



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

Linda Craig wraps up service on the Board

After serving the maximum three terms, Linda Craig is leaving her position on the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. She attended her last meeting in November, receiving a surprise farewell banner and much applause from FCBDD employees and early-childhood program students.

"It's been 12 years, but it sure doesn't seem like that long," she said. "I just feel honored to have been a part. All I can say is, this is the best board ever."

Because no one in her immediate family has a developmental disability, Craig's experience with the disabilities system was fairly limited when she was first appointed to the board. From Medicaid waivers to privatization of services and a seemingly endless list of acronyms, "It was a whole new world to me," she said. "I learned a lot."

Craig said she's especially appreciative of the friendship she developed with Christine Brown, a passionate self-advocate who attends most board meetings. "Christine is my heart," she said. "She has so much to teach people; that young lady could be a lobbyist. She has so much knowledge, and she's a fighter. She's inspired me."

Brown said she has always found it easy to work with Craig. "We formed a connection and I keep her up to date," Brown said. "We'd both like to see a self-advocate on the board sometime."

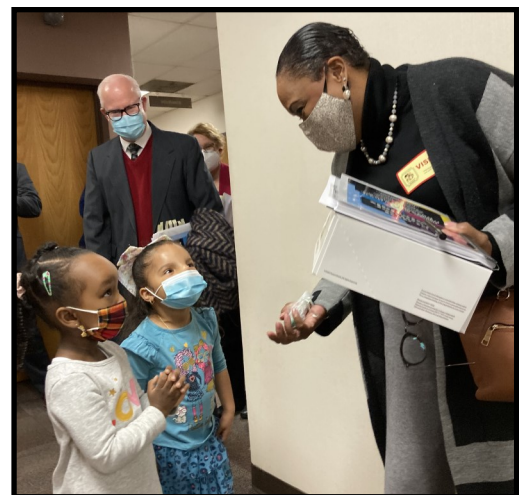
A native of Yonkers, New York, Craig works for the Franklin County Treasurer and is married to state Sen. Hearcel F. Craig. He came to the county board offices -- with flowers -- for her last meeting.

"Linda has always been so supportive of those we serve and our staff," said Jed Morison, FCBDD Superintendent/CEO. "Her guidance as (board) president helped to pass a levy and she provided steady, insightful leadership. She will be missed."

Craig promised not to be a stranger. "If ever you need a volunteer," she said, "I will be there."



Students from the Early Childhood Education and Family Center surprised outgoing FCBDD board member Linda Craig with a farewell banner.



ECEFC students also presented Linda Craig with a handmade necklace.

FCBDD again surpasses Combined Charities goal

Generous employees pledged more than \$63,000 to this year's Combined Charitable Campaign, zooming past the \$57,200 target set for the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The agency has long been the top contributor among county agencies.

Early Childhood Education Director Becky Love, who served as the 2021 campaign chair at FCBDD, said she's especially pleased that staff members stepped up during a time of heightened community need. "You've made the agency very, very proud," she said.

Love thanked her team members -- Laura Billingham, Sarah Gillilan, Mary Martin and Debbie New -- and the campaign's department coordinators.

"I think the fact that our staff is close to the people we serve, and sees the needs in our community, makes a difference," said FCBDD Superintendent/CEO Jed Morison. "Their support is incredible."

West Central School nurses cherish 'adventure' of each day

During the earlier months of the pandemic, West Central School nurse Debbie Charles sought to reassure students by holding a smiling photograph in front of her masked face. She wanted them to know it was still her, still the same Nurse Debbie who's provided decades of loving care.

"She knows the science of nursing, and she also knows it's more than that," said Charles' colleague at West Central, school nurse Sarah Eads. "There is an art. Debbie is my mentor, and she's a wonderful one."

For families whose children have serious developmental disabilities and medical needs, nurses are crucial to school success. Charles and Eads regularly tend to feeding tubes and breathing treatments, administer medications, and respond to seizures, behavioral concerns or illness.

"Every day is an adventure," Charles said. "COVID has been another challenge. But even with all that, we want our students to be able to be here. Our kids don't learn virtually. And no one wants to live in a bubble."

Eads, who recently joined West Central as a full-time registered nurse, tag teams the daily demands with Charles. For more than 18 months, Charles also has monitored a staggering amount of COVID-related information from county, state and federal health agencies, including contact tracing.

"Debbie has stepped way beyond the role of school nurse," said West Central Principal Maryalice Turner. "It's extraordinary what she and Sarah do. Parents should feel very secure with them here."

Though at one time all Ohio county boards had schools, the number has dropped to a little less than half, and school programs aren't as large as they once were. But their nurses are as laser-focused as ever.

"These nurses have to be vested in all of the kids and know their backgrounds and needs," said Bev Smith, a former educator who serves as a consultant with the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. "When I worked for a county board, our nurse was our north star."

Charles' late son had a developmental disability; Eads lost a child with a disability during infancy. They understand the anxiety families sometimes feel when sending children with intensive needs, and limited communication ability, off to school for the day.

"Our assessment skills must be very acute," Eads said. Coordination among teachers, therapists and other service providers also is key.

Over the years, Charles has known several students who passed away, which of course is devastating. She considers each one a part of her family. "It's hard," she said. "But it's also a reminder of how much you love these kids."



Sarah Eads, left, and veteran school nurse Debbie Charles strive to meet the wide-ranging needs of West Central students and families.

State education officials explore FCBDD transition program

Representatives from the Ohio Department of Education recently visited West Central for an up-close view of the unique transition school for older students with developmental disabilities.



West Central fine arts specialist JR Ridgeway discusses art and music classes with officials from the Ohio Department of Education Office for Exceptional Children. From left, OTSP project coordinator Sarah Brooks, education program specialist Chralin Forsthoefel and office Director Jo Hannah Ward.

"There is nothing else like us in the state," Principal Maryalice Turner said. "Everything we do is focused on transition."

Jo Hannah Ward, director of the Office for Exceptional Children, said she wanted to learn more about the transition curriculum at West Central, and consider how similar efforts might be implemented elsewhere. Ward said she and her colleagues came away impressed with all that West Central offers.

Ward also listened to concerns about the need for more-appropriate assessment measures for students whose abilities don't align with current standards.

The shift to adult life is often complex for young people with serious disabilities and many families need help preparing for different vocational, social and residential opportunities. West Central provides that focus for students ages 14-22.

Most West Central students have significant disabilities and benefit from the therapies, aquatics program, and on-site nursing care. The school also offers adaptive physical education, art and music.

Rep. Jarrells tours FCBDD, meets with providers

State Rep. Dontavius Jarrells, who is in his first term representing Ohio's 25th House District in northeast Columbus, recently visited the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities to learn more about agency programs and issues facing the disabilities community.

"We're just delighted that he took the time," FCBDD Superintendent/CEO Jed Morison said. "He's very interested in supporting services and especially in reaching out about workforce challenges."

Jarrells toured the Early Childhood Education Family Center on Johnstown Road and also met with representatives from the Ohio Provider Resource Association and with Rebecca Sharp, executive director of the nonprofit service-provider Open Door Columbus. They spoke about the shortage of direct-support professionals and the need for higher wages.

"He clearly recognizes the workforce problem, and the importance of DSPs," Morison said.

As a legislator, Jarrells has said he wants to prioritize wage increases and focus on growing opportunity in low-income, minority and immigrant communities.



*Representative
Dontavius Jarrells*

FCBDD wants to hear from you

Included in this issue of *Dateline* is a printed copy of the Community Survey and Needs Assessment. Please take a few minutes to respond to this brief questionnaire; your thoughts are important to us.

Comments from people we serve, family members, staff, providers and the public help us to shape plans for the coming year. We review these responses and consider them in the final development of the Board's annual action plan, which is considered during the January Board meeting.

Return print surveys by Jan. 1, 2022, to the FCBDD Superintendent's Office, 2879 Johnstown Rd., Columbus, Ohio, 43219.

You also can fill out the survey online: Go to fcbdd.org/publications/latest-news/

Podcast series delves into lives of adults with Down syndrome

Though he had no experience with podcasts, Mike Messina instantly felt comfortable with the idea behind *Extraordinarily Ordinary*, a new podcast series from the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio.

Messina stars in the first episode, grabbing a beer with Sunny 95 deejay Dino Tripodis. The two talk (and laugh) about life for 40 minutes or so. "It was pretty awesome," said Messina, a 41-year-old who lives and works in northwest Columbus. "It seems like a lot of people love it."

All six episodes, hosted by Tripodis, focus on adults with Down syndrome as they discuss jobs, college, independent living, romance, family, goals and dreams.

"These adults have important life lessons that they share with those who live and work with them every day," Tripodis said. "Having now taken the time to listen, I feel fortunate to have learned from them."

Marilyn Messina, Mike's mom, said revealing the "regular" aspects of life comes naturally to her son. Mike started working at age 16, lives on his own and is expert at using Uber and Lyft. "Being 'regular' is just part of how he was raised," she said.

Having a job that's near his home, and in a fairly walkable community with restaurants and businesses nearby, also can boost quality of life, the Messinas say. Going to the same places and seeing familiar faces makes it easier to create friendships.

Mike said he wants younger people with disabilities to know that there are lots of ways to achieve more independence. "I like to do things on my own rather than depend on my family," he said.

Marilyn said she'll be happy if the podcast offers a dose of hope to parents raising young children with Down syndrome. "They need that extra lift sometimes," she said, smiling. "To know that, one day, your kid is just gonna be another guy in a bar having a beer with a friend."



Mike Messina, left, is featured in the first episode of Extraordinarily Ordinary, a first-ever podcast series from the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio. Long-time radio personality Dino Tripodis, right, hosts.

Episodes were released in October and November on PodBean, Spotify, Amazon Music and also are available at www.dsaco.net/podcastseries

Calendar

Editor's Note: The following calendar is tentative due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Call 614-342-5950 before attending any meeting to see if it is still scheduled.

December 2021

- 1-3 OACB (Ohio Association of County Boards) Annual Convention, for more details call 614-431-0616.
- 6 Public Hearing on the Annual Action/ Strategic Plan and IDEA Funding. To connect to the hearing by phone, call 1-929-205-6099
[Zoom Link to the Public Hearing](#)
- 9 Self-Advocate Advisory Council at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom
- 20 Parent/Teacher Day, classes closed.
- 21 Winter begins.
- 21 Winter recess begins for ECE and West Central School. Classes resume January 3, 2022.
- 25 Merry Christmas.



Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

- Beth Savage**, President
- Marie Crawford**, Vice President
- Michael Underwood**, Secretary
- John Bickley**
- Linda Craig**
- Samuel Davis**
- William W. Wilkins**

Superintendent/CEO **Jed W. Morison**

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities does not discriminate in employment or services on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or disability.

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Information about the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is always available on the internet at:

www.fcbdd.org

Good For You

Notable achievements in the FCBDD community

We appreciate the relationship between Columbus Crew SC and our Franklin County Flyers Special Olympics Team. Columbus Crew SC recently teamed up with Vertiv to donate 70 pairs of high-quality soccer cleats to our Flyers program, and they even made a special delivery! Melissa Dykstra of Vertiv; former Crew player Frankie Hejduk, Franklin County Special Olympics Director Ryan Phillips and Flyers athletes Jack Held and Debra Goldfarb



Congratulations to Jack Brownley, director of schools and special services, on his two years as president of the Governing Board of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities. Jack now moves on to a two-year stint as past president.

We salute the many staff members who have served in a branch of the military and hope they enjoyed a meaningful Veterans Day. Special thanks to a few here at FCBDD who shared some details of their service: Johanna Nitz (West Central School), United States Air Force; Kim Allen-Green (Service Coordination), U.S. Army Reserve; James Cavins, (Service Coordination), U.S. Army, U.S. Army Reserve; Chris Martin, (Information Technology), U.S. Army; and Craig Derksen (Information Technology), U.S. Army.

Thank you for your service.



We wish Gregg Maguire, Donna Frye, Mike Berry and Kevin Shaw all the best in retirement. Gregg, who worked in the Maintenance Department, was with FCBDD for 30 years. Donna had 27 years with the agency and served as a supported-living options specialist in the Service Coordination Department. A service coordinator with 29 years at FCBDD, Mike worked with adults with Level 1 waivers. Kevin also retires as a service coordinator after 29 years of service, 24 of them with I Am Boundless.

Career Milestones

30 Years
Gregg Maguire

15 Years
Joshua Sandy

Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Community Survey and Needs Assessment

Periodically, the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities assesses community needs and services provided by the agency. Individuals who are served, families, staff, service providers, volunteers, advocates, collaborative agencies, and the public are encouraged to take a few minutes to complete and respond to this survey. Your response will assist the Board in its efforts to improve services and better meet needs. ***Please complete the survey and return to Superintendent's Office FCBDD, 2879 Johnstown Road, Columbus, Ohio 43219, by January 1st.***

1. Please check as appropriate. (You may check more than one.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Receiving FCBDD Services <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Not Receiving FCBDD Services <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian/Family Member of Individual Receiving FCBDD Services <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian/Family Member of Individual Not Receiving FCBDD Services <input type="checkbox"/> Staff of FCBDD <input type="checkbox"/> Board Member <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Member of Collaborative Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of Child Enrolled in Local School District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> News Media Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Community Member Not Receiving FCBDD Services <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Member of Service Provider/Contract Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Staff of Franklin County School District <input type="checkbox"/> Elected Official <input type="checkbox"/> Member of Business Community <input type="checkbox"/> State Official <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please List: _____) |
|---|---|

2. Please check which services (if any) of the following you or your family member are receiving .

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Services <input type="checkbox"/> School Services <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Services <input type="checkbox"/> Therapies <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Family Resources / Respite <input type="checkbox"/> Residential / Supported Living Services <input type="checkbox"/> Service Coordination Services <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please List: _____) |
|--|--|

3. Please provide your satisfaction rating for the following categories by circling your choice.

FCBDD Services	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not Applicable
Early Childhood/Home Based	1	2	3	N/A
Schools	1	2	3	N/A
Transportation	1	2	3	N/A
Special Olympics / Recreation	1	2	3	N/A
Service Coordination	1	2	3	N/A
Other (Please List: _____)	1	2	3	N/A

Services Provided by Contract w/FCBDD	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not Applicable
ARC Industries Adult Services	1	2	3	N/A
ARC Industries Employment Services	1	2	3	N/A
Family Resources	1	2	3	N/A
Nisonger Early Childhood	1	2	3	N/A
Nisonger Dental	1	2	3	N/A
Nisonger Dual Diagnosis	1	2	3	N/A
Nationwide Children's Hospital	1	2	3	N/A
Childhood League Early Childhood	1	2	3	N/A
Easter Seals Early Childhood	1	2	3	N/A

(over)

Services Provided by Contract w/FCBDD	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not Applicable
Dahlberg Early Childhood	1	2	3	N/A
Goodwill / SAGE Senior Services	1	2	3	N/A
Goodwill / Young Adult Services	1	2	3	N/A
Goodwill / Work and Community Services	1	2	3	N/A
Epilepsy Foundation	1	2	3	N/A
Creative Housing	1	2	3	N/A
Supported Living Services	1	2	3	N/A
Other (Please List: _____)	1	2	3	N/A

4. Please provide your opinion of the following statements by circling your choice:

	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	N/A	
Overall, FCBDD is providing quality services to the community.	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD tax dollars are being spent wisely.	1	2	3	N/A	
Parents/Family Members of FCBDD participants are involved and supported.	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD collaborates well with other community organizations.	1	2	3	N/A	
Generally, FCBDD meets the needs of individuals in our community who have developmental disabilities.	1	2	3	N/A	
Participants have adequate choice in services offered.	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD staff treat participants, family members and public at large with courtesy and with respect:	Participants	1	2	3	N/A
	Family	1	2	3	N/A
	Public	1	2	3	N/A
FCBDD communicates well. ('NewsBits,' 'Dateline,' Annual Report, etc.)	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD prevention services, including early intervention, and public awareness are provided adequately.	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD supports efforts of individuals to advocate for themselves.	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD supports 'employment first' efforts.	1	2	3	N/A	
FCBDD has done a good job supporting individuals during the COVID-19 Pandemic.	1	2	3	N/A	

5. Please respond to the following questions, if applicable:

- a. What are the strengths of FCBDD? _____

- b. How can FCBDD improve? _____

- c. If you or a family are not currently receiving FCBDD services, but anticipate need in the future, please indicate the service you will need and anticipated date: _____

6. If you would like more information regarding FCBDD or follow-up to questions, please indicate what you would like, and include your name, address and phone number: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____

- If you do not currently receive the FCBDD newsletter - 'Dateline' or 'NewsBits', but would like to receive it, please check the box and include email address to receive electronically:

~ Thank you for taking time to offer your opinion ~