

Published by the Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
"Helping people to live, learn and work in the community"

## Building purchase OK'd

Franklin County Commissioners approved a contract on April 14th to purchase an office building for use by FCBMRDD's Service Coordination Department.

The 44,000 square foot building is located in northwest Columbus at 1600 Watermark Drive, just off the Grandview Avenue exit of I-670.

The seller has agreed to the county's offered price of \$2.5 million. The property's appraised value is \$4.1 million, according to the Franklin County's Auditor's Office.

The purchase contract allows 60 days to complete environmental and other inspections. If not satisfied with the inspection results, the county can nix the deal.

Dot Yeager, FCBMRDD's Chief Financial Officer, began looking in 2007 for a new site for the Service Coordination Department. Her



1600 Watermark Drive

plan is to relocate the department from its leased offices at 350 East Broad Street by the end of the year.

She is hopeful that the Watermark property will pass required inspections and be ready by December 31st.

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed," she said.

According to Jack Beatty, Director of Service Coordination, the department's current offices are no longer adequate.

"We've simply outgrown the space," he said.

## Families United calling it quits

Like an old soldier, Families United will fade away after fighting to improve the lives of Franklin County residents with developmental disabilities for nearly three decades.

The longtime support and advocacy group says it will hold its last meeting on May 14th.

"Our time has passed," said Vera Schmarr, Families United President. "We've served our purpose."

In recent years, the group has had difficulty attracting members to meetings. "Many of our most committed

members have passed away or are too ill to come."

Formed as a not-for-profit corporation in 1979, the group got its start as a committee of the Council for Retarded Citizens, charged with the task of exploring residential services. At the time, few residential options existed in Franklin County.

To help meet the need, Families United members envisioned the creation of small "clusters" throughout the county. This concept helped guide FCBMRDD's development in the

1980s of four, ICFMR apartment sites, one in each quadrant of the county.

Families were heavily involved in the planning process for the Kimberly Woods, Dierker Road, McDowell Road and Morse Road facilities. According to Ed Harper, Executive Director of Franklin County Residential Services, their input was "invaluable."

"They helped ensure that the living environments would be as comfortable and home-like as possible," he said.

In more recent years, Creative Housing, Inc., has incorporated some of the same ideas in its development of independent apartments.

Another major focus of Families United has been providing support and information for families.

Monthly meetings were held at Overbrook Presbyterian Church in Clintonville. Guest speakers, representing a variety of agencies and disciplines,

were invited to help families better understand the complex service system.

Often, when questions arose, the members themselves were the best resource. "You can learn a lot from each other," explained Vera Schmarr.

Reflecting on the organization's closing, Superintendent Jed Morison expressed mixed feelings: "Of course, many people are saddened, and I'm among them. At the same time, it is a joy to recall their contribution to our community, and honor them for that."

Families United has one more item on its to-do list. It is the disposal of funds remaining after paying expenses. Although no decision had been made at press time, President Vera Schmarr expects the group to donate to Franklin County Residential Services toward the development of a program for individuals with developmental disabilities who also have Alzheimer's Disease.

On behalf of the entire FCBMRDD community, *Dateline* thanks Families United for its many years of service!

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## Have we mattered? by Jean Williams

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*(Editor's note: The author, Vice President of Families United, shares her reflections upon the imminent demise of that organization. Mrs. Williams is also a member of the Franklin County Board of MRDD.)*

This is the time of my life when it's only natural to sit back and start evaluating things. I think we all do that as we get older. We think of the things that were so important in our lives and wonder if they were really worth the investment... not of money... or even of time... but were they worth the investment of self?

Where did we learn the most? College... church... marriage... career... parenthood? Where did we *matter* the most? Ahh, that's a good one to mull over! Where did we matter?

The answers are so varied. So many of the things mattered to *us*, but did we matter to *them*? The college or university has gotten along just fine without us. The church still serves whether we attend or not. The marriage may be over by now, and the career long ago ceased to be our mainstay.

One thing would not have happened without us, and that is the birth of our children. And with our children, we mattered in ways we never dreamed of till the hard realities of their reality came through to us.

A fellow parent once said to me, "We knew when we had children that we would forevermore *be a parent*, but we didn't know we would forevermore *have to parent*." But, we have parented our children to this very day,

and will to the end of either our days or theirs.

We have been especially blessed in this endeavor because we found friends and fellow parents, and joined together for many years in the parenting. We became families... families united!

Because of our children, we have known of needs of many and we have worked hard to see that these needs are met. We have succeeded in many ways. And our group has aged... and now must evaluate. We hand our work on to others who share our goals, and we will assist whenever possible.

And we will be proud, because we have mattered!

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## Operation Feed sets new record

FCBMRDD's 2009 Operation Feed campaign was highly successful by any measure.

Staff donated 6,841 pounds of food, which amounts to a 29% increase over last year. Staff also donated \$25,277 in cash, which amounts to a 49% increase over last year.

Bixby Living Skills Center donated the most food, 978 pounds, while ARC

Industries' Central Office was the leader in cash donated with \$5,599.

Superintendent Jed Morison was delighted with the results.

"It was incredible that we could increase our giving that much especially at a time when the economy is down."

Mike Davis, who coordinated the campaign, noted, "Our staff really rose



FCBMRDD Operation Feed 2009

to the challenge... The requests for food are surging."

The Superintendent thanked all who supported the food drive, adding, "I'm very proud of your generous support of our community."

# Professional growth is goal of development day

Passers-by of FCBMRDD facilities on Friday, April 10th, might have thought that agency staff were enjoying a day off. Despite the darkened buildings and empty parking lots, however, staff were not on break. They were working off-site, attending day-long, professional development programs.

Staff Development Day provides the opportunity for staff to receive inservice training to help them improve their job performance. The programs are held two times each year.

"We strive to give information that staff will find helpful in their day-to-day work," said Superintendent Jed Morison. "Our goal is professional growth."

Many staff benefit as well by earning credit toward state certification and registration requirements.

Early childhood staff attended a "co-learning experience" presented by Dr. Mary Rivkin and Dr. Jean Harlan. The theme was "Leading Children to Nature," the setting, the Franklin Park Conservatory.

Adult services staff gathered at Xenos Christian Fellowship where they heard Dr. Stephen Douglas speak on "Dealing with Life's Thorniest Problems." They also got to choose from three options, "Identity Theft," by Detective Richard Coyne, "How to Communicate Better," by Superintendent Steve Hilge-

man of Fayette County, and "Diversity in the Workplace," by Theresa Ferguson.

School staff got together at the Makoy Center in Hilliard. They heard Heather Bridgman present on "Assistive Technology," Kathy Staugler on "Unique Learning System," Karen Berry on "Depression," and Shawna Benson on "Social Stories."

The Ohio Department of Transportation on West Broad Street was the site of the program for Transportation Department staff. The theme of the multi-faceted program was "On Time in 09."

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## Students enjoy success at Central Crossing *By Rhonda Gilliam*

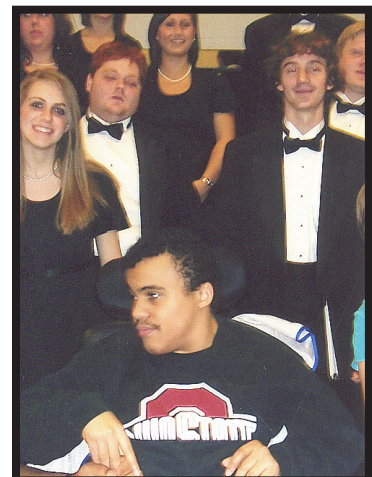
The FCBMRDD collaborative unit at Central Crossing is going well. Thanks in large part to Hubert Watson, Principal and John Morgan, Assistant Principal, inclusion of the unit into the regular education classrooms has been a success.

The support of the teachers has been overwhelmingly positive as has the immediate acceptance of the students.

Central Crossing High School is located at 4500 Big Run South Road, Grove City, and is part of the Southwestern City School District.



*Brittany Brokaw painting the set for "High School Musical" (Instructor Carrie Wisehart).*



*Vincent Smith enjoys the sounds of music in Symphonic Choir (Instructor Peg Weber).*



## In memoriam *Samuel J. Shannon*

A funeral service was held April 16th at Family of Faith Community Church in Newark for Samuel J. Shannon, who died April 12th due to cancer. He was 64.

Sam retired last May as maintenance foreman at Northeast School. He served in that position for 15 years.

According to FCBMRDD Superintendent Jed Morison, "Sam was an excellent staff member and an even better person. All who worked with him will remember his kindness and compassion."

Sam was survived by his wife, Shannon, who is employed as a cook at Northeast, 6 children, and 13 grandchildren.

# Michael Rench presents on Positive Culture Initiative

by Joe Edwards

At the annual joint meeting of FCBMRDD's Human Rights and Behavior Support committees on March 20th, Michael Rench, Deputy Director of the Ohio Department of MRDD (ODMRDD), spoke about the department's "Positive Culture Initiative."

ODMRDD hopes to reduce the use of restraints and time-out with consumers by "planting seeds for a culture of focus on the human condition."

The emphasis is on "truly valuing and knowing the person, creating healthy relationships, acknowledging difficulties people face, offering encouragement and support, and providing safe interactions during times of crisis."

He called for a culture shift, acknowledging that "if we change the way we see people who are affected by disabilities, then we will change our approach to supporting them."

Other important points included: Difficult behaviors are messages about the kind of life the person is living; if we focus on helping a person engage in the life he or she wants, other issues become unimportant; and the change we seek is within ourselves, as caregivers, rather than the person supported.

Michael Rench's presentation was well received. He has been invited to serve as keynote speaker at Staff Development Day for school staff on October 16th.



Michael Rench

## Search continues for star nominees

Top performers sometimes avoid the spotlight. Their efforts might even go unrecognized if no one speaks up.

This is where **you** come in.

If you know an individual or organization who is doing an extraordinary job in the service of FCBMRDD's mission, please complete the nomination form enclosed with this issue, and send it to the Community Star Awards Committee, 2879 Johnstown Road, Columbus, 43219.

The deadline for nominations is May 29th. The awards will be presented at a banquet on the evening of Wednesday, November 4th.

Established in 2003, the Community Star Awards are intended to honor those who, through outstanding work and dedication, support FCBMRDD's mission to help people with developmental disabilities live, work, and learn in the community.

For more information, please call Frank New at 342-5972.

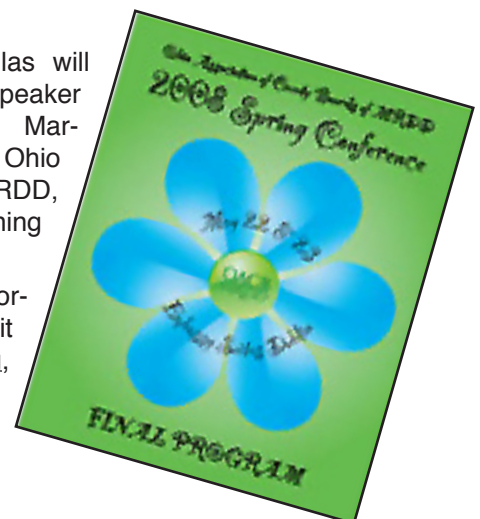
## County boards to host conference

The Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD will hold its 2009 Spring Conference on Thursday, May 21st, and Friday, May 22nd, at the Dublin Embassy Suites.

Topics to be discussed include adult services, updates from the Ohio Department of MRDD, major unusual incidents, and services for children.

Stephen Douglas will be the keynote speaker Thursday. John Martin, Director of the Ohio Department of MRDD, will make opening remarks.

For more information, please visit [www.oacbmrdd.org](http://www.oacbmrdd.org), or call 431-0616.



# Good For You

## Notable achievements in the FCBMRDD community

## Career Milestones

The **Ken Campbell Memorial** at Rhodes Park was dedicated on April 22nd. Ken passed away after a distinguished career in disabilities services, which included positions with FCBMRDD, the City of Columbus, and the Ohio State University's Nisonger Center. Former mayors **Buck Rinehart** and **Greg Lashutka**, as well as Columbus City Council Member **Charletta Tavares**, spoke at the event.

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A health screening was provided for agency staff at the Pleasnick Center on April 22nd. The Superwell Onsite Health Screening was offered free to those interested in identifying potential health problems. Testing included cholesterol, glucose level, blood pressure, weight and body mass index. **Dot Yeager**, **Anna Dickson** and **Amy Magginis** coordinated the screening.

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"The Autism Puzzle: The First Piece" was the title of a special program aired on WCMH-TV (Channel 4) recently. **Jerod Smalley**, a sportscaster at the station, wrote and narrated the program.

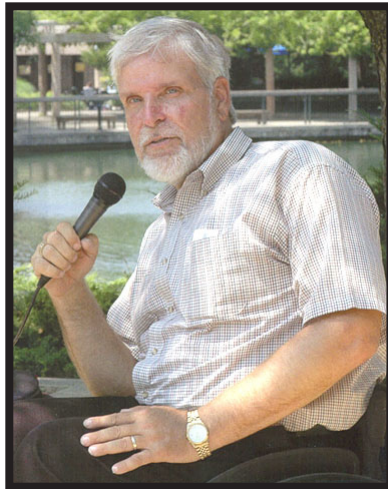
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Special thanks goes to the **Columbus Foundation** for its generosity in providing funding for the purchase of a back-up generator at West Central School. The generator was needed in order for the school to serve as a certified emergency shelter for the American Red Cross. Director of Planning **Frank New** and Director of Schools **Jack Brownley** were instrumental in obtaining the foundation's support.

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Former FCBMRDD staff member **Gary Vernon** was featured in an article in *Reader's Digest* recently. Now known as Gary LeVox, the lead singer with the famous, country-pop group, Rascal Flatts, reminisced about his 10 years as an instructor of persons with mental retardation.

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Ken Campbell



Joe Boxer and friends

**Joe Boxer** has resumed his monthly visits to **ARC Industries North** after taking 6 months off to undergo treatment for a brain tumor. These visits are arranged by **Colleen Carey**, senior companion, with *Central Ohio Good Shepherds - Therapy Dogs International*. Joe -- a 9 year-old boxer -- and his owner, **Debbie Prenatt**, have been visiting monthly since August, 2006. Joe interacts well with ARC North participants, and they with him. He enjoys being petted, and participants enjoy petting Joe, and receiving "face licks."

30 years

Lawrence Myers  
Janice O'Herron

25 years

James Turner

20 years

Donna Hulse  
Marsha Price  
Alfred Sellers

15 years

Michael Bollinger  
Ronald Hess  
Patricia Jordan  
Christopher Lane  
Edward Ruiz

10 years

Margaret Bruggeman

5 years

Stephen Brown  
Aileen Burnside  
Gary Durbin  
Jean Hickman  
Laura Murray  
Nikki Smith  
Beth Speaks

# Blood drive a success

The late **Roger May**, who served as supervisor of FCBMRDD grounds and facilities, believed donating blood to be “the easiest thing you’ll ever do to save a life.” In his honor, FCBMRDD staff conducted a very successful blood drive on April 20th. Special thanks to **Mary Martin** and **Carl Scott** for coordinating the drive.



*Susie May, widow of Roger and their daughter Tammy Wolfe both gave blood along with more than 45 staff members.*



*Roger's son, Jason, also participated.*

## Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

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Renee Stein  
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Superintendent Jed W. Morison

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**Information about FCBMRDD is always available on the internet at:**  
**[www.fcbmrdd.org](http://www.fcbmrdd.org)**

## Calendar

### May, 2009

- 10 Mother's Day
- 12 Franklin County Residential Services Board of Trustees meeting, 1021 Checkrein Ave., 11 a.m.
- 14 Families United meeting, 4131 N. High St., 7 p.m.
- 18 ARC Industries Board of Trustees meeting, Holiday Inn On-the-Lane, 11:30 a.m.
- 20 Parent League meeting, 2879 Johnstown Rd., 9:30 a.m.
- 21-22 OACBMRDD 2009 Spring Conference, Dublin Embassy Suites, 5100 Metro Place. Call 341-0616 for details.
- 25 Memorial Day observance - all county facilities closed.
- 28 FCBMRDD Finance and Human Resources Committees meeting, 2879 Johnstown Rd., 4 p.m.
- 28 FCBMRDD Board meeting, 2879 Johnstown Rd., 5 p.m.

## “Quotable quotes”

“Too many people overvalue what they are not, and undervalue what they are.”

**-- Malcom Forbes**

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.”

**-- Judy Garland**