

From Your President...

By Elizabeth Prather, Richland County Board of MRDD

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We Can Speak Out, the self-advocacy group in Richland County, hosted a regional meeting with representatives from Medina, Shelby and Huron Counties. Derrick Dufresne, Founder and President of Community Resource Associates and Christine Brown, Co-founder of Wings in Fairfield County were guest speakers.

The meeting was designed to give self-advocates an opportunity to share what they are doing. The OAAS Self-Determination Workgroup has found that there is a lot happening with self-advocacy efforts in Ohio, but there are not many opportunities for self-advocates to network.

"If we listen to people from other counties, we may learn something," commented one of the self-advocates. "We want everyone included. There are smart people in every county," said another.

Being smart and having rights were the themes repeated throughout the meeting. Derrick facilitated a lively discussion surrounding those themes.

Some of the sound bytes from this discussion included:

- > "Smart people can still learn"
- > "It's our life to live"
- > "It's our right to speak out... just as much as anybody else"
- > "Just give us a try"

Christine talked about what self-determination means to her. She has started her own consulting business through micro-enterprise and wants to train staff in self-determination.

She spoke about the importance of voting to help your community and to show that you are self-determined. She encouraged individuals to meet with government leaders, and to say what changes need to be done to help people.

Christine is credited with improving transit services in Pickerington by speaking out to officials.

Derrick said Christine has taught him and others never to give up.

"Sometimes to exercise your rights can take years," said Derrick. "A lot of people give up because they think it should happen quickly."

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The self-advocates decided to meet quarterly and would like the opportunity to meet with ODMRDD Director Ken Ritchey. Listed below are some of the activities shared by the self-advocates:

- > Publish the rights of individuals who have developmental disabilities in the newspaper.
- > Make a public service announcement on local TV stations about rights.
- > Use Rights and Responsibility Book to help train individuals on their rights.
- > One county did a play on Rights and Responsibilities that they would like to share.
- > Use the Board Maker version of rights to help train individuals who can not hear or read well.
- > Get your County Board or agency to put these rights on their website.
- > Book clubs that can get books on tape or audio cassettes for people that do not read.
- > Attending City Council meetings as part of Disability Awareness Month.

The next meeting for this group will be scheduled in September. The OAAS Self-Determination workgroup will continue to gather resources that can be used to train adults in Self-Determination. We have a session scheduled during the PAR conference to share what we have discovered, so far. And we are always looking for additional resources, so if you have any ideas, please contact me at eprather@rnewhope.org

I encourage you to consider working with neighboring counties to coordinate additional opportunities for self-advocates to network with folks from different counties. There's no doubt that the self-advocates came away with ideas and energy that has already sparked new activities, but I needed that boost and enthusiasm to help me keep focused on what is truly important.

Clermont County Welcomes New Adult Services Director

Ann More recently joined Clermont County MR/DD as the new Director of Adult Services. She has a graduate degree in special education from Loyola College and is a licensed social worker in the state of Ohio. Ms. More previously worked for ten years in Northern Kentucky's Redwood Rehabilitation Center as the Director of Adult Services. In that capacity, she obtained new Medicaid Waivers for Redwood and began new programs, all of which remain highly successful for adults with multiple disabilities and medical needs and the agency in general. In addition, Ms. More developed enclaves, built and strengthened all community partnerships with businesses and industry, and implemented partnerships with the area universities for practicum placements for both graduate and undergraduate students in the area of social work, special education, psychology, and human services. Ms. More was a Medicaid Core Trainer for the area and was chair of the Northern Kentucky Waiting list committee.

Prior to her years at Redwood, Ms. More served as Education Coordinator for several behavioral medicine organizations and created and implemented a special education program for students 16 through 21 returning to the public school district from institutions.

Visit the OAAS website at

www.oaas.org

Sorta Self-Determination

By Derrick Dufresne, Founder and President of Community Resource Associates

It happened again. Years ago, when supported living took hold, it started fresh, rather pure, and chaotic in its implementation. Over time, as it gained ground and became more popular, the permutations, perversions, and partial implementation started. I knew things were starting to go awry when I heard someone say, "we are really interested in supported living. We are planning to develop a number of supported living facilities".

I fear we may be approaching the same territory with Self-Determination.

In my travels around the country, I am now hearing people say, "We have been doing Self-Determination a long time, we just haven't called it that" and I hear people say "we have been partially doing Self-Determination, but need to implement it fully."

I do not pretend to hold a franchise nor a deep understanding of the principles of Self-Determination. I do not believe that anyone has proprietary control over exact definitions or implementation. Having said that, after almost a decade of implementation, it does appear to be a fairly commonly accepted nomenclature that goes with the implementation of Self-Determination for adults with developmental disabilities.

I mention this because Self-Determination in literature has taken on very many different forms. For example, if one does literature search on the Internet under Self-Determination, one will find very many different things. There is actually a rather extensive body of literature regarding Self-Determination for children with developmental disabilities in the educational system.

This information, while informative, is not particularly instructive in understanding its application for adults. Specifically, Self-Determination for children focuses on planning involvement, listening, and other important

elements that are necessary but not sufficient conditions for understanding Self-Determination for adults with developmental disabilities.

Specifically, what I am referring to is the component parts of Self-Determination that has its origin back to its implementation in the early days in New Hampshire and the extensive amount of literature that has come out of this Center for Self-Determination and other corresponding writings.

Common amongst almost all the writings in Self-Determination is the defined outcome of crafting a meaningful life. In addition, the central role of the person with the disability and his or her chosen circle of support clearly cuts across its implementation for both children and adults.

In both cases, the development of a true person-centered plan is critical to the success of the Self-Determination efforts. It is very important that the person be the center of the planning process, have control of the process, and direct the actions of team members to enlist them as mentors, bridge builders, and community connectors in assisting in meeting the person's desired outcomes.

Where the differences begin to diverge in its implementation with adults involves the second critical piece of Self-Determination. In virtually every reference I have seen the Self-Determination for adults with developmental disabilities, the use of an individual budget directed by the person and utilized in crafting a meaningful life is mentioned.

It is the specific use of an individual budget that tends to expose some of the shortcomings of existing implementation where it exists. It is this budget piece that people talk about, work around, partially implement or at times ignore that has the potential of undermining current Self-Determination efforts that are in process.

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It is understandable that professionals and others who are running the current system would consciously or unconsciously resist the implementation. Previously, without the use of an individual budget directed by the person with Self-Determination can appear to be in place when it really is "Sorta Self-Determination".

The crafting of an individual budget is one of the most difficult, time-consuming, and challenging things that one can be involved with. This is likely because it has a myriad of implications and layering that must be taken into account.

First and foremost, much of the funding that exists for adults with developmental disabilities still lies in "silos". Since we still tend to fund programs rather than people, we tend to use "averages" of service cost and program specific references rather than truly looking at individualized funding.

To break out an individual budget, it is necessary to find out how much the services cost for a particular individual. This includes their services in various parts of their life, mainly residential, vocational, transportation, support, etc. The sad fact is that many human service programs don't have a clue how much the actual cost of services to individuals really are.

The trap of using averages (the number of the total budget divided by a number of people served) is that all of us know that for one person the particular intensity of supports needed may be far greater or far less than someone else. We have to look not at average costs, but intensity of support to truly understand this portion of the Self-Determination equation.

Having said that, there is no current perfect or all-encompassing template that can be used that works in every case. If the only way to begin the individual budget system is to use averages, then do it. Do not study this, evaluate it and debate it ad nauseum and do nothing. It is better to begin, make mistakes and change, than to do nothing at all.

The difficulty is compounded when comparing the use of a Self-Determination budget for a new person entering the system and one who already receives services. For a new person, it is possible to craft far more detailed, flexible and innovative categories and support types since the person has not previously been a part of a particular system.

The complexity grows at times exponentially the longer someone has been in the system and the greater number of funding sources and program categories that an individual is involved in. Therefore, it is certainly understandable why there would be such a struggle in looking at how to craft an individual budget.

Having said that, it is absolutely critical that we now turn our attention to the budget portion of the implementation of Self-Determination. Without struggling with the transfer of control (and that's what it really is) of decision-making coupled with control of dollars, the system will continue to be in control not only of budgets but people's lives.

The time has come for us to remove the "Sorta" from Self-Determination and seek to truly implement it in the way in which it was meant. The purpose of Self-Determination is to help individuals with disabilities craft a meaningful life using the principles of person-centered planning and the implementation of an individual budget. Nothing less will do.

Grad Student Survey of County Boards Examines Various Aspects of Accreditation

**Submitted by Sarah Diamond Burroway, Grants Writer / Special Projects Coordinator
Lawrence Co. Board of MRDD**

While pursuing my master's degree in Strategic Leadership at Mountain State University (Beckley WV), I conducted a statewide survey of Ohio county boards of MRDD. The November 2004 survey queried CB's on how tasks associated with multiple review processes (ODMRDD, CARF and NAEYC) are managed. The CB's were also asked about their deployment of fiscal and human resources in regards to compliance review preparedness.

Surveys were disseminated to all eight-eight counties. Responses were received from thirty-four counties (39%). Of the thirty-four responding counties, eighteen reported they are accredited by ODMRDD (53%). Thirteen counties (38%) indicate they hold accreditation from the Department and CARF. Three counties (9%) state they hold accreditation certifications from ODMRDD, CARF and NAEYC.

The following is a summary of response to the survey question: **“Did your county board pursue “Best Practices” for Accreditation by ODMRDD?”**

- “Yes” – responded by four county boards (*ODMRDD only-1; ODMRDD & CARF-2; ODMRDD, CARF & NAEYC-1*) Of these four counties, two indicated they had attained “Best Practices” certification.
- “No” – responded by twenty-nine counties (*ODMRDD only-15, ODMRDD & CARF-11; ODMRDD, CARF & NAEYC-2*)
- One county did not respond to the question.

In response to the query, **“If no, please indicate why?”** the responses generally fell into three general areas: “not ready;” “not clearly defined;” and “initial accreditation.” Additional comments provided by counties holding single accreditation from ODMRDDD were:

- *We were still working on assuring basic compliance*
- *No- agency has been without a superintendent*
- *No- mgmt team preparing for levy campaign*
- *Concentrated on compliance & "Best Practices" not well defined*
- *We have only been through the initial accreditation process- we most likely will in the future*
- *Not ready yet*
- *Will not pursue next year, not where we wish to dedicate time*
- *It was our first time for accreditation and we wanted to focus on getting the accreditation done thoroughly and correctly*
- *Too much emphasis by ODMRDD on cultural diversity in best practices. We almost felt we were being discouraged from pursuing best practices, but later learned the accreditation unit sent copies of our profiles to other counties.*

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Counties accredited by ODMRDD and CARF report similar reasons for not seeking “Best Practices” certification:

- *Did not have time to prepare*
- *No- felt we were not prepared*
- *No- We view MRDD as a regulatory accreditation*
- *No- at the time there were still uncertainty / questions from the clarity of compliance expectations*
- *We discussed the Best Practice process with ODMRDD and other counties which had used this approach and based on the information provided, we saw no benefit for our county*
- *No- pursued CARF instead, felt best practice standards were not well defined*
- *We were just trying to get a 3 year*
- *Not pursuing for 2005 review, decided to focus on obtaining 4 year*

Responses by counties with accreditation certification from ODMRDD, CARF and NAEYC were also very similar:

- *No really clear definitions as of yet*
- *Hesitant to attempt following significant program changes; too much work for one additional year (of certification)*

The survey conducted during my research is not a scientific survey and simply chose to gather information on trends and attitudes of Ohio’s County Boards of MRDD regarding compliance with the various standards of accreditation.

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**Investments –
OAAS Member Request Summary**

Liz Prather recently sent out an OAAS Member Request regarding Investments. She posed the following question: “We are planning to update our investment policy for the non-profit. I would be interested in seeing other non-profits investment policies/procedures if you would be willing to share that information. And if anyone has the investment policy for BWC, I would be interested to see what not to do!”

Liz summarized the responses below:

Ten members responded to my request. Thanks so much.

Common features of sample policies/procedures I received are establishing objectives of investments and balancing exposure to risk. Some members use an investment manager and others use the Board and managers of the non-profit. A key component of policies/procedures is to outline how the Board restricts, monitors and evaluates any investments made. One of the non-profits outlined an exit strategy and guidelines to be used to “watch” or eventually exit a fund. One member recommended a good reference to use is an 80 page book called "MINDING THE MONEY; an Investment Guide for Non-Profits", written by Robert P. Fry, Jr. and available thru Boardsource.

Unfortunately no one sent me the BWC strategies, but I think maybe I should send BWC some of the samples I received.

We will remain with our conservative approach of certificates of deposit and recommend to the Board to invest in the Richland County Foundation by establishing a designated fund for our non-profit.

The rate of return is greater than our current strategy and we look forward to being part of a larger community effort that has a history of 60 years of philanthropy in Richland County.

New Preble Co. Adult Services Director

I am Ben Hollinger, the new Director of Adult Services for Preble County. I started in the field over nine years ago as a direct care worker for an IO Wavier provider as a way to pay for college. I attended Ashland University and majored in Economics and Political Science. But, when I finished my degree in 2001 I decided to stay in the MRDD field and applied for a job with the Richland County Board of MRDD.

At Richland I was the QMRP for three ICF/MRs that the county operates. After a few years as a QMRP I was promoted to a SSA Manager at Richland County. I was in this position for about two years when I decided to apply for the position in Preble. I am married with a 4-year old boy named Garrett, and my wife is expecting at the end of September with another baby boy (she is due Sept 25 which I see is when the OAAS conference is being held).

Janna Brown Appointed Champaign Co. Adult Services Director

By Michael Missler

It is with pleasure that I introduce Janna Brown as the new adult services director for Champaign Co. My pleasure is not because I am glad to be leaving my position, but because Janna is such an outstanding person and will do an excellent job in her new position. Janna has been with Champaign Co. since 1990 when she was first hired as “nurse Janna”. She is fond of remembering that when she began her job in 1990, there were only four adults in the program receiving medications and there were no other “health related tasks” to be done. Today, there are 42 individuals receiving some type of nursing service. Talk about job security!

Besides having overseen this tremendous growth in the health services portion of the program, Janna is also well known for having created one of the exemplary habilitation programs in the state. Many counties have come to see the system, which she has implemented, and which has been recognized and commended by both CARF & ODMRDD.

Nurse Janna began her career in 1971 when she graduated from the Riverside School of Nursing. Her first job in the field of MR/DD was at Springview Developmental Center. Later she worked for an ICF/MR as both the Director of Nursing and QMRP before coming to Champaign County. Her vision for the adult services program is stated quite simply as “survival”. Sounds like she may have an idea for a