



ABLE Magazine

Advocate with | **B**elieve in | **L**isten to | **E**mpower us!



MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT

BRIAN W. GREEN

Superintendent Brian Green reflects on 2020 and shares thoughts on how Riverside plans to address the pandemic in 2021.

Winter 2021

A Goal Is Reached | 3

DSP Spotlights | 4

Community Support | 5

**Miami County Board of
Developmental Disabilities:**

Lori Meyer, President
Andrew Johnston, Vice President
Mandy Via, Secretary
Michelle Fong
Jerry Herbe
Shawn McKinney
Deon Metz

Brian W. Green, Superintendent

Board of Appointing Authorities:

Miami County Commissioners
Gregory A. Simmons (President)
Ted S. Mercer
Wade H. Westfall
Miami County Probate Judge
Honorable Scott Altenburger

Our Mission is to empower people with developmental disabilities to live, work and play as full members of our community.

ABLE Magazine is published quarterly by the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Riverside).

Article suggestions and address changes should be submitted to:

Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Riverside)
ATTN: Melissa Nichols
1625 Troy Sidney Road
Troy, Ohio 45373
(937) 440-3000

Superintendent's Corner

Our last issue of ABLE Magazine was printed shortly before the 2020 election, in which we were on the ballot for our 2.5-mill renewal levy. I am pleased to report that the levy passed, achieving the same near-70% rate that was achieved in 2015. This is 100% due to the kindness and generosity of the Miami County community. We are humbled and grateful for your steadfast support. So again, we thank you.

The day before sitting down to write this update, I am proud to say we completed our second COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Riverside with help from Miami County Public Health. We have experienced a wonderful relationship with our local health department throughout the entire pandemic. On December 26, Public Health Commissioner Dennis Propes and his team came to Riverside and worked diligently to vaccinate 80 individuals and their direct support professionals who qualified for Phase 1A of Governor DeWine's vaccine distribution plan. The team returned on January 25 to administer dose 2 to those same individuals, as well as dose 1 to another 80 who qualified for Phase 1A. We are currently working to identify and communicate with those we serve who qualify for Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution plan and are working closely with the Health Department to make that phase just as smooth a process as Phase 1A was. If you have questions about the vaccine and how we are assisting those we serve in receiving vaccines, please contact your SSA or visit our website for more information.

As I communicate with other superintendents across the state, I am proud of the work our system has done statewide with supporting people with developmental disabilities during this trying time. Whether it was finding new ways to support DSPs in their work, filling gaps in services with our own employees, or creatively connecting people with others to maintain relationships and positive outlooks, we are proud of the work we have done thus far in this pandemic. We will continue this important work through 2021, and hope to very soon be able to return to a time when we can share space, exchange a high-five or handshake, and experience the contagiousness of one another's smiles. With hope and hard work, we will get there . . . together.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian W. Green". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brian W. Green
Superintendent

A Goal Is Reached

On His Own and Loving It

James Coots is an independent thinker. He believes in striving for personal happiness each day, and in giving 100% of himself toward accomplishing his goals.

When James became eligible for active SSA services in June 2019, his main goal was to live independently. In the last quarter of 2020, his goal was accomplished. But it wasn't easy.

Once James began looking for an apartment, he found it difficult to locate a large selection of suitable and affordable apartments. When he found an apartment complex that seemed like it might work, no units were available. Luckily, James has two characteristics that saw him through: determination and follow-through. It took him nearly six months of checking back with the manager, sometimes daily, to get a weak positive response. When he did, James seized the opportunity, swooped in with his deposit and rent money, and scored his studio apartment. Thus, at just shy of 21 years of age, James was able to move from living with family to living on his own in his very own apartment.



James Coots

And he likes it for some of the same reasons many adults do when living on one's own. "I do stuff on my own time, and no one tells me what to do," he says.

A graduate of Piqua High School, Coots has worked at McDonalds since 2017, but loves pizza. When he is not working, James enjoys watching some television (he loves Garfield), listening to music (a heavy metal fan) and playing video games. He cooks most of his own meals and takes care of his place.

James is an organized soul in the habit of waking up and reviewing what errands need to be done. He makes a list of the supplies he needs and sets off to accomplish his tasks. James does not drive a car, so he walks most places he goes.

"James prides himself in giving 100% for whatever he wants to achieve," says Alicia Knife, his SSA. "He is not afraid to speak up for what he wants. James is very friendly and always seems to have a smile on his face. I know James will have many successes in his life because he works hard and keeps a positive attitude."

Solid proof of what Alicia says, this young man has accomplished what a great many other men his age have not: he has moved out of the family home into his own place and is making it work!

Direct Support Professional (DSP) Spotlights: Kimmi Dunlap & Calvin Arnett



Kimmi Dunlap

Meet Kimmi Dunlap! Nominated for excellent service by Riverside SSA Nicole Adkins, Kimmi is an agency provider, working for BLESS as a supervisor.

In nominating Dunlap, Nicole stated, "Although Kimmi is a supervisor with BLESS, she has been very helpful when

I needed her staff to step in. She is responsive to communication in a timely manner. She is polite and kind. She is a great leader and example to her staff."

Kimmi has been a DSP and worked for BLESS for 5½ years. She was promoted to a Program Specialist in September. In Kimmi's words about how she became a DSP, she says, "I was referred through a friend about BLESS. I have experience with individuals with developmental disabilities in my family, so I thought it would be a great job opportunity."

She says she loves to work with individuals and help them achieve their goals in life, helping them do daily activities, going out in the community to explore new experiences. "I really LOVE their smiles!" she says.

Kimmi dedicates her "all" to those she supports in order to make sure they have everything they need. "I support them in any way possible, and I make sure that their voices are heard! I love my job!"



Calvin Arnett

Independent provider Calvin Arnett has been a Direct Support Professional for about two years and says that he has enjoyed every minute of it. Grateful to have been nominated, Arnett stated, "Being appreciated in your line of work is one of the most best feelings ever."

Arnett went on to say, "My mother has been a DSP for 4 years now, I believe. [When] I saw how much fulfillment she got out of the job I knew it's something I wanted to do with my life.

I love so many things about my job, I like to think that I bring a security to someone's life that normally wouldn't have it and that's all I could ask for. Also being able to be around people who over the last 2 years have become friends to me, that is the easiest thing to love about this career."

"He is creative in his approach to services," says SSA Nicole Adkins. "He is punctual. He always gets back with me. He is hardworking and willing to help out as needed."

Calvin insists that the credit is not all his, however, "I want people to know that we [DSPs] care and appreciate everyone who has gone out of their way in the past year to help all of us achieve our goals. We thank you. We couldn't have done any of this without an amazing community and our support systems."

People with developmental disabilities need many more DSPs like Kimmi and Calvin. If you or someone you know is looking for a job change and would like to learn more about becoming a DSP, please contact Jan Wintrow at 937-440-3090 or jan.wintrow@riversidedd.org.

Community Support Keeps Us Going!

Knights of Columbus Clubs Make Donations

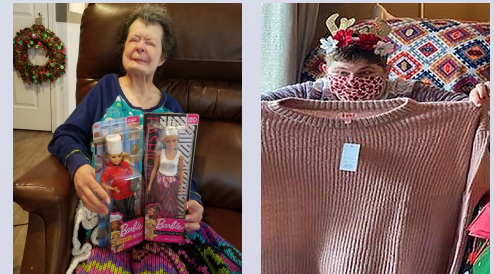
Both the Tipp City Knights of Columbus and Marian Council Knights of Columbus have been good friends to Riverside. They each proved that once again by recently making donations to us. Superintendent Brian Green happily attended the Marian Council's membership meeting early in January, where they presented us with a check for \$1,719.60. The Tipp City Knights of Columbus also made a generous contribution of \$750, which will be used to meet the needs of those we serve in crisis situations due to COVID-19. We are fortunate to have the support of generous clubs like the Knights of Columbus from Tipp City and Marian Council who join us in our mission.



The Giving Tree

For the last several years, a favorite December event for Riverside employees has been the Giving Tree. About five years ago, the congregation of Troy Christian Church generously started the tradition of beginning the holiday season by providing Christmas gifts and cheer to those with developmental disabilities who may not otherwise have any gifts to open during the holiday season.

The Giving Tree kicks off in the fall with the congregation buying and gathering gifts for each participant. This year there were 30 participants who each received four gifts that fulfilled two of their wishes and two of their needs. Troy Christian Church volunteers sorted and labeled the gifts and coordinated delivery to Riverside. All gifts are delivered by the SSAs prior to Christmas for a happier holiday season for many.



MCPH Conducts COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at Riverside

On Saturday, December 26, we were fortunate to partner with Miami County Public Health as they hosted a vaccine clinic at Riverside to administer vaccinations to 80 people - a combination of people served by Riverside and their Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

In accordance with Phase 1A of Governor DeWine's and the Ohio Department of Health's vaccine distribution plan, individuals with developmental disabilities who live in group settings and the staff who work at those locations were eligible to receive the vaccine. To show our appreciation for their unwavering support to us during the pandemic, Riverside Superintendent Brian Green (pictured left) presented a certificate of gratitude to MCPH Director of Nursing Deb French and MCPH Commissioner Dennis Propes.



Community Connections Updates

Brighten Your Day with a Pen Pal

If you like making new friends and enjoy writing or drawing, you will be excited to know that Riverside is starting a Pen Pal program! Do you have a pet? What is your favorite food? Where would you like to go on vacation? These are just a few of the questions that YOU could be asking your Pen Pal!

For details, email: penpal@riversidedd.org
or call Lindy Schaffnit at 937-440-3014.

After you tell us a little bit about yourself, we will connect you with your new Pen Pal!



Weekly Zoom Activities

The Community Connections Department has been going strong despite limitations of COVID-19. Everyone is anxious to return to indoor and in-person events, but until then here are some virtual activities! For more information about Community Connections activities, email cc@riversidedd.org or call Krista Smith at 937-310-3260.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Activity Group Games | Mondays 3-4pm |
| Chit Chat on Zoom | Tuesdays 3-4pm |
| Audio Book Time | Wednesdays 11-11:30am |
| Aktion Club or Advocacy | Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm |
| Zoom Workouts | Wednesdays 5pm |
| Zoom Music Fun | Thursdays 3-4pm |
| Zoom Book Club | Thursdays 3-4pm |
| Zoom Cooking Fun | 1st Thursday of each month 5-6pm |
| Zoom Craft Time | 2nd Thursdays of each month, 6pm |
| People First of Ohio Monthly Chat | 1st Friday of each month, 10am |
| Zoom Basic Sign Language Class | Fridays 1-2pm - with Joy Starry and Tonia York |
| Zoom Movie Nights | Every other Friday 6pm |
| Zoom BINGO | Every other Friday 6pm |

Food Drive Fun

Our Community Connections Team hosted a Holiday BINGO game in December where players contributed to the Fletcher Methodist Church's Food Drive. Riverside's Joy Starry organized the collection site at Riverside giving staff and Riverside friends an opportunity to participate.



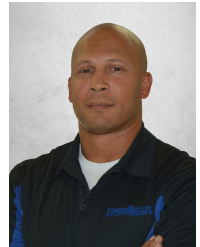
Board Members Retire; New Members Appointed

Riverside's Board recently honored two outgoing members at its November meeting, which was held via Zoom due to the coronavirus pandemic. The board recognized Steve Baker of Troy, who has served many terms on the board since 1993 including 12 years as president, and Kim Ojeda of Piqua, who has served for the last 12 years on the board. Special guest dignitaries appeared at the meeting to present both Baker and Ojeda with letters of commendation and appreciation for their service.



Michelle Fong

Letters were presented live from U.S. Congressman Warren Davidson (presented by Deputy Director Ben Thaeler), Miami County Commissioners (presented by Commissioner Greg Simmons), the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities (presented by Vice President Lori Meyer), as well as letters sent from State Senator Steve Huffman and State Representative Jena Powell. The pair were commended for their efforts to lead the organization during times of significant change in the developmental disabilities service industry and ensuring high quality services for the nearly 1,000 people supported by Riverside in Miami County.



Deon Metz

At its January meeting, also held via Zoom, the Board appointed two new members fill the empty positions. Michelle Fong and Deon Metz were both sworn in and assumed their new duties as Board Members of the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Fong is mother of a child with autism whose family has personally benefited from services offered through Riverside. She also works in the office of communications for the Ohio Department of Health. Deon Metz is a Special Education Coordinator at Upper Valley Career Center. With a degree in Developmental Disabilities from Bowling Green University, Metz has taught as an Intervention Specialist working with students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) for the first half of his career and continues to work with students with disabilities.

Board Member Appointed to DD Council



Mandy Via

Riverside Board Member Mandy Via of Pleasant Hill was recently appointed by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine to serve on the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council for a term beginning Jan. 1, 2021 and ending Dec. 31, 2023. The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council is made up of over 30 members, with the majority being individuals with developmental disabilities, and parents and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who are appointed by the Governor of Ohio. By the direction of its members, the Ohio DD Council funds

grant projects that aim to enrich the lives of people with developmental disabilities with an emphasis on self-determination, diversity and inclusion. Via currently serves locally on our board, supporting the people we serve at the local level. With this new position, she will also represent the community and families of people with disabilities at the state level. We are proud to have her represent Miami County.

Riverside
Miami County Board of
Developmental Disabilities
1625 Troy Sidney Road
Troy, Ohio 45373

Prst Std
US Postage
PAID
Troy, Ohio
Permit #468



Riverside
Miami County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

ABLE Magazine

Advocate with | Believe in | Listen to | Empower us!

MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT

BRIAN W. GREEN

Superintendent Brian Green reflects on 2020 and shares thoughts on how Riverside plans to address the pandemic in 2021.

Winter 2021

A Goal Is Reached | 3

DSP Spotlights | 4

Community Support | 5

Inside this Issue

Winter 2021

A Goal Is Reached! Read about James and his recent success on Page 3!

Also check out our DSP Spotlights on Page 4, featuring Kimmi Dunlap and Calvin Arnett.

Don't miss the latest updates on the amazing support we've recently received from the community!