

## Warren County Dreams

February 2020

### A Word From Our Superintendent



I hope you all have had a great start to this new year and new decade! We have hit the ground running once again at the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD).

As of the beginning of this year, we have two new members serving on our board. We welcome Lynn Bissell and Joel King to our board and our agency, and we look forward to working with them over the next year and beyond!

In late February, our agency will be undergoing an accreditation review by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). DODD reviews all 88 county boards of developmental disabilities, to ensure they are in compliance with state requirements. We currently have the maximum three-year accreditation, and we are currently preparing for their visit later this month.

As in years past, this March will be Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. We will once again be holding two Open House sessions, and we are hopeful you can join us for one of them. Both will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the Warren C. Young Center. The afternoon session will be from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., and the evening session will be from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., followed by the provider and business fair from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be served, and you can get your tickets for the spectacular raffle baskets.

For the third year in a row, the WCBDD has requested the Warren County Budget Commission to reduce the Board's levy collection for taxes. The Budget Commission approved the Board's request, and this will reduce the amount of money that Warren County taxpayers will pay in 2020 by approximately \$8 million. Even with the reduction, we have been able to grow the services and supports we provide or fund, while maintaining a quality agency and staff. This will be a year-to-year decision based upon our budget projections, support needs and carryover balances. We are very thankful for the financial support provided to us by the people of Warren County.

Thank you for reading our newsletter, and please check out the other articles to learn more about what is going on at the WCBDD!

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### PSU Inc. held presentation with Starfire Council promoting community integration

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Production Services Unlimited Inc. (PSU) held an engaging presentation, in collaboration with Starfire Council, promoting the benefits of social inclusion and community integration for people with developmental disabilities. The presentation was led by Jill Mays, Development Coordinator with PSU and Tim Vogt, Starfire Council's Director of Mission and Scale.

Due to a grant authorized by Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD), 19 projects were launched integrating participants in their community. Such projects varied from organizing a donation drive with the Humane Association of Warren County, to attending musical concerts. A

highlight to the presentation was PSU enrolled individual, Tony New being inducted by the Lebanon Division of Fire as an honorary firefighter.

With a mission of avoiding isolation and loneliness, Starfire Council works one-one-one to uncover an individual's talent and passions so he/she may thrive alongside neighbors in his/her community. Thanks to monthly coaching that Starfire Council provided PSU, many doors were opened.

Jill Mays reflected, "I think when people saw the importance of even the small things to the individuals we worked with, it helped staff's attitude with wanting to do things differently." Mays concluded, "All of our individuals should be given the respect and dignity for risk".



Pictured left to right: PSU Inc. CEO, Aimee Rittner and Starfire Council's Director of Mission and Scale, Tim Vogt



Pictured: Lebanon Division of Fire with PSU enrolled individual, Tony New

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### State Representative Lipps wins "Legislator of the Year"



Pictured left to right: State Representative Scott Lipps and WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, State Representative Scott Lipps was recognized by the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB) as "Legislator of the Year". Representative Lipps received his award at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual OACB Conference in Columbus, where he was celebrated for his successful endeavor in raising the wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) working in the DD industry.

The "Legislator of the Year Award" is presented to an elected or appointed official who exhibits high accomplishments in legislative leadership on behalf of Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. During the FY2020-21 state budget process, Representative Lipps was a vocal advocate for raising wages for DSP and coordinated efforts between Ohio Assembly members to put additional state funds behind the DSP wage increase. These efforts were instrumental in a \$2 per hour wage increase that went above and beyond the originally introduced budget.



State Representative Scott Lipps expressed humility regarding the recognition by the OACB, "This award makes my heart so happy. I promise to stand with you as we strive for inclusion, equality, wage increases, new transportation models, and improvements in quality of life!"

Megan Manuel, Superintendent of Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) beamed, "I am so thrilled that Representative Lipps was recognized as the 2019 Legislator of the Year by the OACB. He is a great advocate for the people we serve in Warren County and throughout the state of Ohio. "Manuel then applauded Representative Lipps saying, "This award is well deserved, and we are proud to have him representing Warren County."

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### Voices of Warren County sing at the Lebanon Rotary Holiday Luncheon

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Voices of Warren County performed as a special guest to the Lebanon Rotary Holiday Luncheon. Songs sung included: *I Want It That Way*, *Fight Song*, *12 Days of Christmas*, and *Mr. Heat Miser*. Small but mighty, the singers charmed the members into a hearty applause. Congratulations for a superb performance to singers:

Alexis Bodzin  
Ronald Harcourt  
Shane Galley  
Molly Baldwin  
Stacey Daniel  
Stephanie Bellar  
Mitchell Knight



Pictured: The Voices of Warren County with WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel



Pictured: Members of the Lebanon Rotary, WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel, and members of Voices of Warren County



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### WCBDD Provider Development Team offers CPR/First Aid/AED Training

Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
8:30AM – 1PM  
Warren C. Young Center

801 Drake Rd.  
Lebanon OH, 45036

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities provider development team will be holding a training that covers Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Cost of the training is \$31

RSVP to [providerdevelopment@warrencountydd.org](mailto:providerdevelopment@warrencountydd.org)

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### WCBDD & Lebanon Public Library debut Next Chapter Book Club

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a group of 8 enrolled individuals with Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) began their literary journey through the Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC), a nationwide program that offers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities a fun and engaging way to actively participate in their communities through reading.



In partnership with the Lebanon Public Library, NCBC provides its members the opportunity to read, learn, and make friends in a relaxed community setting. Members, along with trained facilitators, meet weekly at a local establishment to read aloud and discuss a book. As a group, the members determine all aspects of their participation in meetings, including the book selection.

Anyone can participate, no matter their reading ability.

However, it is not designed as a traditional reading class or tutoring program. The focus is on “reading-to-learn”, not “learning-to-read”. Additionally, fundamentals of social interaction and community inclusion are equally emphasized.

Lebanon Public Library’s IT Coordinator, Jan Berger learned of the program through her director, Julie McClellan, who regularly seeks out ways to serve the community. Once exposed to the NCBC mission and model, Berger was compelled to step up. Acting as host, facilitator, and supplier of books, Berger is cognizant of the benefits a book club has to offer.

“Reading together creates opportunities to discuss topics with peers that might not come up otherwise,” Berger comments. “Creating social ties through a book club, creates more of a connection to others and to one’s community. It can help fight off depression and reduce feelings of isolation.”

Through reading, learning, and building relationships, this year’s Next Chapter Book Club members may experience some feelings, such as: curiosity, empowerment, and companionship, but isolation will not be one of them.

Next Chapter Book Club meets every Wednesday at the Lebanon Public Library from 6:30PM – 7:30PM. For more information, contact Adam Jones at (513) 806-3941 or email at [adam.jones@warrencountydd.org](mailto:adam.jones@warrencountydd.org)

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## **WCBDD lowers taxes for all county property owners for third consecutive year**

For the third year in a row, the Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities has voluntarily requested the Warren County Budget Commission to reduce the Board's levy collection for taxes. The Board requested that the County only collect 2.5 mills of the 4.0 mill approved levy in 2020. The Budget Commission approved the Board's request. This will reduce the amount of money that Warren County taxpayers will pay in 2020 by approximately \$8 million.

Megan Manuel, Superintendent of the Board, said, "We passed this levy in 2002 and told the taxpayers we wouldn't be back for more money for at least five years. 2020 will be the eighteenth year of this levy. We have not had to ask for more, and because of the strong fiscal stewardship of our agency, we are able to provide a reduction in the amount paid by taxpayers."

Manuel continued, "We are so appreciative that the taxpayers support our levy and the opportunities we provide to people with developmental disabilities here in Warren County. Even with the reduction in collections, we have been able to grow the services and supports we provide or fund, while maintaining a quality agency and staff. We do not wish to tax people beyond what our need is. This will be a year-to-year decision based upon our budget projections, support needs and carryover balance."

Matt Nolan, Warren County Auditor, met with Manuel and the board members and said, "It is due to the good fiscal stewardship of your administration and this board that you are in this position. You don't spend money just because you have it. You are spending it on needed services and provide supports in a fiscally responsible way."

The reduction would be effective for the 2019 tax year payable in 2020.

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## **Open House to be held March 10<sup>th</sup>, "2020 Vision: A View from the Top"**

In honor of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities will host two Open Houses on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This year's theme is "2020 Vision: A View from the Top". The presentation will showcase the full journey of individuals served by identifying their goals, actions, obstacles, and achievements.

The first Open House will be held from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. and the second will be held from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Warren C. Young Center, located at 801 Drake Rd. Both Open Houses will include a proclamation declared by a Warren County official, which will be presented to WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel as well as an enrolled individual.

The evening format follows the same schedule as the afternoon event, with addition of a performance by the Voices of Warren County; a choral group consisting of adults receiving services from the WCBDD. At 7:00 p.m., guests will be invited to the gymnasium for the Business and Provider Fair where a variety of local businesses and service providers will display their products and services offered. The Fair will run from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Concluding the evening, will be a raffle drawing for gift baskets, held at 7:45 p.m.

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## Upcoming Events

<p><b>CPR/First Aid/AED Training</b> February 12, 2020 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Warren C. Young Center 801 Drake Road, Lebanon, OH 45036 (Training cost: \$31.)</p>	<p><b>School to Adult Life Transition (S.A.L.T.)</b> February 26, 2020 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Warren C. Young Center 801 Drake Rd, Lebanon, OH 45036 (Free event open to families of students with disabilities, ages 14 to 22.)</p>
<p><b>WCBDD Open House</b> March 10, 2020 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Warren C. Young Center 801 Drake Road, Lebanon, OH 45036 (Free event, open to the general public. All ages welcome.)</p>	<p><b>WCBDD Open House &amp; Provider Fair</b> March 10, 2020 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Open House 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Provider Fair Warren C. Young Center 801 Drake Road, Lebanon, OH 45036 (Free event, open to the general public. All ages welcome.)</p>