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1. National Foster Care Month Spotlights Opportunities

Building Blocks to Permanent Families

In May, **National Foster Care Month** spotlights the more than 400,000 children in the U.S. foster care system.

Around the nation, children and adults with developmental disabilities are in need of good foster homes. While foster care generally brings to mind the many children in the system, it is estimated that more than 100,000 adults with developmental disabilities are in need of a family home.

One of DODD's key initiatives is to encourage supports and services that offer new and better opportunities for living in the community, increasing independence and maximizing resources. The Department is looking beyond the boundaries of years past as federal and state funds are accessed to support community-based services and newly-defined opportunities. Adult Foster Care is one such opportunity, and the benefits of home sharing are as unique as each individual and family.

Marsha and Her New Family

Marsha Mace resided at Gallipolis Developmental Center (GDC) from 1999 until 2011. Staff who worked with her there knew that she really wanted to live in a smaller community environment, but her aggressive behaviors were working against a placement outside of the Developmental Center. Marsha worked diligently with her team at GDC and gained better control of her life, moving to a group home in Hocking County with two other former residents of GDC. It wasn't what she was looking for. After a second move to an apartment of her own

with support from staff, Marsha's team thought perhaps this was the answer -- but Marsha wasn't thriving there.

In 2012, Hocking County Board of DD Service and Support Administrator (SSA) Beth Hackney, and SSA Supervisor Matt Nobile, told Marsha's APSI guardian about a local adult foster home that had an opening for someone to share their home. Beth explained that Bill Shepler and his family only take care of one person, and they make that person a part of their family. Beth and Matt felt that Marsha would greatly benefit from living in a family setting. Marsha and Brittany Brown from APSI met the Sheplers and toured their home. There was no hesitation on Marsha's part – she had finally found a home!

On March 1, 2012, Marsha moved into her own bedroom at the Sheplers. Their daughter Kimberly noted,

“Marsha fit into our family easily. She was instantly comfortable in the home and had no problems acclimating to her surroundings. She now has a bedroom all decorated with her personal belongings.”

In addition to clothing, bedding, and other things the Sheplers purchased for her personally, they worked with the County Board and Marsha's guardian to arrange funding for a much-needed wheeled walker; a wheelchair for long distances; an iPad3 with Porloquo2Go software for her communication needs; and, later, a custom bicycle for her to use for exercise and recreation.



Marsha and Bobo

Marsha loves her pets, and the newest is Bobo ... joining Yum-Yum the cat, pictured on p. 12 of [Pipeline Quarterly, spring 2014.](#))

Learn more about home sharing in the next Pipeline Quarterly, publishing in July.

In 2014, Bethany reports that Marsha still is living with the Sheplers and is doing extremely well. “For Christmas this past year, she received a dog that she named Bobo. She still has her cat Yum-Yum and feeds it daily. They also have a new plan in place for Marsha called the ‘Imagine Plan.’ With this plan, Marsha indicated that she wants to go to Disney World, so the Sheplers have started budgeting and planning for this. Marsha continues to use her iPad for communication and (with it) keeps her family aware of what she wants and needs.”

Marsha's story illustrates what adult foster care or home sharing means in human terms. Below is a description of the regulatory terminology regarding Adult Foster Care:

Adult Foster Care

Adult foster care means personal care and supportive services (e.g., homemaker, chore, and medication oversight to the extent permitted under state law) provided in a private home by an unrelated, principal care giver who lives in the home and whose primary, legal residence is that home. Adult foster care is furnished to adults who receive these services in conjunction with residing in the home. *Adult foster care services, their associated activities and skill development approximate the rhythm of life that naturally occurs as part of living in the family home.*

See DODD rule [5123:2-9-33*](#) for complete language on Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers – Adult Foster Care, under the Individual Options (IO) Waiver.

During National Foster Care Month, DODD salutes the many foster families and other individual mentors who offer care to individuals with and without disabilities, in a supportive environment.

**This is under DODD Rules in Effect, <https://doddportal.dodd.ohio.gov/rules/ineffect/Pages/default.aspx>*

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2. Changes Needed in Ohio's Guardianship System

Last week, *The Columbus Dispatch* featured a series about guardianship in Ohio – you can read the full series online at www.dispatch.com/unguarded. This series brought to light challenges with the current system, and offered suggestions for improvement.

For more than 30 years, DODD has contracted with Advocacy and Protective Services Inc. (APSI) to serve as the guardian of last resort for adults with developmental disabilities. DODD and APSI fully support the reform of Ohio's system, and point to how some of the suggestions outlined in the Dispatch series have effectively been in place in Ohio's developmental disabilities system, including required in-person meetings with individuals, more frequent reports on the health and care of individuals, and increased training requirements for guardians.

After a probate judge has appointed a guardian, a guardian's role is to listen to the individual and help them make as many decisions as possible. To achieve this, they need to be actively involved in their individuals' lives. This means regularly visiting individuals in all of the settings where they spend time, and being a part of the decision-making process. We know this makes a difference – APSI's guardians visit individuals an average of six times a year in every setting in which an individual spends time, including in their residence and at community-based activities. Also, guardians attend team meetings to take part in the development of an individual's ISP (Individual Service Plan). This involvement allows our guardians to thoughtfully advocate for what's important to the individual, as well as support their goals.

Ongoing training and reporting requirements are expected of many professionals to whom we entrust our health and safety, such as doctors, educators, and first responders. Guardians should be no different. Requiring annual reports on the health and care of individuals is a step in that direction, and this has worked well for APSI. Additionally, comprehensive ongoing training will ensure guardians have the knowledge they need to serve in this capacity. APSI's training requirements include an extensive orientation program and at least ten hours of training annually – this is more extensive than the recommendations outlined in *The Dispatch*.

The goal of DODD and APSI is to be the guardian of last resort. Whenever possible, the DD system and the court seek families to serve as guardian, and to identify less restrictive alternatives to guardianship. APSI has seen a recent increase in the number of individuals who have become their own guardian, and we believe this is an indicator that our guardians are working with individuals to help them achieve their goals.

Guardianship is a difficult issue for the people we serve, family members, and the system as a whole. We recognize that the system isn't perfect, and hope the series in The Dispatch leads to change and helps more individuals have as much autonomy as possible. Making decisions is part of being human, and the Department and APSI are committed to preserving the dignity of decision-making as much as we possibly can.

Respectfully,

John L. Martin, Director – DODD

Karla Rinto, Executive Director – APSI

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3. SELF Waiver Update: Self-Directed Services, More Options

In early May, the DODD Division of Medicare Development and Administration reported that 262 Ohioans had enrolled in the [Self Empowered Life Funding \(SELF\)](#) waiver, showing a steady increase in enrollment across the state since its inception in July 2012. Some counties have made the SELF waiver a priority, and three such counties – Clermont, Erie, and Guernsey – have identified specific reasons that this waiver works especially well for the people they serve. (See [Pipeline Quarterly](#), spring 2014.)

Aside from the unique services offered and the strong focus on individuals directing their own services, the SELF waiver provides individuals and families a budget within which to plan spending for needed services, along with the tools and training needed to do so.

See SELF waiver tools and training information at [http://dodd.ohio.gov/medicaid/Pages/Self-Empowered-Life-Funding-\(SELF\)-waiver.aspx](http://dodd.ohio.gov/medicaid/Pages/Self-Empowered-Life-Funding-(SELF)-waiver.aspx)

In [Clermont County](#), a goal of 40 people receiving services via the SELF waiver was set for the first two years of enrollment, and families were brought together for an introductory meeting immediately following the waiver's availability in July 2012. Superintendent Sharon Woodrow and staff made the commitment to SELF waivers a priority, focusing on its funding flexibility and self-directed service options. [Guernsey County](#) staff saw a great opportunity for families in their area to utilize funding for Children with Intensive Behavioral Needs under the SELF waiver, and currently have enrolled ten children. And in [Erie County](#), several adults and children have been enrolled on the SELF waiver, which works especially well with the County Board's budget process. Erie County Board of DD Superintendent Carrie Beier notes,

“Our system is a little different. We do individual budgets, and starting at age 14 we look at what it is going to take to help support that person. The SELF waiver just fits into how our county works with people. It goes hand-in hand with our budget process.”

DODD is hopeful that examples such as these, detailed in the spring issue of *Pipeline Quarterly*, will encourage additional counties to explore the flexibility and service options offered by the SELF waiver, and see how it can serve more people in their communities.



On the Front Porch of Their New Apartment

Jeb and Heather, with SSA Larrick Zircle. Jeb and Heather recently were married, and moved to this apartment in the community near the Sandusky Mall.

Heather says,

“I’m excited that my SELF waiver will pay for transportation to work!”

Contacts: Clermont County: hstrum@clermontdd.org; Erie County: stravis@eriecbdd.org; Guernsey County: thitchens@guernseycountydd.org

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4. REMINDER: Strategic Planning Leadership Group, June 11 Forum Family Supports and Listening to People

The next Open Forum to be hosted by the DODD Strategic Planning Leadership group (SPLG) will be on June 11, from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Ohio Department of Commerce/ Ohio Fair Academy Auditorium, 8995 E. Main St., in Reynoldsburg.

Presenters will include Sheli Reynolds, Director of Individual Advocacy and Family Support at the University of Missouri/Kansas City (UMKC) Institute for Human Development, a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

Her presentation will highlight:

- Why Family Supports Matter
- Family Centered Thinking: How Systems and Organizations Can Support It
- The ‘Supporting Families’ Community of Practice: Key Findings So Far

Also presenting will be *Hanns Meissner*, Chief Executive Officer of The Arc of Rensselaer County in Eastern New York State.

His presentation will highlight:

- Blue Space and Why it Matters

- Organization Culture and Change: What Helps
- The Intentional Journey to Individualized Supports

The afternoon will offer opportunities to engage in conversations with presenters and session participants to help generate ideas and enthusiasm for exploring these concepts in Ohio.

Registration Information

The forum is free. Registration is first come/first served, and space is limited. Lunch is on your own. Register at <http://www.planetReg.com/E55616613347>. The presentations will be video-taped and made available following the forum. Funding and planning support for this forum is provided by several partners and stakeholders in Ohio's developmental disabilities community. The SPLG greatly appreciates their generosity.

If you have questions, contact Melody Moon at (614) 466-0129 or melody.moon@dodd.ohio.gov

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5. OACB Conference Speakers Spotlight Change, Tout Ohio

The Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) 2014 Spring Conference at the Hilton/Polaris last week spotlighted several speakers at the state and national levels, addressing key issues of interest to Ohio's developmental disabilities community. Among them was Nancy Thaler, Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and Andrew McQuaide, Coordinator of Community Development and Planning for the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals for the State of Rhode Island.

Thaler prefaced her comments on the status and national outlook for the U.S. Medicaid and Medicare systems, stating,

“From a national perspective, I'd say Ohio is kind of ‘where it's at.’ You are watched! And, the astuteness of your partnerships and the breadth of your long-range planning is noticed.”

She offered insights regarding the need to ‘nudge the Medicaid system toward sustainability,’ and the need to ‘acknowledge the demographic climate change’ that is occurring as Baby Boomers age, and aging caregivers become a growing concern. “Nationally, we are not facing this head-on, and this needs to happen,” she observed. “Family care givers are the backbone of the national service system, and 85 percent of long-term care for the elderly is done by families.”

In his presentation, McQuaide discussed the landmark agreement Consent Decree between the State of Rhode Island and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), designed to facilitate greater access to community-based, integrated employment and day services for individuals with DD in that state. Describing the oversight of the DOJ interim settlement agreement, McQuaide noted several of the points covered in his presentation to the DODD Strategic Planning Leadership Group Forum in April (See [Pipeline, April 2, 2014](#)).



Rhode Island Settlement Agreement Coordinator Andrew McQuaide

This presentation focused on his experience with the U.S. Department of Justice mandating the State of Rhode Island to deliver integrated services for people with developmental disabilities.

McQuaide presented similar information to the DODD Strategic Planning Leadership Group in April.

The OACB conference slate of session presenters also included DODD staff members Molly Kurtz, Office of Policy and Strategic Direction, presenting on initiatives supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorders; and Patrick Stephan and Clay Weidener, Division of Medicaid Development and Administration, sharing updates on several DODD initiatives.

For more about the conference, go to www.oacbdd.org, and visit their [Facebook page](#).

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6. Your Input Needed! Surveys – Employment First; Health

Employment First has awarded a grant to create resources for providers to help individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities who are seeking employment. A short survey has been prepared to help ensure that resources meet the needs of providers who are working with these individuals.

**Providers are encouraged to complete the survey at
www.surveymonkey.com/s/ohioemploymentfirst**

And, the Ohio Department of Health **Division of Family and Community Health Services** (DFCHS) is seeking feedback about the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program, which helps to ensure access to quality care, especially for low-income individuals or those with limited availability of care. DFCHS is gathering feedback about these programs in two ways:

1. *Online Surveys:* Families – those who may be served by MCH programs, including parents of children with disabilities – are encouraged to share their feedback through an **online survey**. Surveys should be completed by June 10. Information from the survey will be used to assess needs in Ohio, and help DFCHS design programs that best meet those needs. For more information, view this **fact sheet**.
2. *Community Forums:* DFCHS will host ten Regional Community-Based Forums to prioritize the top unmet needs. Anyone interested in sharing feedback is encouraged to attend. Information on dates and locations is available **online**. Sessions will take place across the state in June, July, and August. **Register online** for a forum in your area.

Questions? Contact Theresa Seagraves at Theresa.seagraves@odh.ohio.gov or (614) 466-4626.

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PostScripts

OACB Good Life Network, Training Series

DODD has been conducting training events on the new Service and Support Administration (SSA) rule to emphasize the importance of person-centered planning in Ohio's DD service system. In an effort to help professionals at County Boards of DD and private providers embrace the spirit of the new rule in their work, the OACB Good Life Network is holding a special training series. The Good Life Planning Academy will enable a select group of professionals to learn, share, and collaborate with their colleagues. The Academy is a new learning experience that will incorporate the new SSA rule, as well as related new federal rule requirements into participants' regular work activities.

For information regarding the three dates and locations, register [here](#).

Contact: Ann Neu (614) 431-0616; aneu@oacbdd.org

Elder Mobility: New Solutions for Communities

Local forums explore approaches to keep elders, people with disabilities connected

Ohio communities are struggling to meet the transportation needs of senior citizens and people with disabilities. Transportation connects people to family and friends and allows participation in daily activities that enhance quality of life, and access to resources essential to health and well-being. As Ohio's population ages, and the number of older drivers increases, the safety of every driver and passenger becomes an increasing concern. For many older Ohioans and their families, the choice to "hang up the keys" is a difficult one. State agency partners in Cleveland, Toledo, Findlay/Lima, and Columbus are joining together to offer community forums addressing this issue: *Elder Mobility: New Solutions for Communities*. More information at <http://aging.ohio.gov/news/agingconnection/20140515.asp>

Reminder: Healthy Lifestyles 'Train the Trainer' Workshop, June 9 -10

The Ohio Disability and Health Program is hosting its second Healthy Lifestyles Train-the-Trainer Workshop in Shaker Heights. Participants will receive a certificate as a Certified Lead HL Trainer and receive all the necessary training materials.

See <http://nisonger.osu.edu/odhp> for registration requirements. Contact Erica Coleman at (513) 803-4399; erica.coleman@cchmc.org for more information.

Reminder: ASD and Technology Supports Workshop, June 9

The OCALI Summer Workshop Series, *ASD and Technology Supports: A Comprehensive Look at Mobile and Other Assistive Technologies to Support Learners on the Autism Spectrum*, will begin June 9, from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at [Bridgewater Banquet and Conference Center](#), 10561 Sawmill Parkway, in Powell. More information at www.ocali.org/

Job Coach Academy Announced for June 13

Norwich Consulting Services Senior Employment Consultant Mike Heifner will be offering a one-day training for Job Coaches, Employment Specialists, Enclave Supervisors, and Work Crew Supervisors on June 13, from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Quest Business Center/Polaris, in Columbus. Cost is \$119 per person and includes training materials and lunch. Practical skills will be taught, and attendees will learn skills that will improve their coaching and retention outcomes.

Go to the www.norwichcs.com Events Page to register.

New Training: Waiver-Supported Services, June 18 & 20

Current waiting list data captures specific individual waiver requests and the date a person was added to the list. To provide more clarity, the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC) enlisted the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center (GRC) to study the characteristics and specific needs of individuals currently on the waiting list. Barry Jamieson of GRC and Paul Jarvis of ODDC will share the results of the study, including current and future needs of individuals on the waiting list, and implications of the results. There are two opportunities to attend:

- *In-Person*: June 18, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. at The Eye and Ear Institute, 915 Olentangy River Road, Columbus. [Register online](#) by June 13.
- *Webinar*: June 20, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. [Register online](#) by June 19.

Mark Your Calendars: The Arc of Ohio – Training, June 26

In cooperation with DODD, The Arc of Ohio invites you attend a June 26 training at the Holiday Inn/ Worthington, to learn about the latest developments in the statewide development disabilities system. [Click here to learn more and register!](#)

Next Family Advisory Council Meeting, July 8

DODD invites all interested families to attend the next Family Advisory Council (FAC) meeting at the [Columbus Developmental Center](#), July 8 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The agenda will include an update from DODD Director John Martin. FAC meetings are open to anyone with a family member served by Ohio's developmental disabilities system. For more information contact Peggy.Martin@dodd.ohio.gov. Also, check out the new FAC Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FamilyAdvisory/>

DODD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)

To report abuse/neglect and other MUIs call toll-free: **1-866-313-6733**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of DD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember the hotline number is there to be used for reporting concerns.

Pipeline Feedback ... from You to the State

Pipeline is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), distributed at least twice monthly to update and inform readers of timely, relevant information affecting stakeholders in the developmental disabilities community. Share questions or comments about *Pipeline* at feedback@list.dodd.ohio.gov or sherry.steinman@dodd.ohio.gov. To subscribe to *Pipeline*, email: join-pipeline@list.dodd.ohio.gov and write SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. To discontinue your subscription to *Pipeline*, write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. You also may read issues of *Pipeline* at <http://dodd.ohio.gov/publications/pipeline.htm>



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