

supporting dreams



### SPECIAL POINT OF INTEREST:

The Ottawa County Board of Developmental Disabilities is proud to announce that the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities has awarded them a 3-year accreditation certificate, which expires on December 31, 2014. Board employees were commended by the Board of Directors for this outstanding accomplishment!

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# OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF DD

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER — SPRING 2011

### MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the availability of supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities in gaining inclusion in their community. Further, to assist individuals and their families in achieving a life that they establish for themselves.



## Superintendent's Notes *The Power of Family Members*

There are few things as powerful as a well-informed parent advocating for his or her child. In 1972 mothers in Philadelphia organized to challenge Pennsylvania's practice of excluding their children – who were diagnosed with severe cognitive deficits – from any public education. Their efforts resulted in the first case establishing a right to a free appropriate education for their children. Three years later Congress passed 94-142 – the grandparent of the IDEA – which guarantees appropriate education and services to all children with disabilities.

Parents across Ohio started programs for their children with disabilities in church basements and public halls. The families pressured local and state officials to get programs for their children out of church basements and into programs run by trained professionals. In 1968, their efforts resulted in the formation of county boards of developmental disabilities which, today, offer comprehensive services to individuals with developmental disabilities from birth through retirement. Parents here in Ottawa County opened a school for their children in 1961 which moved to various locations with increased funding over time. Only the power of parents provided the impetus for such services and this power created the service system we have today. This has demonstrated proof positive that parents as advocates are the most powerful voice for service creation there is.

I encourage you to interact with our legislators and let them know how important the Board of DD is to your family. As government struggles to balance Ohio's budget, don't let them forget where we have come from and how important it is to support people with disabilities across Ohio.

**Your voice makes a difference!**



## The Art Studio @ RVI

419-898-5250



*If you haven't seen the artwork created by employees of RVI through their Imagine Art studio—then you are in for a treat. These talented artists have a story to tell through their pieces. The art comes in many forms, such as yard flags, beach bags, totes, glassware, Christmas ornaments, dishware, coffee mugs, travel mugs, beach chairs, wall art and much more. The talent and art forms seem to be limitless.*

*It will be fun to see this studio blossom as word of it has already begun to spread like wildfire. (see page 2 for additional Imagine Art artwork.)*





# Spotlight on...

Joann



Johnson

Miss JoAnn Johnson (aka JJ) has a smile as big as Texas and a heart to match! It's no wonder she won the coveted title of Miss Candy Cane 2010! She is very proud of this honor and encourages others to apply so they can experience the same fun she is having. The RVI Board selected JJ from about 21 applicants, but she admits she never expected to win. An amusing anecdote about her name is that if her initials (JJ) are turned upside down they become candy canes! She loves going out to the movies, music (Alan Jackson & Elton John), and going out to eat for tacos. She started a bell collection as a young

girl and it has grown to nearly 50 bells. Her nieces and nephews are the joys of her life and she loves living with her friend Jan. She is very proud of all her accomplishments at RVI, where she has been employed for 30 years! Susan E. and JJ have been the best of friends for 15 years. Christmas and winter are JJ's favorite times of the year, because she loves sending cards, having company at her house and getting visits from her nieces and nephews. Mackinaw Island in Michigan is where she would like to visit this

time next year. She was born in Michigan, but never traveled to the Island. She would also like to ride the Jet Express to Put-In-Bay so she could visit all the cute shops and meet new people. JJ is a cancer survivor and she prays there will be a cure someday soon.



Best Friends: Susan & JJ

### Board Profile

Sandra Toth joins OCBDD Board



**Full Name:** Sandra Toth

**Family:** daughters Martie Marie Lasher and Krista Ellen Underwood; grandchildren Nate Underwood, Alicia Underwood and Joshua Lasher

**Occupation:** Masters in the Art of Teaching Mentor, Marygrove College, ECE Instructor TBD

**Board Status:** She joined the OCBDD Board in December 2010 fulfilling an unexpired term that expires in December 2012

**Goals as a board member:** Sandra said she wants to help fulfill the "gaining inclusion in their community" part of the board's mission

**Hobbies/Interests:** Writing, 5K walking events, technology, reading, working on various remodeling projects, good conversations in coffee shops, art museums and international events



Michelle & Andrew Wells

# Project STIR

Contributed by Andrew Wells

Three weeks ago I attended a training course called Project STIR. STIR means Steps Toward Independence & Responsibility. Project STIR helps people be more independent and be vocal in their own communities.

On the first day of training, the trainers and the trainees introduced themselves and the counties that they were from. We set some ground rules. The last thing we did was learn about "Speak Up for Yourself" and "Speaking Up in Ohio."

On the second day of training, we took steps to become self advocates. The first step is knowing yourself. The second step is to communicate. The third step we learned was problem solving steps. The five problem solving steps are:

1. Relax and tell yourself something positive.
2. Identify the problem.
3. Think of good solutions,
4. Choose a good solution, and
5. Just do it.

On the third day it was real fun. We were in groups all day. We learned about starting a self-advocacy group, self-advocacy, team work, and finding allies and partners. At the end of the day, we talked briefly about goals that were accomplished last year.

The last day we set new goals for the path: more jobs for people with disabilities and making our state representatives and legislators and communities aware of problems and situations of people with disabilities.

I am proud to say I'm glad I went through this training, so I can give the people of Ottawa County a voice.



OCBDD MOTTO:  
SUPPORTING  
DREAMS

Imagine  
Art



## Operations Manager **JACK CUPP** Retires

Ottawa County has an outstanding transportation system in OCTA and Jack Cupp is a big reason why.

From the time he was hired in 1996 as a Substitute Network Driver until his retirement last month, Jack’s caring nature and exemplary work ethic served not only his own career, but also many thousands of Ottawa County residents who have traveled to and from work, shopping, and daily activities safely and efficiently.

Jack is very proud to have been a part of OCTA’s transition from an OCBDD transportation department to a public transportation agency. Looking back on his service at OCTA he says, “I loved the fast pace and the everyday challenges – and there were a lot of them! I liked working at OCTA because I was part of helping so many people. I myself was put in the position of needing help like many of the people we transported and believe this is why I always wanted to go the extra mile to help people. I made the lives of my co-workers more difficult at times by doing this when it would have been much easier to say no. I am proud of the people I worked with. Anytime I asked them, they always agreed to go the extra mile.”

Jack’s retirement comes at a very challenging time for OCTA. We have recently installed a new scheduling and dispatching software system that is designed to help our agency run more efficiently and ultimately improve customer service. However, implementing a change this extensive without Jack’s experience and assistance is not easy. We are learning an entirely different software system while concurrently trying to keep up with the highest demand for service OCTA has ever encountered. Jack is no stranger to a situation this demanding. He often worked long hours and postponed caring for himself to care for others. He knows what he is talking about when he says to his former colleagues: “Some of you need to cut back on your hours. Life is too short and fragile. You need to appreciate the fact that you work for a stable government agency. I think this gets forgotten. Be patient and understanding with each other. Treat everyone as you want to be treated.”

OCTA’s reputation and success is due in no small part to Jack Cupp. Former Transit Director Rosan Allen called Jack the “Heart of OCTA” and said she always believed OCTA could not function without him. Well, OCTA will go on, but it will be a difficult transition. Says Rosan, “He will be missed more than any other staff person ever associated with OCTA. He is selfless. His devotion to OCTA came at the expense of his own well-being.”

Of course, OCTA will go on and we will provide many thousands more safe and reliable rides for those we serve. Jack’s commitment and his standards for excellence will continue to be the model for those of us here at OCTA, and, we hope, throughout all of Ottawa County and Ohio. Thank you Jack! You are deeply missed. Contributed by Bill Lowe, Transit Director

### Assistive Technology & Ohio's Lemon Law

Purchased an assistive technology (AT) device only to find it doesn't work or is broken? Ohio has a law providing protection to consumers who purchase or lease an AT device that is defective. The device must cost \$500 or more.

Ohio's Lemon Law covers any AT device used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capacities of an individual. This includes wheelchairs, motorized scooters, assertive listening devices, voice synthesized computer modules, optical scanners, talking software, Braille printers, environment control and adaptive transportation aids, communication boards or any device that has a function similar to any of these hearing aids or medical devices are not covered by this law.

Learn more about the Ohio Lemon Law and how it applies to AT devices by going to [www.ohio.gov](http://www.ohio.gov) and searching for Frequently Asked Questions Ohio Lemon Law-Assistive Technology.

*The above article is reprinted with permission from Ohio Legal Rights Service, Ohio's protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities. Its mission is to protect and advocate, in partnership with people with disabilities, for their human, civil and legal rights. The article appeared in the August OLRs newsletter.*

Parents/Guardians, Individuals served and Family Members are invited to meet the Superintendent for an open forum on the third Wednesday of the even numbered months beginning at **5:00 p.m.** at the Board of DD.

Please join Melinda Slusser on:

**Wednesday, June 15th**

Future Forum dates are posted on [www.ocbdd.org](http://www.ocbdd.org)



*Supporting Dreams*

### Coffee with the Superintendent



**Ottawa County Board of DD**

235 N Toussaint South Rd  
Oak Harbor OH 43449

Phone: 419-898-0400

# RELAY FOR LIFE



In an effort to give back to the community, REC has formed a Relay For Life team called the **Buckeye Brigade**. The Relay is an event to celebrate lives of people who battle cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. Our team has and will continue to raise money through fundraisers and donations. The team just finished a cookie dough and pastry fundraiser which raised over \$400. We will also participate in the Ottawa County Relay event on June 3rd and 4th 2011. This is an 18-hour event held at the Oak Harbor High School track. It's not too late to join the team or to make a donation! Give Michele a call at (567)262-3119 or check out the website [www.relayforlife.org/oakharbor](http://www.relayforlife.org/oakharbor) for more details. *Contributed by Michele Bailey*

# WE'VE COME A LONG WAY

**Disclaimer:** While the Board has respectfully changed its name (and corresponding language) through the use of Developmental Disabilities instead of Mental Retardation, the following excerpts came directly from the pages of our archived history records and in no way are meant to degrade or disrespect individuals with Developmental Disabilities or their families.

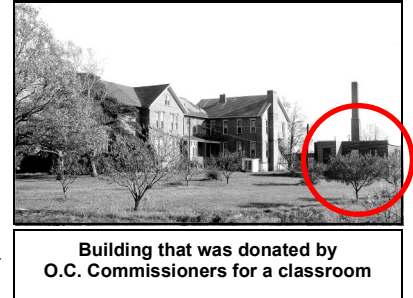
In 1961, school opened with an enrollment of 16 children and with State Subsidy approval in the amount of \$300 for each child. A teacher assistant was added to the staff. Since the opening of the school, transportation was a major problem because the children were scattered throughout the county. This year a station wagon was purchased to transport children living in the west end of the county. The Miller Taxi Service was contracted to transport those from the east end. Parents paid \$10 per month toward this expense.

During 1962 and 1963 the classes continued in rented quarters in the Legion Hall (Oak Harbor). Classroom and playground equipment were donated by many groups and volunteers installed most of it.

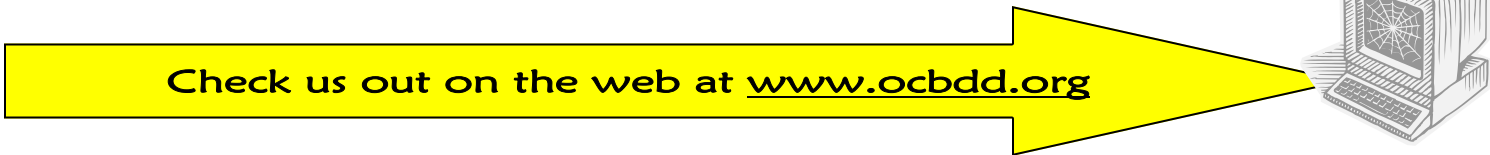
In June of 1964, the Ottawa County Commissioners granted Council's request and gave them a small hospital building on the grounds of the County Home (now known as Riverview Healthcare Campus). With funds provided by the Council and public donations, this building was remodeled to include two classrooms, rest-rooms, small kitchenette and a small office.

In May of 1965, a 1/10 mill operating levy was placed on the ballot and passed by the voters 4 to 1. "Riverview School for Children" was the name chosen. The new school was ready in August and the move from the Legion Hall was made.

The levy provided the County Commissioners with a source of revenue for operating the school and council was relieved of the responsibility of raising public funds for this purpose. The council now took on the job of providing special teaching aids for the teachers, special equipment, and sponsoring educational experiences for the children.....*TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER*



**Ottawa County Board of DD**  
 235 N Toussaint South Rd  
 Oak Harbor OH 43449



## Upcoming Events

**Family Advisory Council Mtg**  
 May 13: 10:00am @ OCBDD  
 Gary Tonks, Director of Arc of Ohio will be the guest speaker



**People 1st Meeting**  
 June 2: 1:30pm  
 At RVI



**Red Cross Blood Drive**  
 June 17: 9:00am-2:00pm  
 At OCBDD



**Coffee with the Superintendent**  
 June 15: 5:00pm  
 At OCBDD Building



**Monthly Board Meeting**  
 June 20: 5:00pm  
 At OCBDD Building  
 The public is welcome



**Monthly Board Meeting**  
 May 16: 5:00pm  
 At OCBDD Building  
 The public is welcome



**Family Advisory Council Mtg**  
 June 10: 10:00am @ OCBDD

### GO GREEN

If you have an email address & would like to receive this newsletter electronically (saving the agency's paper resources), send your address to [bbeck@ocbdd.org](mailto:bbeck@ocbdd.org).

This newsletter and other information about the OCBDD can be accessed at: [www.ocbdd.org](http://www.ocbdd.org)

*This is a quarterly publication of the Ottawa County Board of Developmental Disabilities. News releases, story ideas, comments and suggestions should be addressed to Ottawa County Board of DD Newsletter, 235 N Toussaint South Rd, Oak Harbor OH 43449.*

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