

# Reaching Up



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## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I would personally like to invite you to take a moment to read the first issue of the Tuscarawas County Board of Developmental Disabilities' (TuscBDD) *Reaching Up* newsletter.

As we deliberated about names for this newsletter we first landed on *Reaching Out* as an appropriate title. However, with further discussions, we instead selected *Reaching Up* because it is our desire to do more than just reach out -- we desire to reach up.

In the pages of this newsletter, you will find exciting updates about the future of service and support provision for persons with developmental disabilities in Ohio. You will learn about the legislation and landmark civil rights cases that are asking County Boards across this state

to provide more options for persons served. You can also find information describing how TuscBDD is prepared to meet this call by enacting appropriate and systematic changes. You will also find in the pages of this newsletter stories highlighting the many ways our community is partnering with persons with developmental disabilities to provide more options.

However, as any good student of history knows, it is essential to not lose sight of the past. In this newsletter, you will also find a story reflecting upon the incredible legacy of this agency. You will learn about Ruth Carlson a local mother who advocated tirelessly for opportunities beyond institutionalization for children with developmental disabilities in Tuscarawas County.

The painstaking work of this woman and many other like-minded individuals led to the creation of the extensive system of supports this county now offers. As we move forward, it is vital that we keep this legacy in sight and continue to develop innovative options for individuals served.

I now invite you to learn more about TuscBDD and the many ways in which this agency and its community partners are enhancing the lives of individuals and families served. I also invite you to join with us as we *Reach Up*.

*Respectfully, Natalie M. Lupi*



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# SYSTEM REDESIGN FOUNDATION: CHOICE

Despite Samuel Patterson's success in terms of community-based employment, academic achievement and personal independence, Samuel and his family long for the day when his story is no longer noteworthy. "Like any mother, I am proud of my children when they are able to pursue and accomplish their dreams. However, I anxiously await the day when similar stories about persons with developmental disabilities are the norm instead of the exception," shared Samuel's mother Linda Patterson.

Samuel, a 2010 graduate of Indian Valley Local Schools, is now employed by the Columbus Zoo (see picture at left with the zoo's Director Emeritus, Jack Hanna) -- fulfilling a life-long dream. "From an early age, Samuel expressed his desire to work at the zoo," stated Patterson. "People said it was impractical, but he did it through persistence." Samuel has also graduated from the Ohio State University's TOPS (Transition Options for Post-Secondary Settings) program where he studied animal science and learned independence skills (see picture below). Samuel now lives independently in Columbus. "At the root of my son's story, is a lesson on what is possible when people, regardless of their exceptionality, are given the opportunity to pursue their passions," further expressed Patterson.

A foundational element of the system redesign taking place across Ohio is the need for increased choices for individuals served. The DODD has explicitly mandated that County Boards devise benchmarks to gage the recruitment of additional private providers. According to the DODD Revised Ohio Administrative Code - Rule of Free Choice, County Boards must establish and implement annual benchmarks for the recruiting of appropriate providers.

In order to understand this mandate, it is first essential to understand the role and function of a private provider. A private provider is a separate entity from the County Board which has been approved by the DODD to provide services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities.



## SYSTEM REDESIGN OVERVIEW: NEW CMS RULE

Ohio is currently at a crossroads in regards to the service and support model for persons with developmental disabilities. Advocacy efforts from persons with developmental disabilities and their caregivers have led to an increased focus on the need for appropriate opportunities for inclusion across this state and country. This nation-wide civil rights movement has also led to the passing of new federal and state-level mandates and landmark litigation favoring this desire. For a comprehensive list and explanation of these various pieces of legislation and court cases please review the System Redesign FAQ sheet available at [www.tuscbdd.org](http://www.tuscbdd.org).

In this issue of *Reaching Up*, an overview of the new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) rule will be reviewed.

First and foremost, it is critical to understand the importance of CMS. In the early 2000s, county boards were designated Medicaid local administrative authorities by Ohio Law. This means that TuscBDD is responsible for funding approximately 40 percent

of the costs to support individuals on Medicaid waivers (the majority of individuals supported by TuscBDD). The additional 60 percent of the associated support costs are covered by CMS. Without this support, TuscBDD would be responsible for 100 percent of the costs. Due to this arrangement, TuscBDD has not asked for new monies in over sixteen years. Therefore, compliance with the new CMS rule is vitally important.

The Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), John Martin, summarizes this rule well. "Essentially, the rule says that federal Medicaid funds no longer can be used to pay for waiver services in settings that isolate people, including institutions, and settings next to public institutions. This rule applies to facility-based work and day services that are paid for using Medicaid HCBS waiver funds."

To ensure compliance, the DODD and TuscBDD are developing new support models which promote community employment and integrated day services. The level of community involvement will be based on each person's support plan.

### HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?

It is the priority of TuscBDD and the DODD to minimize any disruption of service or support provision. CMS has asked that states ensure compliance by 2019 (the DODD requested until 2024, but CMS has not yet responded to this request). Therefore, TuscBDD is seeking to get ahead of the game by working towards compliance now. The agency is guided by its current three-year strategic plan which will help us make the necessary changes in a systematic manner.

In terms of actual effects, this change will first of all provide persons served with access to new and different services and supports. These new services and supports will be designed to promote appropriate community employment and involvement opportunities. Again, the level of community involvement will depend on the person served. Additionally, if you are served by a local provider, they may have to change to ensure compliance.

This new rule also requires adoption of the Person-Centered Thinking framework. This innovative approach to service and support delivery develops a plan based upon the expressed interests of individuals served and their caregivers. TuscBDD is currently receiving training in this new approach and has recently begun implementation with positive feedback.

## COMMUNITY & AGENCY EVENTS

June, July & August 2015  
Camp Butterfly  
Tusc. Co. YMCA  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
Special Needs Day Camp

June, July & August 2015  
Summer Children's Programs  
Norma Johnson Center  
Various activities offered on  
Tuesdays and Thursdays

June, July & August 2015  
Summer Reading Program  
Tusc. Co. Library  
Variety of programs for all  
ages

June 20, 2015  
Fishing Derby  
Norma Johnson Center  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

July 3, 2015  
4th of July Holiday  
TuscBDD Offices Closed

July 2015  
Summer Art Camp  
Tusc. Co. Art Center  
Variety of programs offered  
for children and teenagers

August 18, 2015  
In-Service Day  
Dutch Valley Restaurant  
Sugar creek, OH  
TuscBDD Offices Closed

Examples of private providers in Tuscarawas County include, Horizon's, Stepping Stones and Starlight Enterprises Inc. (SEI). As the system transforms, providers such as the entities mentioned above will increasingly be looked upon to provide direct services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

As the system develops, private providers are encouraged to become a DODD-approved CMS waiver provider. This will allow approved providers to bill CMS for services and supports rendered for individuals on waivers.

Recently, individuals served by the TuscBDD Adult Workshop participated in an interest survey. A variety of interests ranging from singing to gardening were noted. "Information from this survey will prove essential as the agency seeks to implement the Rule of Free mandate," shared TuscBDD Director of Program Operations, Chris

Yurick. "We are seeking to develop partnerships with providers, local businesses, non-profits and etc. who are willing and able to match the expressed interests and priorities of individuals served. In order to accomplish this goal more service and support options will be needed."

To prepare for this transition, TuscBDD has developed a comprehensive three-year strategic plan (2014-2017). This document outlines the systematic steps the agency will take to expand opportunities for persons served by TuscBDD. This document is accessible online and can be viewed on the agency's website at [www.tuscbdd.org](http://www.tuscbdd.org).

"At the end of the day, a major thrust of this redesign is the need for more choices. Change won't occur over night, but we owe it to our community and individuals served to increase options," shared Yurick.

## FORMER NFL PLAYERS SHARE EXPERTISE

Former linebacker for the Green Bay Packers and NFL Hall of Famer, Dave Robinson, shared the importance of working hard and pursuing your dreams with community members gathered at TuscBDD for a Sports Clinic and Community Connections Fair sponsored by the Legends Foundation on Friday, May 29. Mr. Robinson was joined by Jamar Martin (OSU, Dallas Cowboys and Miami Dolphins), Rashan Hall (KSU) and Anthony Griggs (OSU, Philadelphia Eagles and Cleveland Browns) who enthusiastically led an inclusive sports clinic for the community.

Children and adults from TuscBDD's Starlight School and Adult Workshop actively participated in the clinic. "The energy was contagious. At one point, I even noticed that our teachers grabbed pompoms to cheer on the participants," shared Holly Lawver, principal of the

Starlight School. "The athletes did an excellent job sharing their expertise in a way that allowed everyone to participate."

At the conclusion of the Sports Clinic, several community organizations set up display tables as part of the Community Connections Fair. TuscBDD was pleased to welcome Horizons, the Tuscarawas County Library, the Tuscarawas County YMCA, SEI, Mass Mutual, the OSU Extension Office's Fit Youth Initiative, REM Ohio, the Tuscarawas County Family and Children First Council and the Tuscarawas County Advocates Council to the fair.

"We wish to thank the Legends Foundation and the various community organizations represented for supporting this event. We had a blast!" expressed Nate Kamban, TuscBDD's Community Relations and Special Projects Coordinator. "County



Boards across Ohio are currently adopting a more community-based service and support model. This event further established links with the community. It is our desire to continue to host activities that people with and without disabilities can enjoy together to foster true community."

*(Picture: Dave Robinson and Alec Worth enjoy the event.)*

## AEP GRANT AWARDED

Katy Ganz, a Speech-Language Pathologist at TuscBDD's Starlight School, and Farrah Raines, a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant at the Starlight School, were recently awarded a grant from AEP to modify standard toys to facilitate use by children with disabilities. "Both Farrah and I receive several calls each year from therapists, teachers and parents inquiring about how to adapt standard toys for use by children with disabilities," stated Ganz. "The process is relatively simple – we are converting battery-operated toys into switch-operated toys. Only a basic understanding of electricity and currents is needed to do this. This simple change facilitates access for children with severe motor impairments due to disabilities ranging from Cerebral Palsy to Rett Syndrome."

As Ganz and Raines have continued to field calls from interested community members, one day the conversation shifted. Why not teach Starlight School students with moderate developmental disabilities to modify toys? "By teaching the students, they will gain a better understanding of electricity, and the ways in which simple adaptations can greatly facilitate access," shared Ganz.

Using this idea, Ganz and Raines applied for a Teacher Vision Grant from AEP for the 2015-2016 academic year for their "Circuits to Switches" project. As part of the application, Ganz and Raines indicated that the Starlight School would use grant funds to create a workshop where children trained in the process of adapting toys can teach other students, parents, teachers and therapists the techniques for modifying toys.

Recently, Ganz and Raines received word from AEP that their grant application had been selected to receive funding. "This will be an excellent opportunity for our students, staff and the community in general," expressed Starlight School principal Holly Lawver. "It is the very mission of the Starlight School and TuscBDD to enhance the lives of persons with developmental disabilities through quality services and community partnerships and this grant will allow us to do just that. By opening this workshop to the community, we will be able to highlight the capabilities of students with developmental disabilities and further prepare them for meaningful careers in the community."



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROWING AT TUSCBDD

In late April, volunteers from Arizona Chemical, Schoenbrunn Landscaping and TuscBDD prepared a plot of land for a garden to be used by persons with developmental disabilities who have expressed interest in learning more about gardening. This garden is located next to TuscBDD's workshop located at 638 Commercial Ave SW in New Philadelphia.

"I am still awestruck how this partnership came together," expressed Nate Kamban, TuscBDD's Community Relations and Special Projects Coordinator. "We recently completed an interest survey with adults served by TuscBDD in which several individuals expressed an interest in gardening. We were in the early stages of planning our garden activities when Arizona Chemical contacted us about donating to and volunteering in an Earth Day-related project with the County Board. We immediately shared our garden idea and Arizona Chemical was on board. They generously donated funds to purchase garden materials and plants as well as provided an eager team of volunteers. It was fate!" further shared Kamban.

"We are thrilled to be able to contribute to this garden project," noted Sandy Fragrase Production Scheduler at the Arizona Chemical facility in Dover. "This opportunity provided us with a chance to meet a local need and also celebrate Earth Day. This has been a great experience for our staff and we are excited to see how this garden enriches the lives of persons with developmental disabilities in this county."

After receiving the call from Arizona Chemical, TuscBDD contacted Schoenbrunn Landscaping who also quickly agreed to support the project. Schoenbrunn Landscaping provided a professional landscape drawing of the garden along with volunteer assistance to ensure the garden is properly installed. "We were happy to help," noted Penny Rouse, Schoenbrunn Landscaping's Dover Garden Center Manager. "Gardening is a much-loved pastime and it is essential that everyone has the opportunity to experience the joys of gardening."

Despite the cold weather, the team worked hard to prepare the plot of land for the

garden. "It is the purpose of this garden to provide persons with developmental disabilities with the valuable experience of growing their own food, enjoying the outdoors in a new way and possibly integrating healthy fresh produce into their diets if they so choose," stated Chris Yurick, TuscBDD's Director of Program Operations. "We are truly blessed to be a part of a community that is so willing to support individuals with developmental disabilities. This was a great day."

In May, representatives from Arizona Chemical, TuscBDD and SEI completed planting the garden plot. The volunteers were joined by hard-working members of the Tuscarawas County Advocates Council. The advocates council is a group of persons with developmental disabilities who seek to advocate on behalf of the rights of persons with developmental disabilities.

TuscBDD staff is now managing the garden alongside individuals served by the agency. *(Picture: Chris Yurick and William Chambers plant strawberries at the garden.)*

## FIRST PACE U CLASS GRADUATES

For thirty weeks, the inaugural class of PACE U (Personal, Achievement and Community Employment) interned at three local companies. Each intern was able to spend ten weeks at each store honing their professional skill set. To complement the on-site job training, the interns received classroom training from TuscBDD's job coaches. The classroom training provided instruction on various aspects of employment acquisition such as resume writing, interview etiquette and job application completion.

Before the classroom training and internships began, the program commenced by asking the participants a very simple question -- what do you desire for your future? From this initial question, the participants developed vision boards which illustrated the goals of each intern. "The vision boards serve as a launching pad for the participants," shared TuscBDD Job Coach, Kim Chaney. "This process is driven by the priorities of

the individual -- not me as a coach." This paradigm shift highlights the direction of TuscBDD and County Boards across this state by designing services and supports that match the desires of persons served.

"They did a fantastic job," stated Chaney as she described the seven participants in the first PACE U class. "They gave it their all. I know for a fact that the stores loved having them there."

"It was a wonderful program," expressed Pamula Crilley, Elder-Beerman's Store Manager. "We thoroughly enjoyed it, and our employees enjoyed it. The interns and our employees worked side by side. They were a part of our team and family here." She further suggested that additional businesses consider participating. "I would encourage other businesses to take a look at the program. It is a rewarding experience the whole way around."

In order to celebrate the good work

completed by the participants, TuscBDD staff prepared a graduation celebration. Participating employers, TuscBDD staff and the family members of the PACE U graduates filled TuscBDD's training room for the event. It was a great event and one that will continue.

TuscBDD is happy to report that three of the PACE U graduates have now obtained community employment. If you would be interested in learning more about this program and the upcoming 2015-2016 class, please contact TuscBDD at 330-308-7173. (Picture: Pace U Participant Bernard shares his PACE U vision board.)



## TUSCBDD & REM OHIO TO OPEN SHOP

A new and exciting partnership between TuscBDD and REM Ohio (a private provider) has recently formed. Notably, TuscBDD and REM will open a retail project known as the World of Possibilities shop at TuscBDD's location at 223 Fair Ave. NW in New Philadelphia.

The shop will emphasize a "buy local" theme by featuring goods produced by local craftsmen and artists (with and without disabilities). Future plans

include the opening of a café with both indoor and outdoor eating spaces. A grand opening is planned for June.

In addition to providing a new retail experience in Tuscarawas County, A World of Possibilities will provide essential job skills training for persons with developmental disabilities. Employees will gain valuable experience in customer service, sales, stocking, order fulfillment and other retail

functions. "I am thrilled about this unique opportunity for Tuscarawas County residents," stated TuscBDD Community Transition Manager, Nancy Hunter. "A World of Possibilities exemplifies the very mission of TuscBDD as we partner with the community to provide vocational training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in an integrated setting."

The location of the shop is also

ideal. A World of Possibilities is located just a stone's throw away from the cafés and shops located in the downtown area of New Philadelphia.

Stayed tuned for more information including the grand opening date, shop hours and information on available products!

## A NEW LOOK FOR TUSCBDD

"We are excited to introduce our new logo to the community," shared TuscBDD Superintendent Natalie M. Lupi. "We have decided to continue to use a star theme in order to refer to Starlight and our proud legacy of supporting persons with developmental disabilities in Tuscarawas County, but you will notice that these stars are moving in a new direction -- an exciting direction!" further expressed Lupi.

"In addition to the new logo, an agency tag-line has been developed (Empowering, Partnering, Achieving). "These three words clearly describe

our agency's vision moving forward. At TuscBDD, we seek to empower persons with developmental disabilities to partner with the community to achieve their goals and dreams. We are looking forward to partnering with the community to bring these ideals to life," stated Stephanie Wilson, Board President of TuscBDD.

Board Members also elected to adopt TuscBDD as the agency's acronym instead of TCBDD. "The reference to Tusc clarifies our connection with Tuscarawas County," further expressed Wilson.



## TESTIMONIAL

TuscBDD staff and a reporter from *The Times Reporter* recently had the opportunity to interview Kim Byrd. Kim, who receives services from TuscBDD, shared her experience transitioning from sheltered services and supports to more integrated and independent options. "I am living a good life," shared Byrd. "I love living in this apartment," she said smiling. "I am not moving anywhere." Kim also enjoys having friends over and cooking meals for her family.

Kim also benefits from the flexibility of working in the community. Kim is able to work at a variety of job sites in the community through Adult Day Services (ADS) -- a local provider. Kim's current situation stands in stark contrast to her previous situation where nearly all of her daily activities were supervised and monitored. "The benefits of this change are overwhelmingly positive" shared Stacy Savage, Kim's Service Facilitator from TuscBDD. Learn more about Kim's story on TuscBDD's Youtube Channel. (Picture: Kim Byrd in her new home.)



## NEW AVENUES OF COLLABORATION

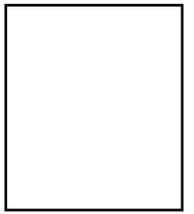


TuscBDD and local school district leaders have convened a working group to discuss future areas of collaboration. For many years, TuscBDD has enjoyed a close and collaborative working relationship with the various school districts in Tuscarawas County. It is the purpose of this working group to build upon this tradition of collaboration.

"TuscBDD and the Starlight School provide an essential service to residents of this county," shared Mark Murphy, Superintendent of Tuscarawas Valley Schools and a member of this working group. "We are now in the process of discussing how we can enhance this partnership by reviewing the ways in which we have worked together in the past and planning for additional collaboration in the future."

The working group has recently finalized a survey which seeks to clarify the various ways in which school districts are already serving children with disabilities. Data from this survey will be shared amongst working group members to allow the group to pinpoint duplicative efforts as well as strength and weakness areas.

"Stay tuned," stated Murphy, "we are looking forward to sharing and implementing the results from this collaborative effort." (Picture: Members of the working group discuss additional partnership opportunities.)



## CONTINUING THE DREAM: THE PROUD LEGACY OF RUTH CARLSON

If you were a parent of a child with a developmental disability in Tuscarawas County prior to the 1950s, your options were few. Children with developmental disabilities were often hidden away or institutionalized. However, the passionate advocacy efforts of local families opened the door for more service and support options in Tuscarawas County.

This movement began with the tireless efforts of Ruth Carlson. Ms. Carlson's son had a developmental disability and was institutionalized. Not satisfied with the status quo, Ms. Carlson rallied families throughout Tuscarawas County to lay the groundwork for TuscBDD.

The advocacy efforts of Ruth Carlson and other families in this county led to the birth of the Starlight School in 1955 and, eventually, the County Board in 1967.

To preserve the memory of Ruth Carlson and continue to support persons with developmental disabilities in Tuscarawas County, the Ruth Carlson Foundation was formed in 1981. It is the mission of the Ruth Carlson Foundation to provide aid and benefits to persons served by TuscBDD.

Over the years, the Ruth Carlson Foundation has provided tremendous support to persons served by TuscBDD. Private providers have also received assistance from this foundation. During the 2014-2015 academic year, funds from the foundation were used to support a healthy eating program for students of the Starlight School (see picture below).

"The foundation is a vital asset," shared Lynn Angelozzi, a Ruth Carlson Foundation Board Member and TuscBDD's Human Resources Director. "TuscBDD is fortunate to be able to partner with the foundation to continue to realize the dreams and ideals of Ruth Carlson and other local advocates."

