



TOGETHER WE ARE THE COMMUNITY

February 2009 • Issue 6 • Volume 5

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

Individuals Benefit from Sensory Studio

At the end of 2007, the Adult Services Division began the development of a Sensory Studio, equipped with a unique combination of electronic equipment that provides valuable opportunities for sensory awareness, purposeful movement, self expression, music appreciation, and leisure.

Individuals who attend the adult services' facility-based programs utilize the studio components as an integrated

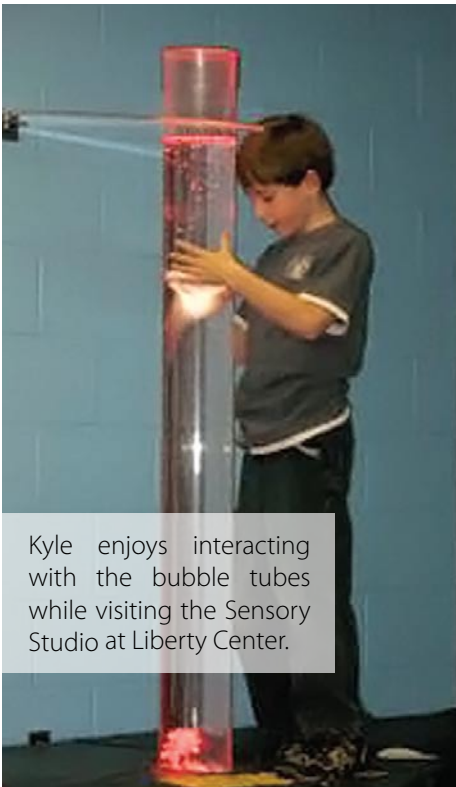
part of their individualized program. Adult Services' staff assures that sessions are designed and customized around very specific needs.

Recognizing how the various elements of the Sensory Studio could be utilized, Support Coordinator Amy Levy requested specialized supports for Kyle, a 10-year-old boy with musical talent and sensory integration needs. While providing services and supports to children is normally outside the realm of Adult Services, the team acknowledged the opportunity for Kyle.

Kyle visits the studio weekly with his mother. Staff have worked with him on developing his musical interests and improving his social and interaction skills. Kyle's mom, Tammi, says that Kyle's interactions in the studio are "the perfect blend of compassion, music, techno, sensory, and it is fun for him. You can see it in his beautiful smile when he's there."

Adult Services will be exploring ways to provide increased sensory opportunities to individuals, both enrolled in their facility based programs and within the community. For a tour or questions, contact Lee Ann Fogle at (513) 867-5977 ext. 104.

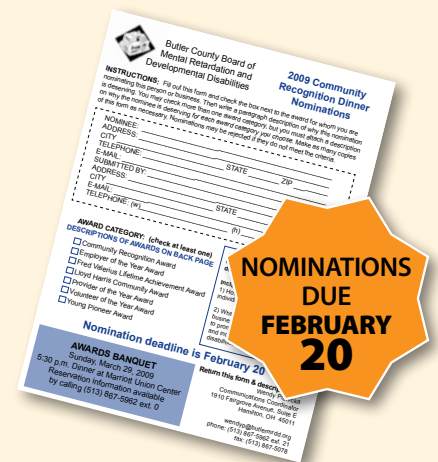
*Written by Lee Ann Fogle,
Habilitation Coordinator*



Kyle enjoys interacting with the bubble tubes while visiting the Sensory Studio at Liberty Center.

Community Awareness Dinner is March 29

The 15th Annual Butler County Board of MRDD Community Recognition Dinner will take place Sunday, March 29 at the Cincinnati Marriott North in Union Center. The dinner is a way for the board to honor individuals and businesses for their work and dedication to support individuals with disabilities. Nominations are now being accepted in seven award categories. Nomination forms can be found in this newsletter and online.



Budget Information and Goals on Website

www.butlermrdd.org

Go to our website to see updated information on:

- The budget crisis
- The results of our goals for 2008
- Our planning and goals for 2009
- Nomination forms for the 2009 Community Recognition Dinner

For more news and information, please visit
www.butlermrdd.org

Letter from the Superintendent



To survive a severe storm, it is imperative to remain calm and to grab hold of something that is grounded and stable.

It seems indisputable that in 2009 we will all be living in the midst of a financial storm. As Superintendent, I intend to remain calm, keep my feet on stable ground and rely on the stable foundation that supports this agency.

Stable ground is, for us, the values and beliefs that bring us to this work and keep us on the course we have planned even if it requires us to "reroute" when obstacles are in our way.

We will soon have our 2009 Annual Action Plan out to you. We did a lot to prepare for this document. We looked at our data, analyzed trends, listened to

families, staff, the community and the individuals we support. We looked at the Strategic Plan we developed in 2004 and kept our Annual Plan in line with that.

This year we will be taking another look at the Strategic Plan that we developed in 2004 and will revise that, as necessary, to meet the current times. So much has changed in our financial environment since then, so this is a good time to re-look at the plan. In the next several months, there will be opportunities for interested people to talk to us and to answer certain questions about what is important to them and how they want the future to look. You will be invited to attend one of these "listening sessions" and we hope that we get a lot of participation from you and other community members.

Then, in May, we will hold a Search Conference in which we will take a serious look at the input and draw up a new

strategic plan to guide us through the next few years.

Although this year will be tough for all of us in a variety of ways, I trust the foundation on which this agency stands. As we look to update and/or revise the Strategic Plan, we will need as much input as we can get. In a time when so much seems to be out of our control, taking time to reflect and to share ideas is something that we all can and should do so that when the storm subsides, we know we have stayed on the course in spite of it.

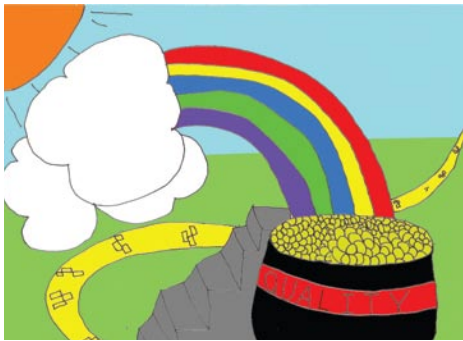
Please look for the opportunities that will be made available to you. If you are interested in attending a listening session, please contact Jack Pealer at 867-5924.

Thank you, as always, for your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Hurr".

Christina Hurr, Superintendent

Cooperative Defines Quality



Back in 2006, a number of concerned stakeholders involved in providing services to people with developmental disabilities in Butler County (people receiving supports, family members, direct support professionals and others) came together under the concept of "what quality means." From that initial meeting, we worked together around the idea of defining real quality in people's lives, and acting on that definition to improve the quality. One of the main ways quality is created, members of the group agreed, is through paying attention to, and nurturing, the strong and beneficial relationships between the people receiving supports

and the direct support professionals providing that support.

We ended up calling ourselves The Butler County Quality Cooperative (BCQC). In the past three years, the group has sponsored the production of two training videos around the concept of strengthening relationships among direct support people and the people they support. We have also sponsored workshops at several conferences for direct support people. We've distributed over 150 copies of the videos to local agency providers, and many use the videos in orientation trainings for new support people beginning work. We also were able to help support the writing of a series of newspaper articles about the importance of relationships among direct support professionals and the people they support in the local newspaper late last year.

In 2009, the BCQC has a number of projects we would like to accomplish, including developing a website with content generated by direct support professionals, sponsoring two workshops

to debut the new BCQC video, "A Clear Idea," and in September coordinating a Direct Support Professionals Day in which support professionals are recognized for the incredible roles they play in people's lives.

Since 2006, the BCQC has been made up of providers, people with disabilities, family members, and Butler County MRDD staff. In 2009, we really want to help push the Cooperative forward, and make sure that its leadership is made up of an even more diverse group of representatives. If you are a family member of a person with developmental disabilities, a direct support professional, or a person who receives services, and are interested in participating in our work, we would love to have you. Please call Keith Banner at (513) 867-5932, or email at keithb@butlemrdd.org. The next Quality Co-op meeting is April 16 at Redeemer Church from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

*Written by Keith Banner,
Quality Enhancement Coordinator*

Arc Event Discusses Finding Quality Supports

The Arc of Butler County, in cooperation with the Bereavement Support Group and the Wage & Benefit Committee of the Butler County Sheriff's Department, is hosting a day of information and support on a variety of topics for families, staff and caregivers. The session topics include:

- Planning for Life After High School
- PATH, Building the Dream
- Creating Fun & Friendships *during night session only*
- Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)
- Empowered People Reaching Out (EPRO) *during night session only*

- Agencies & Networks That Can Help *during night session only*
- Dealing with Grief & Loss
- Funeral Pre-Planning

The event takes place Thursday, February 26 at the Janet Clemmons Center, 282 N. Fair Avenue, Hamilton. There are two times: 9-11AM or 6-9PM. The snow date for the event is March 2, 6-9PM only.

For questions, or a copy of the training day schedule, call Linda at (513) 420-4620 or Margie at (513) 867-5922. To register, email Jack Pealer at jackp@butlermdd.org or call (513) 867-5960 ext. 272. In case of bad weather, call (513) 867-5960 ext. 272 for cancellation information.

Tony Yocco Joins the Board of MRDD



Tony Yocco was appointed by the Butler County Commissioners to serve on our Board as a community representative beginning January 2009. He will serve

a four year term. Tony lives in the West Chester area and works for GE Engines as a Controls Supplier Management Leader.

Tony has experience as the Treasurer of a GE Global Board, which included

members from around the world and he was a Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair for the GE Volunteer Foundation. In 2004, Tony received the Excellence Award for his volunteer activities.

Tony actually came to know of our Board and programs and activities because he has been one of many GE employees who volunteered their time at Board facilities and at evening social events for individuals who receive board services.

Tony is on the Finance Committee and the Ethics Council for the Board.

Our Mission: supporting individuals to successfully live, work and learn in their community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 11, 6-8:30PM

Sweet Heart Dance. Sponsored by GE Controls at Tori's Station in Fairfield.

FEBRUARY 12, 6-8:30PM

Valentine's Dance. Liberty Center.

FEBRUARY 26

The Arc's Day of Info for Families.

Two sessions. Janet Clemmons Center.

MARCH 7, 10AM-4PM

Summer Adventures for All Kids.

Tri-County Mall.

MARCH 29, 5:30PM

Community Recognition Dinner.

Cincinnati Marriott North.

THANK YOU!

Sacred Heart Students Help to Make Home More Comfortable

An article in our August newsletter highlighted the story about Jim, an individual who moved out of Fairfield Center into a community-living setting. He had a room of his own in the new house, something he hasn't had his whole life. The principal, students, and parishioners of Sacred Heart School and Church saw the article and wanted to help in making Jim's transition more comfortable, as well as the transition for all 17 people moving from Fairfield Center. Students in the seventh and eighth grade collected \$584 of their own money to be used to buy household items! The parishioners and the other students also donated gently used household items. The donations helped Jim, and others like him who finally have a sense of independent of living in their own places, but most times don't have the resources, to turn their space into "home." Thank you!



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Since 1967, the Butler County Board of MRDD has been the agency that people turn to for information, support, and service when seeking help for a family member with mental retardation or a developmental disability.

The Butler County Board of MRDD assists the community in meeting the individual preferences and needs of nearly 2,000 people. Supports and services are available life long through contracts with partner agencies or directly provided by the MRDD agency.

Much of what the Butler County Board of MRDD does goes beyond the walls of its facilities and takes place in the community where we support individuals to successfully live, work, and learn in their community.

*For more news and information, please visit
www.butlermrdd.org*

In This Issue:

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- **New Board Member**
- **Liberty Center Launches Sensory Studio**
- **Sacred Heart Students Help to Make Home More Comfortable**
- **Cooperative Defines Quality**
- **and much more...**

Together we are the Community is edited by Wendy Panicka, Communications Coordinator. Send story ideas or other suggestions via email to wendyp@butlermrdd.org or call 513-867-5962 ext. 21
For accessibility issues or concerns, contact Karen Whalen, Director of Quality Assurance and Medicaid Services, at 513-867-5671 or email her at karenw@butlermrdd.org.

Address service requested

Butler County Board of
Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
155 Donald Drive
Fairfield, OH 45014

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Butler County Board of
Mental Retardation and
Developmental Disabilities

**2009 Community
Recognition Dinner
Nominations**

INSTRUCTIONS: Fill out this form and check the box next to the award for whom you are nominating this person or business. Then write a paragraph description of why this nomination is deserving. You may check more than one award category, but you must attach a description on why the nominee is deserving *for each award category you choose*. Make as many copies of this form as necessary. Nominations may be rejected if they do not meet the criteria.

NOMINEE: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 TELEPHONE: _____
 E-MAIL: _____
 SUBMITTED BY: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 E-MAIL: _____
 TELEPHONE: (w) _____ (h) _____

AWARD CATEGORY: (check at least one)
DESCRIPTIONS OF AWARDS ON BACK PAGE

- Community Recognition Award
- Employer of the Year Award
- Fred Valerius Lifetime Achievement Award
- Lloyd Harris Community Award
- Provider of the Year Award
- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Young Pioneer Award

Attach this form to a paragraph describing why the nominee is deserving of the award(s).

Include in your description:

- 1) How do you know this individual or business?
- 2) What does this individual or business do within the community to promote awareness, education, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities?

Nomination deadline is February 20

AWARDS BANQUET
 Sunday, March 29, 2009
 5:30 p.m. Dinner at Marriott Union Center
 Reservation information available
 by calling (513) 867-5962 ext. 0

Return this form & description to:
 Wendy Planicka
 Communications Coordinator
 1910 Fairgrove Avenue, Suite E
 Hamilton, OH 45011

wendyp@butlermrdd.org
 phone: (513) 867-5962 ext. 21
 fax: (513) 867-5078



Butler County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

2009 Community Recognition Award Descriptions

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD

This award is for an individual, business or organization who, on a continuous basis, **employs** a person with a developmental disability or assists them on the job; **helps** individuals have fun and friendships in the community; **aids** a student to be a part of the regular classroom or school activities; **includes** people with developmental disabilities at church or other community activities, and/or **contributes** in some other way to the community inclusion of children or adults with developmental disabilities in Butler County.

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

For a company or organization that is a **long-term employer** of individuals with disabilities and has been accommodating in creating and maintaining jobs for individuals. The company or organization has shown **expanded efforts** beyond employment.

FRED VALERIUS FAMILY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

For a family who has **helped pioneer opportunities** for individuals through long-term advocacy and volunteer services. These efforts should have begun prior to 1977 and are continuing today.

LLOYD HARRIS COMMUNITY AWARD

For an individual with disabilities who has **contributed to their community** through employment or volunteer service.

PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

For an individual **or** agency provider who, on a continuous basis, has **supported individuals to participate within their community**.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

For an individual **or** organization from the community that **volunteers their time** and talents throughout the year to promote services and enrich the lives of individuals being served by the Butler County Board of MRDD.

YOUNG PIONEER AWARD

For a family of a young child receiving and/or eligible for services from the Butler County Board of MRDD. This family supports the Butler County MRDD programs by **referring others, promoting programs** to others, and by **strong commitment to the agency's mission** and philosophy. Family continuously advocates and supports their child, as well as other families and children.