

A Newsletter about Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities programs, supports and staff

A Connection To The World

A special community connection has helped one man connect to his family, friends, and the rest of the world.

Joe Logan, 22, a resident at West Chester Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, is quadriplegic as a result of an assault that occurred two years ago. Joe is able to feel, but not able to move, below the neck. He is also on a ventilator 24 hours a day, making travel into the community impossible without the assistance of a nurse and respiratory aide. Because of this, Joe's life experiences have been limited and are at the mercy of other people. Through the special work of Cathy Howell, Community Resource Coordinator, and Barbara Phillips, Support Coordinator, Joe was paired up with Bill Freeland, a West Chester resident who works at GE as an information technology manager. Bill had previously volunteered at an event for transition-aged students this past summer. When Cathy introduced Bill and Joe, they became friends right away. "Me and Bill are buddies," Joe said with a big smile.

Cathy paired them up because she knew that Bill would be able to help Joe with an immediate need. Joe had the desire to communicate with family and friends and to express himself. To do so, he needed a computer.

Bill researched different computer programs and models to figure out the best match for Joe. He met with Joe on several occasions to try out programs and to see what Joe was able to do. A laptop with voice-recognition software built in was purchased through a personalized individual budget that was obtained for Joe. The computer arrived just before Christmas.

Joe's new computer has given him a sense of control. "I only need help opening

up the laptop and turning on the computer. After that, I'm in control. I can do everything else," Joe said.

The software performs demands through special voice commands. For the past two months Joe has been learning how to use the voice-recognition software and how to navigate through computer programs and the internet with the help of Bill. Joe has been able to reconnect with family and friends through email and the social networking site Facebook. Joe plans to study online to obtain his G.E.D. After Joe works to get his G.E.D. the next step is to explore employment opportunities. And he wants to write a book about his life.

"There are a lot of jobs right now that Joe could do with the skills that he already has. He has an enthusiasm and has learned the voice-recognition software very quickly. Once he gets his diploma Joe will speed ahead," Bill said.

Joe and Bill have become good friends. They share a quick wit and a great sense of humor. "I have found it very rewarding to be able to work with Joe to help him set goals and build plans to achieve these goals. Joe has pushed me to learn as much as I am pushing him to learn," Bill said.

The possibilities for Joe are endless now. "We've just scratched the surface with the possibilities of this computer and what Joe is capable of doing," Bill said.

Joe has been amazed at what's he's been able to learn and do with the laptop in such a short time. The voice-recognition software that he's using on the laptop is a standard program already installed on most



newer PC's. Since he's mastered that so well and so quickly, he and Bill are testing out more advanced programs that perform more functions.

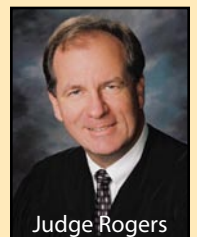
"I never realized how much was out there," Joe said. "Until I got this computer I just didn't realize. It's such a privilege to have this computer and to get on the internet. I am so thankful for it."

Recognition Dinner

Mark your calendars for the 16th Annual Community Recognition Dinner, taking place Sunday, March 7, 5:30PM at the Cincinnati Marriott North off Union Center Blvd. in West Chester. Judge Randy Rogers will be the guest speaker of the evening.

The dinner is a way for the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities to honor individuals and businesses for their work and dedication to support individuals with disabilities.

For more information, including ticket prices, please visit:
www.butlerdd.org



Judge Rogers

Letter from the Superintendent



WELCOME TO 2010!

I am happy to present a positive forecast for 2010 on behalf of the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The Board has approved a budget, a new Strategic Plan for 2010-2014 and an Annual Action Plan.

If you remember, at the beginning of 2009 we were facing the uncertainty of the state budget and the economy was on a significant downswing. At this point, although the economy is still trying to recover, our budget picture for 2010 is stable. We have decreased our budget for expenditures but have a workable budget. One temporary help to us has been the federal stimulus money which has created less of a financial burden to the match we pay for Medicaid programs. Our local levy of continuing 3 mills continues to be our most predictable and greatest source of income. Although our budget is stable for 2010, we will have to continue to plan and to make adjustments in order to be able to sustain high priority services and supports.

Budget aside, we have been able to meet our goals for 2009 in regards to services and supports. Other than residential supports, we have been able to provide for more supports without waiting lists. We successfully passed national accreditation by the Commission for

Rehabilitation Services (CARF) and, thanks to the input from our stakeholders; we have a new Strategic Plan for 2010-2014. Planning, as you can imagine is critical. The changes we have made to decrease our expenditures and changes in how we deliver services has kept us stabilized. Analyzing the trends has helped us adjust our services and supports to meet the growing complexity of needs in the individuals who come to us. Although the changes are not always easy, careful planning will continue to keep us stable and balanced during these very unpredictable times. For more details about our successes and our statistics, watch for our 2009 Annual Report that will be coming out in early spring. Please take time to read it.

Let me highlight a few things regarding our strategies and goals for 2010:

Strategically, we will continue to develop and find options for supports for families and individuals. We feel strongly that since we cannot provide everything for everyone, we need to get better at finding other resources that families and individuals can access, depending on their desire and needs. We will continue to empower individuals and families to make individual "life" plans and to build natural supports that may be more reliable long-term vs. governmental supports which are subject to economic trends and legislative changes. We will continue to seek out community members, faith-based groups and businesses that are more than willing to help support individuals but need to know

how to do so.

The focus of our goals for this year has not changed significantly from last year. Programmatically, we will continue to seek and support employment for individuals who desire it, to work with high school students and their families to plan for transition from school to adult life, to provide specialized supports for individuals with the most complex needs (i.e. medical, behavioral, mental health, autism), to provide specialized supports to children 0-3 and their families, to build capacity for respite services, to provide specialized training and consultation for our staff and for other providers and to monitor the health and safety of individuals. Operationally, we will continue to look for ways to be more accessible, efficient and effective in our service delivery. Our priority for assigning our limited number of residential waivers is to provide for emergencies and for older parents who are ready to transition their son/daughter to supported living services.

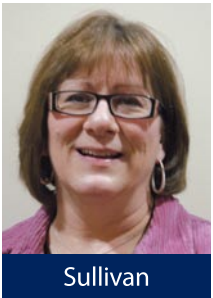
On behalf of the staff, the Board and myself, I want to thank you for your input, your patience and your support during these times when we have had to adjust to the changing environment at the same time you and your family are facing numerous challenges.

Christina Hurr, Superintendent

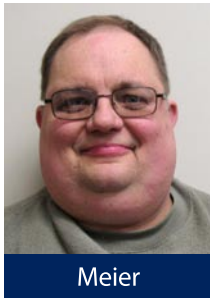
Pictured from left is Dr. Ginger Wickline, holding her daughter Amelia, and Ciara Egleston, Josh Higgins, Tiera Fletcher, Jeff Housh, Jenny Berrios, Jessica Sanders, Christine Thomas and Donnie Collins.



Two New Faces Join the Board This Year



Sullivan



Meier

Two new members began four-year terms on the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities at its meeting January 14. Butler County Commissioners appointed Richard Meier from Fairfield and Connie Sullivan from Hamilton to two vacant posts on the seven-member board. The Board now has representation from each geographic area of the county.

"Mr. Meier and Ms. Sullivan are both parents of young adult children with a developmental disability. They will be able to appreciate the viewpoint of other families

who receive our services. They each also bring unique skills and work experiences that will add to our Board," said Superintendent Christina Hurr.

Mr. Meier worked as a paralegal for more than 20 years. He currently works out of his home on a part-time basis and cares for his daughter. Ms. Sullivan was employed by Coors Brewing Company for 28 years as an administrative assistant, in sales and in training. She currently works for a consulting firm that provides leadership development and training to corporations.

Ms. Sullivan is replacing Craig Moon's position on the Board. Her term will end December 31, 2013. Mr. Moon did not ask to be re-appointed. Mr. Meier was appointed to finish out Board Member Linda Good's term, which ends December 31, 2012. Also at the January 14 meeting, current Board Member Dr. Kathy McMahon-Klosterman was re-appointed and is serving her second term, set to end December 31, 2013.



A Tribute to Linda Good

Linda Good served on the Board for nine years. She passed away in December and is greatly missed. Linda was a dedicated advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities. She brought a powerful and unique perspective to the Board based on her own life challenges as a result of a serious auto accident when she was a young adult. She worked with various statewide and national level legislators in the disabilities rights movement. "Linda recognized and appreciated the efforts of each employee and fellow Board member, giving praise where it was merited, but challenged what needed to be challenged in a non-confrontational manner, always mindful of what was in the best interest of the folks we serve," said Imogene O'Lenick, president of the Board.

Miami Students Celebrate Our Name Change with a Party

Students from Miami University Middletown (MUM) celebrated "Western Day" in October to recognize the removal of the words "mental retardation" from the Board's name. The event was hosted by the MUM Center for Teaching and Learning, the Miami Middletown's Student Government, the Campus Individuals Volunteering in the Community (C.I.V.I.C.) group, the Introduction to Psychology class, taught by Ginger Wickline, and MUM staffers Carol Caudill and Wanita Hatton.

Western-themed activities led by MUM staff and students included a puzzle spelling out "BCDD" created by a student, pumpkin painting, a cake and a

fighting bull piñata full of candy. Attendees included individuals with disabilities from the Abilities First program and students from Miami High School, as well as county Board staff, MUM students and staff.

The goal of the event was to bring together individuals from MUM and the Middletown community in recognition of the significant historical and political event of the name change and to create an enjoyable social interaction for individuals with and without disabilities.

"Some individuals without disabilities do not know how to interact with those with disabilities, not realizing people with disabilities have hobbies, jobs, families, and lives that mirror their own in many important ways, despite the personal, cognitive, or physical limitations that they may have," said Dr. Wickline.

The students in the psychology class wrote a five-page account of their experiences with Western Day. The students

gained a great appreciation and respect for individuals with developmental disabilities. One student wrote: "Many people believe that the doors to the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities in main stream society have been shut tight because of misconceptions, ignorance, and fear. This event definitely helped me to change my previous misconceptions, ignorance, and fear. After the event I realized that just because people have a disability, they are really no different from others."



A Newsletter about Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities programs, supports and staff

The Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities serves 2,600 infants, children and adults. The agency operates three adult centers, one early childhood center, and four community team office sites. Seventy-three percent of our annual operating budget of \$29.8 million comes from local tax levies. Federal funds make up 20 percent and state and local funds account for 7 percent.

A seven-member volunteer board oversees our organization. Five are appointed by the Butler County Commissioners; two by the Probate Court's Presiding Judge:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Imogene O'Lenick , President | • Richard Meier |
| • Rev. Dr. Kim Katterheinrich , Vice President | • Connie Sullivan |
| • Dr. Kathy McMahon-Klosterman , Recording Secretary | • Tony Yocco |
| • Utawna Leap | |

The Board meets the second Thursday of every month at 6:30PM at the Administration Building, 1910 Fairgrove Avenue, Suite E in Hamilton. The Board schedule, agenda and minutes are available at www.butlerdd.org.

In This Issue:

- **Superintendent Letter**
- **Miami University Celebrates the Name Change**
- **Community Recognition Dinner, March 7**
- **New Board Member Profiles**
- **Community Connection Opens Up the World for One Man**

Possibilities in Action is edited by Wendy Panicka, Communications Coordinator. Send story ideas or other suggestions via email to wpfanicka@butlerdd.org or call 513-867-5962 ext. 21
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