



Champaign County Board of Developmental Disabilities

SPRING QUARTER 2022 - NEWSLETTER

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Issue

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

This year, for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, we are not just celebrating the individuals with DD, but also everyone who contributes to the DD community. Let's give a round of applause to those with developmental disabilities, their family members, their DSPs, their employers, their SSAs, and their friends.

Because of you more people can volunteer and help make their communities a better place.

Because of you more people can become valued members of the workforce and take pride in a job well done.

Because of you more people can laugh, have fun, and enjoy life to the fullest.

Because of you more people can show off their special abilities, and more people can receive the benefits of those abilities.

Because of you we are all helping each other to make our world a better place.

If you know someone with special abilities, share a picture or story of them on your social media pages. Spread the word about DD Awareness this month and all year round. Post with the hashtags #DDawareness2022 or #DDAM2022.

The Champaign Co Board of DD is here to connect all parts of the community. Ask us how you can be a part of it!

What is a Developmental Disability (DD)?

The CDC defines a developmental disability as "a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime."

Developmental disabilities can start as early as birth or develop later in life. To receive services from the county board of developmental disabilities the disability must have occurred before the age of 22.

Between the ages of 0-3 years, if an infant has or is at risk of developmental disabilities, the Champaign Co Board of DD (CCBDD) can provide early intervention services. Early intervention also helps families when their child is ready to transition into school.

As a person with DD ages, CCBDD can provide them with a Service and Support Administrator (SSA). SSAs help individuals and families get the resources they need to live their lives to the fullest.

Do you or a loved one have a developmental disability and need extra help? Check out our website to see the services we offer and contact us for a referral.



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Disability Rights and Self Advocacy

March 2: DD Awareness & Advocacy Day

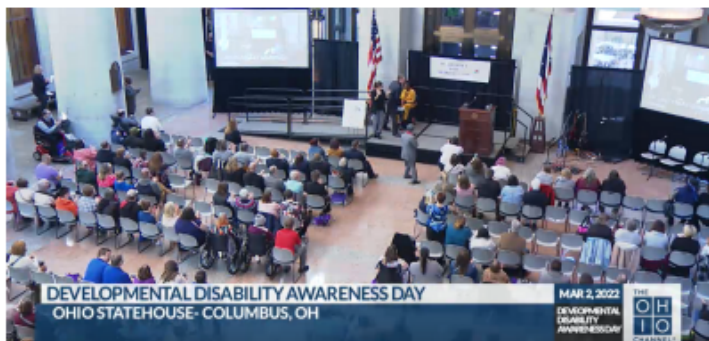
Every year, during the first week in March, individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and their community allies gather in Columbus to advocate for policies that impact their lives.

After several years of virtual gatherings due to the pandemic, the 2022 event once again offered in-person participation. On March 2, advocates from Champaign County joined the rest of the state for a day of education and activism.

A Day of Activity

Participants of DD Awareness and Advocacy Day had a busy schedule to fill their day in Columbus.

- There was time in the morning to check-in and explore the Statehouse Museum Gallery.
- At 9:30, participants were treated to music from Zayne Harshaw. Zayne was diagnosed with autism at the age of 4. He is now lead guitarist in the Blue Spectrum Band, which travels all over the country to perform. Learn more at bluespectrumband.com.
- At 10:00, participants were invited to hear from various speakers in the Statehouse Atrium. Speakers included Lt Governor Jon Husted, DODD Director Kim Hauck, OSILC Chairman Kevin Flynn, and a Self-Advocate Panel.



Left/Top: Screenshot from the Ohio Channel broadcast
Left/Bottom: Advocates observe in the Senate Hearing Room



- When the presentation completed, around 11:00, participants were free to explore assistive technology demonstrations (like the Augmented Therapy equipment pictured above).
- Finally, participants attended prescheduled one-on-one meetings with their state representatives to discuss current policies and the needs of people in their community.

Important Topics Discussed

This year, speakers at DD Awareness and Advocacy Day asked participants to "be the change". This was one of the main topics for the day. Attendants (in-person and virtual) were praised for making their voices heard and advocating for the changes they need.

Also discussed were the state's initiatives in assistive technology. Making technology more available to persons with disabilities can allow more independence. Those served

by CCBDD can call their SSA for additional resources on assistive technology.

Advocates also mentioned better accessibility in public areas, better transportation, and the Direct Support Professional shortage. All are important for supporting independent living.



Right/Top: Advocate participates in assistive technology demonstration
Right/Bottom: Advocates stand in front of "Perry's Victory on Lake Erie" in the Ohio Statehouse

Provider Spotlight: Downsize Farm

More Than a Family Business



For Downsize Farm, a Champaign County service provider, the word 'business' is synonymous with 'family'. Founders Bob and Midge Custer created a business where everyone feels included. Their daughter, Bobbi McKee is now the CEO. Their nephew and in-laws work in day to day operations. They even employ staff who are related to each other or related to program participants. And if you are not a relative, they will surely make you feel like one.

Bobbi says, "Since the business was founded on the idea of caring for our family members, we give all clients and staff the same dignity and respect as if they are our true family."

Downsize Farm started and continues to operate a **Day Program** where people with developmental disabilities spend their time learning everyday jobs to keep a farm running. They cook with food grown in their own garden, feed and care for animals, craft items to sell (<https://downsize-farm.square.site>), and maintain the buildings and vehicles.

With Bobbi as CEO, Downsize Farm expanded its operations with more programs: a vocational program, an employment team, and a residential program. Not only can clients practice everyday living skills at the farm, but they also receive training for competitive employment, become actively employed, try their hand at living independently, and give back to the community with service projects.

Vocational Program:

This program is a collaboration with The Spotted Cow Coffeehouse in Urbana. Clients can join an educational program to train for jobs in food service, manufacturing, janitorial, and other work. From there, clients can progress to the Employment Team, if they choose.



Employment Team:

Downsize Farm partners with area businesses to place clients in competitive employment positions which best suit everyone's needs and interests. The staff at Downsize provide job coaching and work closely with both clients and businesses to assure a proper placement.

Residential Program:

Some clients set goals to live independently. The residential program can provide Homemaker/Personal Care (HPC) assistance to those living independently. It can also coordinate Ohio Shared Living (OSL) placements, which places someone with a developmental disability in the home of a person or family willing to be a paid caregiver.

Whatever the person's goals, Downsize Farm helps pave the way with the ideals of love and family. In fact, Downsize staff and clients invite the whole community into their 'family' by hosting and stocking a Blessing Barn. The Blessing Barn, located at The Spotted Cow, works like a Little Free Library. But instead of books, it holds nonperishable foods free to those in need.

If you want to learn more about Downsize Farm or how you can be a part of their family centered services, visit www.downsizefarm.com.





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#DDAWARENESS2022

Look and listen for CCBDD at community events, in the newspaper, or on the radio!



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