

Warren County Dreams

March 2023

A Word from Our Superintendent



Once again, we started off the new year at the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) in full swing! I was glad to see the calendar turn over to 2023, and we got right down to business.

We had been preparing for our scheduled visit from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) for our three-year accreditation review, and on February 15th – 16th, the DODD team was at WCBDD. The last time they were here for a review was in February 2020, which was right before the world shut down for the pandemic. DODD's team of reviewers spent two full days interviewing employees, board members, people we serve and family members. They also reviewed many personnel files and files and records of individuals we serve. Because they were reviewing information from the last three years, everything they reviewed had been completed during the national pandemic. I am very pleased to say that after the two-day review, DODD determined we have continued to meet the standards to maintain the highest level of accreditation and once again received the maximum three-year accreditation. I am very proud of the work our staff did over the last three years to ensure the people we serve received the needed services, while maintaining our DODD compliance. I thank all of them for the hard work they do every day. We have a great team at WCBDD!

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan recognized March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in order to "increase public awareness of the needs and potential of Americans with developmental disabilities and to provide the encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential."

On March 14th, we held two open house sessions to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, where the theme was *'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'*, where we focused on how dreams really can come true. We were fortunate to have Warren County Commissioner Shannon Jones join us for the afternoon session, where she presented a proclamation on behalf of the Warren County Commissioners declaring March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. We also had two fantastic speakers, Jennifer Jurin and Maggie Satterthwaite, who are adults served by the WCBDD, and they shared their personal journeys about how they dared to dream to make their dreams come true.

For the evening session, Warren County Probate and Juvenile Court Judge, Joe Kirby joined us, and he presented a proclamation declaring March 2023 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. State Representative Scott Lipps then spoke to the crowd and shared his support for people with disabilities and the people who work in the developmental disabilities field. Jennifer Jurin and Maggie Satterthwaite once again shared their stories, before the Voices of Warren County closed the evening Open House by singing two songs for us. Finally, the night concluded with the Provider and Business Fair and raffling off several outstanding raffle baskets. It was a great celebration for a great cause. We really appreciate everyone who was able to join us and everyone who supports our agency and people with developmental disabilities.

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!

Congratulations to Bryan Marsh and Bill DeLord for their reappointment to WCBDD

Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) was pleased to have Warren County residents, Bryan Marsh and Bill DeLord, reappointed as members of the board. The gentlemen were re-sworn in by Warren County Probate Judge Joseph Kirby, on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, accompanied by WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel.

With a background in business, board member, Bryan Marsh has served in a variety of sales and sales management roles over the course of his career. It was on March 11, 2021, that Marsh was sworn in as the newest board member of WCBDD. Upon his initial appointment to the board, Marsh stated, "Our family feels fortunate to be surrounded by so many incredible members of this organization who have helped our family over the years."

Board member, Bill DeLord is retired after an extensive career in the automotive industry. DeLord who had previously served on the board several years ago, was sworn in on August 31, 2021. Encouraged by having served on the board in the past, DeLord shared, "Dealing with developmental disabilities within my own family has made me come to appreciate the compassion and caring that is so desperately needed by the individuals we serve. I am excited and humbled to be able to be a part of this board again."

Board members of the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities serve four-year terms, and may serve no more than three consecutive terms. All board meetings are open to the public, and typically take place on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the WCBDD Administrative Offices located at 42 Kings Way, Lebanon.



Pictured: Board members, Bryan Marsh (left) and Bill DeLord (right), with WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel (center)

Voices of Warren County place 2nd in holiday choir competition at Sorg Opera House

On Wednesday, December 21, 2022, members of the Voices of Warren County made their stage debut at the Sorg Opera House, to compete in the Middletown Holiday “Whopla” Choir Off. The holiday “Whopla” is a singing contest that invites community groups from around the tri-state area, to compete for monetary prizes while also spreading holiday cheer. Each group is allotted up to 15 minutes for their performing act. The winners are chosen by a celebrity panel of judges and audience votes. The mission of the contest is to showcase the musical talents of local churches, schools, and performing act choirs, as well as to promote community involvement. A total of nine choirs were featured at the sing off, including the Voices of Warren County, a choir comprised of adults with disabilities who receive services from the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD).



Led by WCBDD Advocacy Coordinator and Choir Director, Ellen Hudson, the choir warmed the hearts of the masses, as they serenaded with their musical stylings of *12 Days of Christmas*, *Silver Bells*, and crowd favorite, *Heat Miser*, led by soloist, Mitchell Knight. Knight won the audience over with his crystal-clear voice and animated theatrics, earning the choir a very hearty standing ovation.

A standing ovation was not the only accolade earned by the choir. At the end of the contest, it was announced that the Voices of Warren County placed 2nd in the competition, earning them a monetary prize of \$500!

In addition to a standing ovation and \$500, the choir received an outpouring of support on social media. Described as a “wonderful performance” and the “highlight” of the evening, the choir and its leader were commended on the joy they radiated from the stage, making a chilly evening in December, not feel so chilly after all.



Pictured: Soloist, Mitchell Knight hams it up on stage with his rendition of *Heat Miser*



Pictured: WCBDD Choir Director, Ellen Hudson (right), WCBDD Community Integration Coordinator (left), Rhonda Schutte, and Voices of Warren County are all smiles after placing 2nd in singing competition

YMCA & Special Olympics Ohio to provide memberships at no cost to athletes

On December 22, 2022, Special Olympics Ohio (SOOH) and the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs (Ohio YMCA) announced they are partnering to provide memberships at no cost for registered athletes and approved private providers who meet certain eligibility criteria.

“This is an incredible partnership to benefit our athletes and community-based organizations,” Special Olympics Ohio CEO Jessica Stewart said. “Not only will our athletes be able to enjoy the benefits of exercise, but they will also be able to spend time training for their year-round competitions. Our athletes will have the ability to improve all aspects of their lives through the opportunities our Ohio YMCAs have to offer.”

To be eligible, each SOOH athlete will be contacted by their local community-based organization and instructed to fill out a request form. Once it is indicated that the athlete has a current physical on file and is in good standing, they will receive a confirmation letter from their local organization. This approval, either digitally or on letterhead, can then be brought to one of the participating Ohio YMCAs.

In addition to the free membership, SOOH athletes will receive one personal training/wellness coaching/wellness instructor session at no charge. Training and meeting space will be available at no charge for athletes, as well as volunteer and employment opportunities.

SOOH will offer training in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as well as other educational training opportunities for the YMCA staff at no charge. SOOH will also help with funding and resources for YMCA facility enhancements and/or equipment for athletes’ and members’ use.

Ohio Alliance of YMCAs Executive Director, Beth Tsvetkoff, added; “Our YMCAs enthusiastically embrace and support this partnership, and look forward to continuing to build on the success of our organizations. Meeting the needs of communities we serve, is at the heart of our mission, and this partnership will help ensure we are elevating diversity, equity, and inclusion work throughout Ohio and help all people reach their full potential.”



Enrolled individual receives recognition from Antioch Shriners for his heart and generosity

Rick Nunamaker receives services from the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD). He is an employee at the Goodwill store located in Lebanon, where he resides, and remains active with bowling, singing with the Voices of Warren County, and serving as a member of the Voices Speaking Out self-advocacy group. Known for using his perseverance, heart, and generosity, Rick was recently recognized by the Antioch Shriners with their highest achievement: The Green Fez.

The Antioch Shrine (located in Dayton), is a proud fraternal organization for men of good character, whose mission is to have “fun with purpose” through parades and social events. Rick received recognition during a Shriner ceremony on January 14, 2023, where he was honored and awarded with his own Green Fez hat. The ceremony was attended by many different people including, WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel, Board President, Laurie Lupinetti, and fellow Shriner and State Representative, Scott Lipps, who has been a friend and advocate to Rick for over twenty years.

The men’s friendship (and brotherhood) began many years ago when Rick, then a resident of the City of Franklin, frequently attended council meetings where Representative Lipps served as Mayor. The friendship grew over the years, then became impenetrable when Rick joined the Lipps Campaign Team. Rick attended numerous events as a supporter and at times, a speaker, thus becoming a top ambassador to the campaign. Those who served on the campaign team became inspired and motivated by Rick’s consistent enthusiasm and work ethic, including Representative Lipps.

Shortly after honoring Rick at the Antioch Shriner’s ceremony, Representative Lipps posted to social media, announcing Rick’s recent accolade saying, “Rick has a heart of gold, strong faith, and has always tried to help everyone he meets. I am so proud of Rick! Thank you everyone who attended the ceremony, and thanks, Rick, for teaching us how to live and how to love.”



Pictured: WCBDD Board President, Laurie Lupinetti (left), WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel (center), and Rick Nunamaker (right)



Pictured: Tyler Klick (left), Darlene Hicks, Rick Nunamaker (center), and Representative Lipps (right)



Pictured: Representative Lipps (left), and Rick Nunamaker (center), with the Antioch Shriners

WCBDD Superintendent is elected to Chair of Special Olympics Ohio Board

Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) Superintendent, Megan Manuel, was recently elected Chair of the Special Olympics Ohio Board of Directors for the 2023-2024 term. Special

Olympics Ohio is part of the global inclusion movement using sports, health education, and leadership programs to empower people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics provide year-round sports training and competition in 19 different sports for nearly 22,000 children and adults.

Manuel, who has served as WCBDD Superintendent for the past 14 years, was initially appointed to the Special Olympics Ohio Board in June of 2018. Manuel served as Board Secretary in 2019, until she was elected as Vice Chair in 2020. A total of 19 members serve on the board with a variety of experience and expertise. Manuel's experience includes assistant basketball coaching and serving as a unified golf partner (in Marion, Ohio) for Special Olympics.

A long-time supporter of the Special Olympics mission, Manuel follows in the footsteps of her late father, Jerry Manuel, who passionately served as member and past Chair of the Special Olympics Ohio Board. Manuel recently demonstrated her support as a top fundraiser for the Warren County Team at the annual Special Olympics Ohio Caesar Creek Polar Plunge. Polar Plunges are nationally recognized fundraisers that challenge community members to jump into frigid mid-winter waters. Several Polar Plunges were held throughout the state, with the local Warren County plunge taking place at Caesar Creek Lake.

In addition to Manuel's fundraising efforts, Special Olympics basketball team, the Warren County Wildcats were named as one of the top fundraising groups. Both Manuel and the Wildcats were significant contributors to the \$44.1K raised at this year's Caesar Creek Polar Plunge. All proceeds benefit Special Olympics Ohio's efforts in providing athletes, the opportunity to develop fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Each year more than 11,000 people donate their time, talent, and energy to volunteer for Special Olympics Ohio events. To learn about volunteer opportunities with Special Olympics Ohio, go to www.soo.org



Pictured: WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel (left), community members, and the Warren County Wildcats



Pictured: WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel



Pictured: WCBDD Board President, Laurie Lupinetti (right) and her daughter give a thumbs up before taking the plunge

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. 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 some of the data of services delivered from 2019 through 2022

DESCRIPTION	CY 2019	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022
Referrals to Team for EI Eligibility	451	359	437	501
Total Served by WCBDD	533	511	561	646
Evals/Assessments by WCBDD	499	397	469	538
Total Home/Community Visits by WCBDD	4,252	3,850	3,826	4,392
Referred from EI to DD services at age 3	81	81	52	100


Upcoming Socialization Opportunities:

In-Person Playgroup Opportunity!

We are excited to be back in-person and offering playgroups for children enrolled in WCBDD services age birth to 3 and their parent/caregiver. The last few years have been challenging to safely maintain group, but we are happy to be back and steady.




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 18, through June 27, 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 6 (six) parent/caregivers and 6 (six) enrolled children per playgroup. No siblings at this time.
- 2nd Quarter dates: Tuesday April 18, 25; May 2, 9, 16, 23; June 6, 13, 27
- Registration is required via email to: Carolyn.Bogenschutz@warrencountydd.org
- Deadline for registration: March 24, 2023
- In order to allow opportunities for more families, any family registered for the January - March 2023 playgroup session may register for the next session, but will be placed on a wait list and notified after March 24, 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: March 24, 2023






Sibshops is coming to Warren County DD!

Sibshops is a nationally acclaimed program. 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 given the chance.

****Space is limited and registration is required****



It's Here. . .


Sibshops 2023

Just for brothers and sisters of kids with special needs!

DATES & TIMES:

Saturday, February 4, 10am-1pm
Saturday, July 15, 10am-1pm
Saturday, November 4, 10am-1pm
Location: Cincinnati Children's MOB
3430 Burnet Avenue
5th Floor Conference Room
Parking in garage behind building

Saturday, May 6, 10am-1pm
Location: Warren C Young Center



*Cost for May 6th session only will be covered by Warren Co. Board of DD for families who have a family member enrolled in WCDD 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*

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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

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

Community Egg Hunt for children with disabilities to be held April 1st in Springboro

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities will host a community egg hunt for children with disabilities on Saturday, April 1, 2023 at the Miracle League Field in Springboro, located at 1605 S. Main Street. Arts and crafts activities will be offered to participants beginning at 1:30 p.m., and the Egg Hunt will commence promptly at 2:15 p.m. The event welcomes children ages 18 and under with developmental disabilities, as well as their siblings.



Egg Hunt! **Free!**
for children with
developmental disabilities

Saturday, April 1, 2023
at 2:00 p.m.

Arts and crafts activities from 1:30 to 2:15 p.m. Egg hunt begins promptly at 2:15 p.m.

**The Miracle League Field
Springboro Jr. High School
1605 S. Main Street
Springboro, OH 45066**



**The Easter Bunny will make a
special appearance!**



The Miracle League Field can
accommodate wheelchairs and walkers.



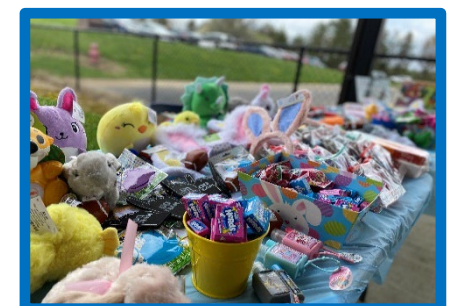
**There will be 1,500 eggs, filled
mostly with toys and prize tickets.**

Bring your baskets and camera!

Sponsored by the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

**Open to all children ages 18 and under with developmental disabilities.
All siblings welcome!**

For more information, contact Adam Jones at (513) 806-3941 or adam.jones@warrencountydd.org



Up to 1,500 eggs filled with toys, candy, and prize tickets will be scattered about the Miracle League Field. Participants are encouraged to bring a basket to collect eggs, and a camera to capture memories. The Easter Bunny will be making a special appearance to pose for photos and hand out prizes. The Miracle League Field is accessible for individuals who use walkers or wheelchairs.

For more information, contact Adam Jones at (513) 806-3941 or adam.jones@warrencountydd.org

Ohio's Developmental Disability Crisis: What to Know

What is the crisis?

Ohioans with disabilities cannot get the care and support they desperately need because of the unprecedented workforce shortage of skilled Direct Support Professionals caused by extremely low wages.

What is the impact of the crisis on people with developmental disabilities?

Without Direct Support Professionals, many people with developmental disabilities cannot eat, go to the bathroom, bathe themselves, or do things we take for granted. Without Direct Support Professionals, people with developmental disabilities suffer!

What is the impact on Direct Support Professionals?

Direct Support Professionals who support people with developmental disabilities can't feed their families with what they are paid, and they are quitting the field every day at an alarming rate. Efforts to retain current support professionals and attract new ones to the field are greatly impacted by low wages caused by current reimbursement rates.

How is Ohio's Developmental Disabilities workforce crisis different from other workforce shortages?

Developmental disability providers are locked into reimbursement rates set by the State of Ohio. Only action by state officials can resolve this issue.

What can you do to help?

SHARE YOUR STORY!

A powerful way for people with developmental disabilities to advocate for themselves is through their own personal stories that come from the heart. Additionally, stories from those who are advocating on behalf of someone with developmental disabilities, are persuasive in their sincerity and authenticity.

To share your story, visit OhioDDCrisis.com

You'll find an easy-to-use web portal where you can share your story! That story may then be shared with key legislators in an effort to help them understand the very real and immediate human impact of



this crisis. Simply click on the “Share YOUR story” link on the site and follow the prompts in the online survey tool.

Additionally, the website provides general information and resources that can assist you when you discuss this crisis with others. You will also have an opportunity to sign up for updates related to the effort and to sign an online petition of support.

Only by showing our state officials the true human cost of Ohio’s Developmental Disability Crisis, will we collectively move them to take meaningful action.