbly said, “I am honored, and I love my job!”