



FOCUS



Leading the Way | Achieving Excellence | Shaping the Future

Welcome Back

Lawrence County Developmental Disabilities would like to welcome back Jamie Mays as a Service & Support Administrator. Jamie previously held the position under LCDD and returns her expertise and experience to our program.



Staff Birthdays

- Ron Sims, May 4
- Arlie Lynd, May 19
- Chris Bentley, May 22
- Mia Dishman, May 23

Lawrence County DD Kicking Off #IamLCDD Awareness Campaign

Lawrence County DD has started a new campaign to help raise awareness and support for developmental disabilities in the county.

Along with the formation of a new awareness committee, the #IamLCDD was developed to make people aware of who exactly makes up Lawrence County Developmental Disabilities. The campaign will not only feature those that are served by the agency, but also those that help to complete the mission of promoting advocacy, inclusion and personal growth in the community.

The campaign will feature more spotlights, highlights and personal stories from individuals throughout the DD community in Lawrence County.

The campaign will have an official kick-off picnic entitled "Lawrence County's Developmental Disabilities Community Round-Up!" Several agencies, providers, advocacy groups, individuals, families and supporters will be in attendance at the event, along with Jeff Davis, Director of DODD, who will be the special guest speaker to discuss the future of DD services in Ohio.

The event will be held on June 4th at the current Open Door School on Lorain Street in Ironton... MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Growing Possibilities
 Lawrence County's Developmental Disabilities
JUNE 4
 5:30-7:30
COMMUNITY Round-Up!
 Join us June 4th at Open Door School in Ironton as the entire DD Community in Lawrence County will look ahead to where we're going & how we can all get there together! Developmental disability agencies, providers, advocacy groups & more will be in attendance
 Special Guest: Jeff Davis, Director of Ohio Dept. of DD
 Grilled Food & Games for all!
 #IamLCDD
 Open Door is at 421 Lorain St., Ironton, Ohio, 45638
 The event will be held outside on the playground. If we have inclement weather, we will move to the gymnasium.
 Hosted by Lawrence County Developmental Disabilities

LCDD Working to Save Open Door School, Services for the DD Population

Lawrence County Developmental Disabilities is facing a significant funding shortage starting in 2020 that has resulted in necessary changes to their program operations.

Lawrence County DD (LCDD) is projected to have a financial shortfall of nearly \$900,000 by the end of 2020 due to the rising cost of services. The deficit is expected to increase to over \$2 million in 2021.

While the agency had a balance of carryover funds for several years, records show that it began relying on those funds in 2016 to meet annual expenses.

"I cannot stress enough the importance of long-term budget forecasting, at the minimum of 5 years, especially when an agency relies on levies," said Superintendent Julie Monroe.

Monroe was initially hired by LCDD in 2017 on an interim basis through a shared service contract with Scioto County DD, where she served for 20 years. After being hired permanently in January of 2018, she began working with the Board to analyze the budget and begin the financial forecasting process.

"Local tax dollars have been the cornerstone of Lawrence County DD services since the first levy was ran 43 years ago. Since LCDD has not received any new local funding for over a decade, we have simply fallen behind," said Monroe.

In addition to the financial shortfall, Lawrence County DD has a waiting list for home and community-based services - services that help people with developmental disabilities get the support they need to live, work and participate in the community rather than in institutions.

"These services are often not provided in a traditional brick and mortar setting," said Monroe. "So many people in the community don't realize that LCDD is responsible for funding these services. When you see someone with a developmental disability receiving help from a provider in the grocery store, at the doctor's office, their church, or in their homes to cook and care for themselves, LCDD is helping to fund those services, and we are mandated by the State of Ohio to do so," said Monroe.

Over the past year, the LCDD Board has taken actions to operate as efficiently as possible. They are in the process of downsizing buildings, which includes moving the Open Door School to the former Tri-State Industries building in Coal Grove. The current Open Door School building is very old, and is facing costly upgrades and repairs. It is also a three story building and many of the students have mobility issues.

"Moving the school has been a priority of the Board," said Debra Jones, LCDD Board President and guardian to her 57 year old sister with Down Syndrome. "Renovations are being paid for from proceeds from the sale of another Board-owned building, and funds from other sources outside of the general fund, including donations".

The Board also looked at its long term sustainability and prioritized its programs based on mandates and costs.

"Even if additional funding would be obtained, the LCDD would not be sustainable long term if it operates as it currently does," said Steve Thompson, LCDD Finance Committee Chair.

The LCDD preschool program - offered at the Early Childhood Center (ECC) in South Point - is the most expensive, non-mandated program the LCDD currently operates. The Board made the very difficult decision in February to discontinue operating preschool classrooms at the ECC effective next year (May 2020).

Sue Vanderhoof, Director of Early Childhood Programs for the LCDD, is leading a transition committee with local school districts, the Lawrence County Educational Service Center, and providers of preschool services over the next year to make the transition as smooth as possible.

"It is important to note," said Vanderhoof, "that the ECC building also houses programs provided by Lawrence County Head Start, and that the building will continue to be used for early childhood education." LCDD is currently having discussions with local school districts about their need for the building.

"The LCDD will work cooperatively with all of our partners, and share our expertise, to ensure quality special education preschool services remain available in Lawrence County, said Vanderhoof". Other services for young children, such as early intervention, will remain in place.

The Lawrence County DD is asking for a 2.5 mill levy for 10 years in November.

"We do not want to have to make further changes to our program," said Jones. But the cost to provide services has increased for us just like everyone else. My sister went to Open Door School, and now can live in her own home because of Lawrence County DD. We are hopeful that the community will see we have a real need and continue to support us as they always have," said Jones.



Students & staff at Open Door School work on a science project together

Week of the Young Child at Early Childhood Center

In April The Early Childhood Center celebrated The Week of the Young Child. The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration to spotlight the importance of early learning and young children. There was a theme for each day and festivities were planned for the children throughout the week.

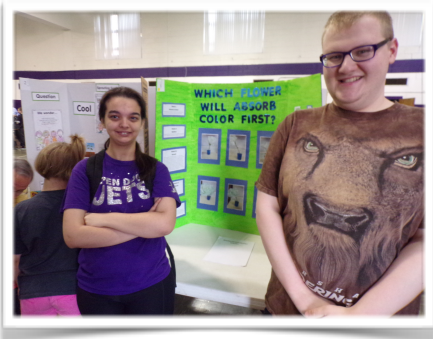
The children enjoyed a performance from the Rock Hill Band on Music Monday. The children also explored musical instruments in their classrooms and even put on their own musical parade at the end of the day.

On Tasty Tuesday students were able to sample different foods provided by community restaurants (Casa Grande, Snak Shak, and South Point Giovanni's). Students were excited to sample each item and engaged in discussions about which was their favorite.

Work Together Wednesday provided an opportunity for children to learn about various community helpers during transportation day. Students were able to see and explore various modes of transportation as well as emergency vehicles; such as an ambulance, police car, and fire trucks. Students also learned when and how to dial 9-1-1.

To wrap up the week, everyone dressed as superheroes for Thursday's Super Abilities Day. The event came to a close with an exciting visit from Batman and the Batmobile. During his visit, Batman shared an important anti-bullying message and encouraged the children to always "Do the right thing." and "Never give up!"





Contact Us!

Main Board Office
740-532-7401

Early Childhood Center
740-377-2356

Open Door School
740-532-1234

Service and Support Administration
740-532-0406

www.lawrencedd.org

To receive the newsletter electronically,
email us at info@lawrencedd.org

New LCDD Board Members Sworn In

Lawrence County Developmental Disabilities had three new members appointed to its board at its April meeting.

LoRena Cahal, Joel Utsinger, and Mike Gore were sworn in by Country Recorder Sharon Gossett Hager to fill terms that are currently vacant. Following the completion of the current terms, each member can be reappointed for a four year term.

Mrs. Cahal is the South Point mother of a son with autism who has received services from Lawrence County DD throughout his lifetime. She works as a family advocate with Head Start, an opportunity that allows her to be familiar with county resources for families.

Mr. Utsinger is an Ironton father of twins who have developmental disabilities that attend Open Door School. He has over 20 years of experience in education, which has helped to expand his knowledge of the field.

Mr. Gore is an Ironton resident and law enforcement veteran with over 30 years of experience in his field. Formerly a patrolman for the Ohio State Highway Patrol, Gore brings years of public leadership to the LCDD Board.

The Board conducted a search that began in January of 2019 with a call for letters of interest from qualified candidates mindful that the position requires time, effort and commitment to Lawrence County DD and to the community. The process concluded successfully with the appointment of the new members by the Lawrence County Commissioners.

The May LCDD Board meeting will be held on May 17 at 6pm at the LCDD Board Office. Board meetings are open to the public.



Calendar of Events

May 8
Planting Flowers at ODS

May 9
Special Olympics - SPHS

May 14
Open Door Graduation - 6pm

May 15
Senior Citizens Fair

May 17
ECC Graduations - 10am & 1pm

May 17
LCDD Board Meeting - 6pm

May 20
ODS Awards Day

May 24
Last Day of School

May 27
Memorial Day Parade



604 Carlton Davidson Ln., Coal Grove, OH 45638