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And Now-A Word From Your President

By Blair H. Brubaker, Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities

I'd like to continue the notion discussed in our Spring Newsletter that we can all benefit from reading material regarding services and supports we provide, from sources that may see things differently than we do. In my last article I referred to the "A Call to Action" document from the National Disability Rights Network. This time around, I'm referring to the series of articles published by the Columbus Dispatch in May, regarding Sheltered Employment, Community Employment and Transition.

I was generally impressed with the Dispatch articles, in part, because they referenced several sources, including people served, family members, County Board personnel and others. It's always good to hear the opinions of others and doing so is often thought provoking. Kim Linkinhoker, with the Ohio Association of County Boards, once asked me what I thought an ideal Adult Services Program should look like. My immediate remark was that I was too invested in what we've created in my particular county to start from scratch and design something different. It's that reoccurring challenge of devoting so much time working in your business that you don't devote time to work on your business. You've heard this from me before. Operating facility based programs doesn't necessarily promote the fluidity needed to respond to the changing needs of our primary customers. And even when we do invoke change, we don't eliminate the previous business model. To use an analogy Kim shared with me during our discussion, we tend to keep all of our "train cars" on the track, adding to them with each new service offered. Think of each car as representing a form of employment service we offer. We've gone from sheltered employment, to enclaves and work crews, to individual customized employment, to entrepreneurial enterprises to... Problem is, we never "uncouple" a car and let it drift away. We really haven't gone "from" one service delivery model to another, we just pull one more train car along while we keep all of the others attached. This taxes all of our resources. Yet, people need a variety of services and supports to choose from and funding streams often encourage organizations to branch out regarding services provided and populations served.

Yesterday, I spent some time with our Summer Transition Camp participants. We have thirteen transition students in our first "Camp". The diversity and interests of this relatively small group of future customers really struck me. Their dreams and desires present very real challenges. A parent of a person we serve recently asked me if he could bring family from another state to tour our production facility. He commented that they have very limited vocational services in their particular state for people with disabilities and he wants to show them our facility. A member of the family holds a public office and is viewed as a person who could effect change on a large scale. After consideration, I think I'll tell our tour guests to be careful what they build. Then, I think I'll re-read the Dispatch articles one more time.

Take Care,
Give Care!
Blair

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Do a Search for OAAAs
Click on the OAAAs Logo
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Hardin County Aktion Club Gives Back to Community

The Hardin Pioneer Aktion Club gave away its first \$250 Scholarship to Ellen Smittle of Ada, Ohio. The Aktion Club is a service organization sponsored by the Ada and Kenton Kiwanis Clubs and was chartered in 2010. Since their charter, the club has been busy with two or more service projects every month and like finding ways to give back to their community. They have held a few fundraisers and have used that money for social events and service projects but wanted to do more. The group voted to give away a scholarship to a Hardin County high school senior to better their education. A committee was formed and they designed an application with a very important essay question: "How would you make the life of a person with disabilities better?"



Picture: Troy Roberson – Aktion Club Treasurer, Ellen Smittle – Scholarship Recipient, Josh Grimes – Aktion Club President, Pattie Williams – Scholarship Committee Chairman

The application also asked for school activities, work history and service project history. Members scored the 13 applications that were received and voted on the top three. Members of the Aktion Club are proud of their community and were overjoyed that they could assist someone in furthering their education.

Save Money Now!

Is your organization trying to find a way to reduce costs? **Save money now** by being reviewed for the Ohio Association of Adult Services workers' compensation group rating discount program through the Professional Insurance Agents Association of Ohio, Inc. Workers' compensation premiums can be costly in today's economy and group rating is still one of the BEST options available to reduce that expense upfront.

If you explored our plan in the past, it's time to take a second look. You owe it to yourself to explore the options and savings a membership entitles you to receive. If you participate in another group rating program, you may not be saving as much as possible and you may be paying extra dues to belong to another group.

If you are reviewing savings quotes from other group administrators, please make sure that you are comparing apples to apples. Our group administrator, CompManagement, Inc. takes great pride in the accuracy and consistency of our savings forecast, while others may tend to promote inflated savings figures in an effort to secure additional business. It should also be mentioned that not all group administrators offer the same

level of service (not all service companies are capable of providing your organization with the full array of discount programs currently available as well as services related to claims management, cost containment, safety & loss control, rating, and hearing representation).

Therefore, it is critical that you align yourself with a program that has a group administrator that is able to meet all of your current, as well as future needs. Please review other quotes thoroughly to ensure that you are comparing similar discounts and service offerings.

CompManagement is currently in the process of reviewing employers for our group discount program for the 2012 rate year. To receive a free, no obligation savings quote contact CompManagement's Customer Support Unit at (800) 825-6755, option 3 to request an analysis by phone. As a service to our members, CompManagement will not only evaluate your organization for participation in group rating, but we will evaluate all alternative rating programs that would be beneficial to your organization's bottom line. We urge you to take advantage of this tremendous member benefit!

Be Red Cross Ready

Heat Wave Safety Checklist

In recent years, excessive heat has caused more deaths than all other weather events, including floods. A heat wave is a prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity. Generally temperatures are 10 degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region during summer months, last for a long period of time and occur with high humidity as well.

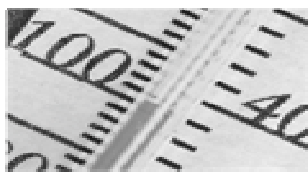
Know the Difference

— Conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event to meet or exceed local Excessive Heat Warning criteria in the next 24 to 72 hours.

— Heat Index values are forecast to meet or exceed locally defined warning criteria for at least 2 days (average high temperature and humidity).

— Heat Index values are forecast to meet locally defined advisory criteria for at least 2 days (average high temperature).

How can I prepare?



- ▶ Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of approximate temperature changes.
- ▶ Check heat index (the temperature the body feels when the effects of heat and humidity are combined). Be sure to check humidity to increase the heat index by as much as 4-6.
- ▶ Discuss heat safety precautions with neighbors or your landlord. Have a plan in place for your special needs home, work and school, and prepare for the possibility of power outages.
- ▶ Check the contents of your emergency preparedness kit in case a power outage occurs.
- ▶ Know those in your neighborhood who are elderly, young, sick or overweight. They are more likely to become victims of excessive heat and need help.
- ▶ If you do not have air conditioning, this replaces your "air" conditioner. Stay in the coolest part of the day, especially during the afternoon.
- ▶ Be aware that people living in urban areas may be at greater risk in the effects of a prolonged heat wave than are people living in rural areas.
- ▶ Call the local fire and police departments for heat-related emergencies.
- ▶ Make sure that your animals needs for water and shade are met.

What should I do during a heat wave?



- ▶ Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio for critical updates on the National Weather Service (NWS).
- ▶ Never leave children or pets of any age enclosed in vehicles.
- ▶ Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with both alcohol and caffeine.
- ▶ Eat small meals and eat more often.
- ▶ Avoid extreme temperature changes.
- ▶ Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- ▶ Stay indoors, stay hydrated and avoid strenuous activities during the hottest part of the day.
- ▶ Protect yourself from sunburn and dehydration.
- ▶ Use a highly visible sign when working in extreme heat.
- ▶ Take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors.
- ▶ Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- ▶ Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.

Recognize and care for heat-related emergencies ...



- Heat cramps** are those aching pains and spasms that usually occur in the legs or arms, caused by excessive sweating and fluid and mineral loss of fluids and electrolytes. Heat cramps are often an early sign that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- Heat exhaustion** typically involves the loss of fluids through heavy sweating during strenuous exercise or physical labor in high heat and humidity.
- ▶ Signs of heat exhaustion include:
 - dizziness or lightheadedness
 - muscle cramps
 - weakness and exhaustion
 - ▶ Move the person to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool wet cloths or towels to the skin. Let the person drink plenty of water from small amounts of cool water to drink. Move into the person drinks slowly. Watch for changes in condition.
 - ▶ If the person does not water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, **call 911** for the local emergency services.
- Heat stroke** is a life-threatening condition in which the person's temperature control system stops working and the body is unable to cool itself.
- ▶ Signs of heat stroke include:
 - hot, red skin which may be dry or moist, changes in consciousness, vomiting, and high body temperature.
 - ▶ Heat stroke while traveling: **Call 911** for the local emergency services immediately.
 - ▶ Move the person to a cooler place, quickly cool the person's body by giving care as you would for heat exhaustion. If they do not improve rapidly, cooling by spraying or misting packs of wet towels clothed the waste under, groin, neck and joints.

Let Your Family Know You're Safe

If you are unable to reach your family members, you can use the Red Cross Emergency Alert System to let your family and friends know you're safe. For more information, visit www.redcross.org.



For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit RedCross.org

Stark County Board of DD: A Plan For a Better Today and Tomorrow

Adult Services, like any other enterprise, seems to always be evolving, swirling like the eye of the hurricane. In keeping with the times, the services and supports provided to individuals with disabilities in Stark County are changing or maybe better said, evolving. The SCBDD Strategic Plan and Adult Services Action Plan, called Striving for Excellence, are frameworks by which to develop services and supports while the foundation is self-determination. Our goal is simple – provide services and supports that will exceed the expectations of our customers.

The SCBDD Strategic Plan was written in collaboration with Stark County Board members, individuals served, community members, school officials, providers, guardians and parents. We tried to assemble as many stakeholders as possible. Core values such as choice, dignity and respect, accountability, stewardship, and integrity became the focal points for the rest of the strategic plan. An increased emphasis was placed on the individuals served by the Stark Board of DD as being the priority in everything we do.

Enhanced Choice is an initiative which allows individuals we serve several options from which to choose day services through subcontracted provider relationships and expanded employment opportunities. SCBDD also identified a commitment to fostering self-advocacy, community connections and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be involved in their communities. These two principles were the driving force behind the development of the Adult Services Action Plan. SCBDD Adult Services adopted a self-determined service delivery model to best serve individuals with disabilities. This paradigm puts the individual first in every aspect of service delivery process to enhance the individuals' experiences, increase the skills of staff members to become mentors and to have community access in all services.

As the Individual Support Plan is the vehicle through which services are planned and defined, the document needed and received a facelift. Developing an improved ISP allowed a more responsive, proactive, individual -centered approach. The All About Me ISP is more “user-friendly”, readable by individuals with disabilities, guardians, family members and team members and eliminates the socialize language. It provides a holistic picture of the individual – their needs, wants and dreams – and charges team members to remain focused on what is required to ensure not only the individual's health and safety but also their well-being and happiness by addressing their wants and desires.

A long term training self-advocacy program for individuals with disabilities is being developed. This will guide individuals in how to be active participants in all aspects of their lives from ISP planning/implementation to community membership and fostering meaningful relationships. The outcome of the program is focused on offering individuals a more self-determined life and resources on how to explore the possibilities and opportunities around them.

The “Circle of Excellence” was developed as a long-term staff training program. The information concentrates on quality service delivery to individuals served and how to become a mentor. Staff members receive training on best practices, how to support a self-determined individual and how to provide the best services in Stark County.

The individuals and staff of SCBDD Adult Services have risen to the challenges and initiatives set forth and together we are providing creative, innovative, individual driven services. We are moving forward with a commitment of excellence to everyone served.

The Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities Adult Services provides a variety of services and supports to about 860 people. For more information on SCBDD Adult Services contact the Director of Adult Services, Carmen Crum, at 330-477-3930 or visit www.starkdd.org.

Medina County Self-Advocates Enjoy Legislative Day

On Thursday, April 14th, nine self-advocates and staff spent the day in Columbus for the 2011 Legislative Day. Legislative Day gives an opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their supporters to voice their opinions and concerns on state funding and personal needs. The day started with an opening ceremony consisting of several speakers. The honored speakers included senators and state representatives.

Afterwards, we had a private group session with Erich Bittner, aide to Senator Obhof. He gave each person an opportunity to speak. They spoke about better paying jobs, more independence, current political issues, and three self-advocates voiced their interest in going to college. In fact one individual, NidhiSoni, wrote a letter regarding her obstacles in reaching her college bound dream. Mr. Bittner read it aloud and was moved by her profound words.

The next day, Nidhi and staff were touched and inspired. It was suggested that we collectively collaborate our thoughts on the day's events so Christine and Nidhi jumped at the opportunity to share the experience. Christine is employed as a Social/Recreation Specialist with the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities; she facilitates the Community Integration department. This department uses community outings to improve one's social skills, community awareness, cultural diversity and cognitive thinking. It promotes teamwork and has proven to be very effective in personal growth and enrichment.

Nidhi is a 24 year old woman with Cerebral Palsy. Nidhi has a kind heart and a wonderful sense of humor. She is articulate with her thoughts, yet has barriers with others understanding her speech. She is also very gifted in writing. With this in mind, she has chosen writing as her voice. Nidhi participates in the Community Integration department four times per week, hence her opportunity to attend Legislative Day and have her "voice" heard. Nidhi came prepared with a heartfelt letter outlining her aspirations; it was written with passion and conviction.

We both felt that the speakers were quite informative and willing to listen. Nidhi was so happy to get her opinions across to the Senator and others, while Christine was happy that Nidhi finally had the chance to express herself. In the month to follow, Nidhi was honored to receive a letter directly from the Senator. This was just the confidence builder Nidhi was craving and she began to realize that there is a true writer within herself. At the present time, she is applying to colleges and looking to get some of her motivational writings published. Nidhi has a theory that if she is able to publish one or two writings, it would increase her chances of being accepted to college. On the other hand, Christine believes Nidhi will get accepted to a college on her own. Although Nidhi will require some guidance, Christine has faith in Nidhi and her writing ability. She looks forward to assisting Nidhi with the transition to college.

It was a proud moment when Nidhi was not only able to be a "voice" for herself, but also a "voice" for the entire community of individuals with developmental disabilities, especially those with CP. It was expressed to us that all the information gathered on Legislative Day will be discussed amongst state officials and representatives. Together, we hope this starts an awareness of Nidhi's issues. In the future, we hope that Nidhi will have the opportunities to conquer her college wishes, pursue her writing career, and inspire others to do the same.

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