A Word from our Superintendent

It is a new year, and it is time for us to focus on our 2016 priorities! Although we have many tasks on which to focus, our main priority this year is going to be dealing with the conflict free case management concerns and the privatization of Production Services Unlimited (PSU), Inc.

The federal government has said the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) is not able to be both a funder/planner of services and a provider of services. Therefore, we need to remove ourselves as the provider. PSU, Inc. has been an arm of the WCBDD since its inception in 1971. PSU, Inc. provides valuable, quality services to people with developmental disabilities in Warren County. We know that many families depend on PSU, Inc. for their family members, and we want to see it remain in place for those individuals and families. Therefore, we are working with PSU, Inc. to become a stand-alone company and provider. The current plan has them being fully privatized on January 1, 2018.

Over the next two years, we will be undertaking the process to assist in making that happen. We will be working closely with the PSU, Inc. Board in order to make the transition successful. Later this month, we will be announcing times and locations for information sessions for individuals served, family members of individuals served, and anyone else interested in attending to discuss our two-year plan to make this happen.

We are responsible for ensuring that people in Warren County have provider options so that they may choose the provider that would best serve them. Therefore, we will be working on the recruitment of additional providers into Warren County as well.

Our goal throughout this process is to be transparent about the changes coming, be fair to our employees and the Warren County taxpayers, and ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities in Warren County continue to receive quality services. We hope you will join us at one of the informational sessions coming soon.

On February 1st, we were pleased to participate when Ohio State Senator Shannon Jones (pictured left) presented an Ohio Senate Presidential Letter to Taylor Wittenauer. Taylor, age 13, won first place in the Special Olympics State Swim Meet in the 25-meter free-style event. Pictured to the right of Taylor are WCBDD Superintendent Megan Manuel and Taylor’s Service Coordinator, Rebecca Bryant.
The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities will host a community egg hunt for children with developmental disabilities at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 20, 2016. The egg hunt will be held at the Miracle League Field in Springboro, located at 1605 S. Main Street. The event is open to children ages 18 and under who have developmental disabilities. Siblings are welcome to participate. There will be 1,500 eggs filled with toys and prize tickets, and minimal candy. The Easter Bunny will make a special appearance to pose for photos and hand out prizes. Bring your basket and camera to this free, annual event. The Miracle League Field can accommodate wheelchairs and walkers.

Warren County Probate and Juvenile Court holds employment presentation

The Warren County Probate and Juvenile Court recently held a special presentation to promote and discuss the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities. More than 50 people from Warren County governmental agencies attended, including Warren County Prosecutor David Fornshell, Warren County Court Judges Donald Oda and Robert Peeler, Warren County Recorder Linda Oda, Warren County Auditor Matt Nolan, and Warren County Clerk of Courts James Spaeth.

Warren County Probate and Juvenile Court Judge Joseph Kirby held the event in his courtroom. “I became interested in hiring someone with disabilities after attending an event last March at the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities,” said Judge Kirby. “We contacted them (WCBDD), and by April we had hired Megan Mahoney to be a file clerk in our office.”

Megan Mahoney was born with cerebral palsy, and receives services and supports from the WCBDD. “It has been a long road to finding my dream job here at Warren County Juvenile and Probate Court,” said Mahoney. “I have worked in clerical and secretarial roles for more than 15 years, yet I filled out more than 200 applications before getting this job.”

Mahoney is supported by a WCBDD Job Coach who helps her to be successful in her position. “Whenever we add new responsibilities to Megan’s job, we have the support of her Job Coach to help her succeed,” said Kirby.

Megan Manuel, Superintendent of WCBDD participated in the presentation and said, “One of the main ways people identify themselves, whether they have a disability or not, is by their job. People with disabilities want the same things that everyone wants; which includes having a good job.”

Judge Kirby urged other county agencies to hire people with disabilities and said, “Megan is an outstanding employee. Her commitment to her job and the staff makes our office a better place to work.”

Megan Mahoney’s speech was videotaped and can be viewed at www.warrencountydd.org/videos.
Open Houses will celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities will hold two Open Houses on March 3, 2016 to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. The public is invited to attend to learn more about our agency’s services and supports which we provide to people who have developmental disabilities.

The first Open House will be held from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at the Milo H. Banta Center, located at 410 S. East Street. Warren County Commissioners will present a proclamation to Megan Manuel, WCBDD Superintendent, and a member of the WCBDD Self-Advocacy group, Voices Speaking Out. There will be a performance by the Voices of Warren County, which is a choral group consisting of individuals receiving services from the WCBDD. Light refreshments will be provided, and open tours will be offered. In addition, raffle tickets will be sold for gift baskets that will be awarded to winners later that night.

The second Open House will be held from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium at the Warren C. Young Center, located at 801 Drake Road. The evening format follows the same schedule as the day-time event. At the conclusion of the Open House at 7:00 p.m., participants will gather in the gymnasium for the Business and Provider Fair in which local businesses and service providers display their products and services. The Fair will run from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., and the drawing for the gift basket raffles will be held at 7:30 p.m. All proceeds from raffle ticket sales will benefit our choir, the Voices of Warren County and our self-advocacy group, Voices Speaking Out.

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and the theme for 2016 is “What’s Your Story?” Statewide, organizations devoted to serving people with developmental disabilities are planning special events to raise public awareness of the many abilities people have, regardless of disability.

School to Adult Life Transition seminar to be held February 24th

A free information seminar for parents of teenage children who have developmental disabilities will be held on February 24th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Warren C. Young Center, located at 801 Drake Road in Lebanon.

The seminar is part of a series titled, School to Adult Life Transition, or S.A.L.T., and is a funded pilot project of the Employment First Local Leaders Collaboration of Montgomery, Greene and Warren Counties to raise expectations for community employment for youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

The series seeks to address needs and concerns that families may have regarding transition from school to adult life. The topic for the session on February 24th is Leasure and Recreation Night. Family members of people with disabilities, agency personnel and educators are welcome to attend and participate at any of the presentations. Parents are encouraged to bring their children ages 14 and older to participate in a Student/Young Adult session while parents attend the presentation. In the Student/Young Adult session, students will work on employment awareness, planning and preparation for the adult world, and self-advocacy.

The S.A.L.T. series sessions will begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. Series dates and topics include:

- February 24, 2016: Leasure and Recreation Night
- March 23, 2016: How does employment impact Social Security benefits and benefits analysis?
- April 27, 2016: Parent Panel
- May 25, 2016: Organize Your Transition

For more information, contact Patti Shrom, Parent Resource Trainer at (513) 892-0596 or e-mail prtpattis@gmail.com.

The seminar will be videotaped and available for viewing on the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities’ website. To view the video go to www.warrencountydd.org/videos.
Community partnership creates new position to assist college students with disabilities or mental health issues

Students at Sinclair Community College, Courseview who have developmental disabilities or are experiencing mental health issues have a new resource available to them, to help them be more successful in school. A new counseling position has been created through a community partnership between the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) and the Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties (MHRS), along with Sinclair Community College. The new position is Counselor—Supported Education Program, and Lorrie Spivey has been selected to fill the role.

The Counselor—Supported Education Program will serve as a personal point of contact for identified students to help them navigate the college system. The Counselor will also coordinate the delivery of internal and external supports to advocate for the students’ needs, as well as provide immediate support to address academic, mental, personal and career needs, including crisis intervention when needed.

Megan Manuel, Superintendent of WCBDD said, “We are excited to contribute to this partnership and hope that it will open doors for more people with disabilities to be successful. We want to provide opportunities for people in Warren County who may not have otherwise been able to attend college.”

Brent Lawyer, Executive Director of MHRS said, “Developing community ‘partnerships’ is a key component of Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties’ business plan. We believe this results in improvements for both systems. Establishing community partnerships with key constituents not only improves access to needed behavioral health care services, it assists our organizations in reducing costs through sharing of resources, resulting in enhanced accountability.”

Scott Markland, Vice President for Regional Centers said, “Access is a special part of the Sinclair mission and this partnership will ensure that Sinclair students have the resources they need to get an education and ultimately better their lives. We are pleased that we are able to form this partnership with the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities and the Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties.

It is anticipated that approximately 100 Warren and Clinton County students will be identified and served by the program.