



Contact Dickman, James
From Sandusky County Board of DD
Phone 419 332 9296 ext. 123
Email jdickman@scbdd.org
Website www.scbdd.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2019

SANDUSKY COUNTY BOARD OF DD CELEBRATES MARCH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

Visit to Ohio Statehouse, online video and local billboard campaigns, open house events; local county board to highlight the connection between individuals with disabilities and their communities this month

Each year, March is recognized across the nation as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. For County Boards in Ohio, it is a time of special reflection on the opportunities for enrichment and engagement that have been created over the past year as well as those areas that still need the attention of legislators and communities.

The Sandusky County Board of Developmental Disabilities (SCBDD) serves nearly 600 individuals locally through Service and Support Administration (individual case-management), Childhood Early Intervention, School of Hope and Educational Supports, Transition and Pathways 2 Employment programming, Self-Advocacy, Special Olympics, and more.

This year, the SCBDD is advocating locally while appealing to our newly elected Ohio State governing body to address concerns affecting all Ohioans with disabilities. March 2019 developmental disability awareness programs include:

- **March 5th trip to the Ohio Statehouse.** SCBDD Superintendent Sarah Zimmerman will join key staff and individuals with self-advocacy training and meet with state representatives to discuss important quality of life concerns affecting Ohioans with disabilities.

“Unfortunately, there are some reoccurring themes this year that we want to stress to our newly elected representatives,” said Superintendent Zimmerman. *“Specifically, we still have a crisis in care with a lack of qualified providers to serve individuals, in their home and in the community. This is a nationwide problem and certainly not exclusive to Ohio. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) deserve a living wage. It would go a long way toward bridging the provider gap. We also need to focus on increased opportunities for employment and better access to public transportation,”* Zimmerman said.



- **March 12th SCBDD is hosting an open-house and a community integrated basketball game.** Exhibition teams consisting of Special Olympians, local high school athletes, and community 'celebrities' will face off in a spirited competition in celebration of commUNITY. Free and open to the public with entertainment and concessions; doors open at 5:30 pm, tip-off at 6:00 pm.

"If you haven't been to a Rebel's basketball game this year, it's something you will want to add to your bucket list," said Ed McClain, Special Olympics and Self-Advocacy Coordinator. "The Lady Rebel's basketball team were runner's up in State competition last year and are looking to compete at the state level again this year. We have a fabulous fan-base and we want to encourage the community to come on out for this exhibition. It's going to be fun and the Special Olympians are really looking forward to it," said McClain.

- **March 20th "Leadership Day."** Local self-advocates will share their needs and concerns at the local level with Sandusky County community leaders.
- **March 25th 'Provider Recognition Dinner.'** An evening dedicated to recognizing local care providers for their selfless, compassionate service to individuals and their families; presentation of 2019 Shining Star DSP Awards.

In addition to these community events, the SCBDD will sponsor a social media video campaign and billboard campaign to raise awareness of the importance of an inclusive community and those programs that promote community integration.

"Individuals living with disabilities have the same goals and desires as everyone else," said SCBDD Superintendent Sarah Zimmerman. "They want to receive a good education, have a meaningful job so they can support themselves and live an independent life in the community. This month we are challenged as a community to slow down, interact, and appreciate the strengths and contributions of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who make our community a better place to live. Our collective goal should include supporting a better tomorrow for them, one person at a time," said Zimmerman.

###