

# Dateline

June 2023

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"Helping people to live, learn and work in our community"

## West Central families, staff celebrate combined-class graduation

Joined by several alumni whose commencement had taken place virtually during the pandemic, members of the West Central School Class of 2023 crossed the stage before a proud, cheering, and sometimes teary-eyed crowd.

"Because of your children we are all better servants, better educators, and better people," Principal Rebecca Holthaus said. "They certainly all deserve to be celebrated and I am thrilled to be able to do that in person together!"

Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, served as master of ceremonies. Marci Straughter, the first person with developmental disabilities to serve on the FCBDD board, spoke and advised graduates to find a fulfilling path.

Sha Richert said she's happy that her son, TeVeon Mitchell-Troche, went to West Central for his last year of school. "They made me feel like they were going to love TeVeon like he was their own," she said. "And they did."



Sophia Ruschau and instructor Kelly Bowers



TeVeon Mitchell-Troche and mom Sha Richert



Daniel Jewett and sister Sarah Gift



Javonya West with son Isaac Talbert

## FCBDD salutes the Class of 2023 graduates and families:

Libaan "Lee" Ahmed  
John Morgan Cline  
Heidi Edmier  
James "JP" Floyd  
Jazmyne Friend  
Zayd Hashmi  
Ronald Hawkins  
Anthony Holt  
Daniel Jewett  
Nehemiah Jones  
Adam Legg

Adrianna McDade  
TeVeon Mitchell-Troche  
Sophia Ruschau  
Ronald "RJ" Russell  
Jorge Sanchez  
Gavin Slatzer  
Kaled Soufi  
Andrey Spurlock  
Natasha Thurman  
Kaitlyn West  
Nicholus Wheatley

## Superintendent/CEO Jed Morison announces retirement

Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, announced that he will retire on Dec. 31, 2023, after 54 years of public service.

He will remain on the job while the Board conducts a search and hires his replacement. Morison then plans to take several months of accumulated vacation time and will be available to the new superintendent during the transition.

His professional career began in 1969 at age 21 and included work as a school bus driver, counselor and direct-support professional, teacher and director of Ohio Special Olympics. Morison returned to FCBDD as assistant superintendent and was named superintendent in 2000. He also spent 14 years as a member of the Bexley City Council.

"I have had the good fortune to witness what I often call a civil rights movement for people with disabilities," he said in a message to staff, friends and the community. "We have come a long way, now helping thousands of children and adults of all abilities and their families to live enjoyable, safe and meaningful lives."

To read his full message, go to <https://fcbdd.org/jed-morison-to-retire>



# ARC opens spacious new day facility in Grove City

A vacant call center in Grove City has been transformed into a bright, welcoming and barrier-free space for adults with developmental disabilities.

ARC Industries recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new facility on Marlane Drive, which expects to provide active treatment and community-based services for about 75 people. A majority will be residents of the nearby Heinzerling Developmental Center who had been traveling to Groveport for day services.

"We realized there aren't a lot of providers in the area, especially those that can support people with complex needs," said Amanda Smith, chief services officer at ARC. "Now it's going to be a nine-minute commute for them – we timed it – instead of 25."

To reimagine the building, ARC leaders turned to their front-line employees. "We really worked closely with our staff – they know the needs of people best," she said. "From the beginning, they helped us pick the architect, they helped us pick the design team, the colors and even the paint."

The top-to-bottom renovation received the Interior Design Award in the Voices of Design Competition hosted by the Columbus Center for Architecture and Design.



*Participants enjoy the bright, airy feel.*

"I'm so excited to see what this will provide for people with developmental disabilities in our community," said Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. "It means a lot."

The building is focused on flexibility of space and a feel that is open, modern and filled with natural light. It has several private changing rooms, activity rooms and an outdoor sensory garden.

"It's a win-win for everyone," said CJ Clifford, habilitation specialist at Heinzerling. "The building is innovative and accessible. It's pretty much what human beings want – to be able to go outside, and to experience the outside when you're inside."

Smith said ARC would love to hear from community members interested in volunteering or offering instruction in art, yoga, literacy or other activities. For contact information, go to [www.arcind.com](http://www.arcind.com)



*DODD Director Kim Hauck and FCBDD Superintendent Jed Morison celebrate with program participant.*

# Return of FCBDD Provider Fair draws hundreds of families



*Larry Macintosh, Director of Administrative and Support Services*

As she looked over the many positive comments on the Provider Fair visitor survey, Service Coordination Supervisor Anne Watson spotted one that seemed to represent "the hope of our efforts," she said.

"It was amazing! I laughed and cried!" the parent wrote. "The supports here made me feel like I CAN DO this."

Hundreds of area service providers, community resource groups, people with developmental disabilities and their family members filled the Lausche Building at the state fairgrounds on April 27 for an event that offers a rare opportunity for people to connect, talk, learn and ask questions in person.

"Sometimes you just don't want to communicate by website or email," one father said after spending a few hours at the event. "This was a very productive morning, and now, I've got a lot of good resources."

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities had not hosted a Provider Fair for the past three years due to the pandemic. Its return was a huge success, said Larry Macintosh, FCBDD Director of Administrative and Support Services. "For the first time ever, we filled up the entire building," he said.

Pedicabs provided rides both inside the cavernous building and in the parking lot. "It's a little overwhelming," parent Anjie Graber said. "But it really is nice to be able to meet people in person."



## Community partner spotlight

# Goodwill Columbus, Harmony Project team up for collaborative performance

As she stood before an audience that had swelled to more than 400 people, Lattie Harrington realized she wasn't feeling like her usual happy self. "I thought, 'Uh-oh, what just happened? It got me,'" she said. "I got stage fright. I cried a little bit."

But the tears didn't linger, and Harrington soon felt happy and proud to be among the Goodwill Columbus Work and Community Services (WCS) artists taking part in "Hear My Voice: The Goodwill Harmony Sessions."

The collaborative performance on April 26 featured powerful songs, storytelling, theater and rhythmic movement, along with a display of works by Goodwill Art Studio artists. Goodwill WCS Director Tiffany Martin said WCS has partnered with the nonprofit Harmony Project and We Amplify Voices, plus local storyteller Donte Woods-Spikes, for the past few years to bring inclusive, creative opportunities in the arts to people with developmental disabilities.

"It's all about giving them experiences they've never had," Martin said with a smile. "Even though she was nervous, Lattie often finds a way to give herself her own solo."

### Seems like you were busy, Lattie. What were your performance areas in the big show?

I was in the choir, in the rap session and in the heartbeat (drama therapy) with Joe.

### So maybe your tears were actually happy ones – just lots of emotion all at once.

I got a little scared when that light came on. My mom cried, too.

### But once you settled down, did you enjoy it? Are you glad you've worked with groups like the Harmony Project and with We Amplify Voices to produce really cool songs?

Oh, yes. I love it! Now I'm on YouTube, Spotify and Apple. I'm a little bit of a star.

### Sounds like you're up for more.

I've still got my Harmony t-shirt. I'm going to keep going. I practice all the time.

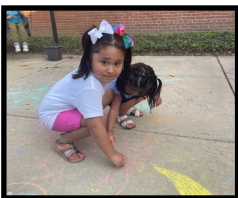


## ECLC families, staff celebrate creativity at art show

The annual art show at the FCBDD Early Childhood Learning Community, a longstanding end-of-the-year tradition, drew dozens of parents, family members and friends eager to see the many ways students expressed themselves through art.

From paintings and drawings to sculpture and sound, the hallways, gym and classrooms were filled with creative works. As in previous years, each student contributed two pieces for the show. Some have been in the works for weeks or months over the course of the school year.

Having fun throughout the process matters more than the end result.



"It's really a wonderful event," said Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, said of the show. "It's something we all look forward to."



## Easterseals offers improv camp to help build social skills

Easterseals Central and Southeast Ohio is teaming up with The Improvaneer Method to offer summer "Improva-Camp" sessions for youth and adults with disabilities.

The Improvaneer Method was launched by Rob Snow, an Ohio parent who has a son with Down syndrome. Participants use improvisation to build skills such as quick and creative thinking, problem solving, adapting to change, listening, teamwork, self-confidence and more.

"Improv games is what they call them, but those games are working on all those social communication skills that are so important," said Lisa McCarty, Director of Children's Programs at Easterseals.

McCarty has a teenage son with Down syndrome who took part in Improvaneer classes offered through the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio. "He loved it," she said.

Camps are broken into a youth group for ages 10 to 15 and adult sessions for those 16 and older. All take place over three days from June 26-28 and end with a performance and reception. Cost is \$175 per participant.

Sign up at [tinyurl.com/improv-es](https://tinyurl.com/improv-es) To learn more about the Improvaneer Method, go to [www.theimprovaneermethod.com](http://www.theimprovaneermethod.com)

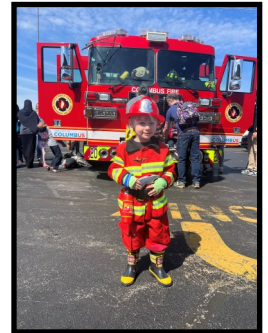
## ECE Partnership hosts touch-a-truck extravaganza

Hundreds of young children got to see the real-life version of some of their favorite toys at the recent touch-a-truck event at the FCBDD Early Childhood Education and Family Center.

“Our kids love vehicles – they just do,” said Jessica Bennett, a Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities teacher who helped organize the event. “And we had the space here to allow kids to see them, touch them in a safe space, and to really bring the community in.”

Bennett said the idea grew into an end-of-the-school-year celebration, including not just the trucks, but food, a resource table and even a costumed character. More than 380 people attended.

Children were able to explore 12 different vehicles, from fire and plow trucks to a postal delivery van and utility bucket truck. FCBDD and the Early Childhood Education Partnership are grateful for the support of the city of Columbus, the U.S. Postal Service, AEP Ohio and Rumpke.



## Ohio Tech Ambassador Network coming to Columbus

Families and people with disabilities who are interested in learning more about supportive and assistive technology are invited to a special event this month with the Ohio Tech Ambassadors.

From 1 to 4 p.m. on June 15, Tech Ambassadors from around the state will appear in person at the Ohio Statehouse to speak and to show some of the technology they use in their everyday lives.

George Myers, grant director for the Ohio Tech Ambassador Network, said the idea is to provide opportunities for up-close demonstrations and discussions in an open-house environment. Organizers will be giving away a new Echo Show 5 to a pre-registered person or family member present when the winner is announced.

The event also serves as a wrap-up celebration for the current phase of the Ohio Tech project, which since January 2021 has featured Ohio Tech Ambassadors serving as role models, hosting events and providing peer-to-peer mentoring to show how supportive technology can foster independence and enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

Central Ohio has three Tech Ambassadors, including Marci Straughter, a member of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. To register for the June 15 event, go to <https://ohiotechambassadors.org/events/ohio-tech-ambassadors-in-columbus>

## Popular children’s author visits FCBDD classroom

Laura Numeroff, best-selling author of the children’s classic *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, recently visited Bolton Crossing Elementary and spent time in the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities collaborative classroom there.

FCBDD teacher Patti Saniel-Banrey arranged the visit and happily helped to feature *Raising a Hero*, the latest of Numeroff’s 47 books. The illustrated book is about a young boy who raises a service dog named Max, and proceeds support Canine Companions for Independence.

Saniel-Banrey also has a dog through Canine Companions – named Lion – who works with her in the FCBDD classroom. The service dog connection is great, Saniel-Banrey said, but she has long used Numeroff’s books in her work with students who have disabilities. “They’re easy to read and to understand. And they’re easy to have activities with, too,” she said.

Numeroff has visited more than 150 schools over the years and said she loves meeting the children who read her books. “And,” she said, “I absolutely love animals.”



Author Laura Numeroff, in pink, visited an FCBDD classroom.

# Good For You

*Notable achievements in the FCBDD community*

Thanks to everyone who donated to our Operation Feed campaign. We raised nearly \$6,000 to help local families put food on the table! That's a big increase from last year. And a hearty shoutout to West Central School, whose generous staff raised a significant chunk of our total.



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We're grateful to the many staff members who worked so hard to make the FCBDD Provider Fair a big success. And we know the disability community appreciates the effort, too. It was an awesome event!

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Congratulations to FCBDD Director of Early Childhood Education Becky Love, who received the 2022-2023 Partner of the Year Award from the YMCA of Central Ohio.

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FCBDD and our Early Childhood Education Partnership were honored to host two important and informative visits recently: Swati Adarkar, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning in the U.S. Education Department, joined us in April. And in early May, we met with Dr. Angela Chapman, now the new Columbus City Schools superintendent.



# As the school year ends, FCBDD thanks retirees

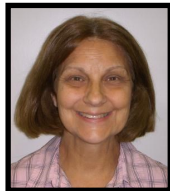
The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities is grateful to these staff members for their many years of service to people with disabilities and their families. Tally all this dedication and it adds up to more than 200 years.

We hope everyone retiring this spring and summer enjoys a long, fulfilling retirement. Happy trails!

## West Central School



**Kathy Bowerman**



**Kathy Ahlers**

## Administration



**Cindy Massenelli**

## Early Childhood Education



**(left to right) Susan Gibson, Jill Duffy, Claudia Simmons, and Pam Borowy**

## Transportation



**Greig Brown**



**Dianna Taylor**

# Career Milestones

## 35 Years

**Teresa Johnson  
Wendy Mandel**

## 30 Years

**Michael Christen  
Tacey Reed**

## 25 Years

**Lynne Johansson**

## 20 Years

**Sara Faudree  
Alan Rafiqq  
Jessica Taylor  
Timothy Whiting**

## 15 Years

**Matt Walter**

## 5 Years

**Donald Kulpa  
Anne Renzi**

# DODD seeks participants for family caregiver survey

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities is conducting a survey to learn about the different ways families and guardians are affected by caregiving.

Caregivers can complete the voluntary survey online or by phone. Responses are confidential and are used to help policymakers understand the challenges faced by caregivers and formulate policies to overcome them.

For more information, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yckkxj2x>



## Dateline

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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

[www.fcbdd.org](http://www.fcbdd.org)

## Calendar

### June 2023

- 5 West Central School Summer Program begins.
- 8 Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Self-Advocate Advisory Council meeting via Zoom; 10 a.m.
- 13 ECE Summer Center Program begins.
- 15 FCBDD Early Childhood Education and the Mid-Ohio Food Collective Produce Drive through from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the ECEFC Bus Lane (accessed via Marilyn Lane). For more details, contact Sarah Gillilan at 614-342-5803.
- 19 Juneteenth - all county facilities closed
- 22 Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Board meeting at 2879 Johnstown Road, Columbus. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details. Noon (12:00 p.m.) <https://bit.ly/3JvZSUJ>
- 23,24,25 Opening Ceremonies and Ohio Special Olympics State Games at Jesse Owens Stadium 7 p.m.
- 30 West Central Summer Program ends.

### July 2023

- 4 Independence Day - all county facilities closed.
- 12 Family Support meeting, 10 a.m. via Zoom. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details or click the following link to connect: <https://bit.ly/3JvZSUJ>
- 13 ECE Summer Center program ends.
- 20 FCBDD Early Childhood Education and the Mid-Ohio Food Collective Produce Drive through from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the ECEFC Bus Lane (accessed via Marilyn Lane). For more details, contact Sarah Gillilan at 614-342-5803.
- 27 Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Board meeting. Please contact Amy Magginis at 614-342-5950 for details. <https://bit.ly/3JvZSUJ>

### August 2023

- 17 FCBDD Early Childhood Education and the Mid-Ohio Food Collective Produce Drive through from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the ECEFC Bus Lane (accessed via Marilyn Lane). For more details, contact Sarah Gillilan at 614-342-5803.
- 21,22 ECE and School staff returns - Staff Preparation/ Development Days.
- 23 First day of classes at West Central School.
- 23,24,25 ECE Program Service Days – Parent Visitation (No Transportation).
- 28 First day of classes, ECE - please consult program schedule.

**The next issue of Dateline will be the July/ August issue printed in late July.**