



PRESS RELEASE

Date: February 22nd, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Adam Jones, Community Relations Coordinator (513) 806-3941 cell
Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities
414 S. East Street, Lebanon, OH 45036
Adam.jones@warrencountydd.org

Warren County man's self-determination earns state recognition

(Lebanon, OH) – Aaron Bowman receives services from the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD). He is employed at Chuck E. Cheese, where he has enjoyed a 15 year career as their mouse mascot. He is also a recent recipient of the ESDY Award, presented by the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA).

OSDA is a statewide non-profit organization that empowers individuals with disabilities to decide the trajectory of their lives through the practice of self-determination. Each year, the organization celebrates and awards those who have not only excelled in establishing the direction of their lives, but have encouraged others to do the same.

No stranger to self-determination, Aaron is a proud member of Voices Speaking Out, a WCBDD sponsored group that promotes independence and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities. Aaron was nominated by WCBDD Advocacy Coordinator, Ellen Hudson, who detailed the “countless ways” Aaron demonstrated self-determination.

In the nomination, Hudson describes Aaron as an “outstanding mentor and leader, who was initially shy and timid when first joining Voices Speaking Out.” She adds that Aaron has since gained amazing confidence. Now a respected leader among the group, “Aaron serves as the elected Sergeant at Arms, due to his dedication to responsibility and attention to detail.”

Hudson continues to illustrate Aaron's self-determination by citing specific examples. Last winter, Aaron routinely visited a group member who was critically ill and hospitalized. In addition to providing the member's spouse with both monetary and spiritual support, Aaron gathered family members of other critically ill patients of the hospital, for comfort and prayer.

On another occasion, Aaron's self-determination enabled “quick-thinking under stress” when a peer was threatening to end his own life. A potentially tragic outcome was quickly avoided, thanks to Aaron's swift action to alert the appropriate authorities.

Though he exemplifies the principles of self-determination, Aaron remains a humble member of the group. Hudson shares that despite the encouragement from others to run for the President of Voices Speaking Out, Aaron shyly declines saying, “I don’t want to hurt the feelings of others running for office.”

Aaron was presented his award at last month’s virtual board meeting where his self-determination was recognized by Dana Charlton, Executive Director of the Ohio Self Determination Association.

###