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# SCDD Falloween Carnival set for Oct. 26

*The community is invited for music, games, food, and activities at the Vern Riffe School*

The Scioto County Developmental Disabilities Falloween Carnival is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 26, at the Vern Riffe School (VRS) in Portsmouth.

There will be an old-fashioned-style carnival throughout VRS with a haunted sensory hallway in the basement. Music will be provided in the parking lot of the school provided by KC Chatfield in addition to a trunk-or-treat and inflatables. At 6 p.m. there will be a costume contest that is open to all. There will also be hot food and drinks, caramel apples, and lots of good treats.

"We have some incredible participants lined up. We'll have the Batmobile, and we'll have the Portsmouth fire and police departments, the Scioto County Sheriff's Department, the Shawnee State University Police Department, and local EMTs. All of those and other vendors will be in our parking lot to hand out treats," said SCDD Outreach Coordinator Theresa Rowland.

Inside the school will be more games, a cake-walk, and in the gymnasium there will be fingerprinting services, sensory booths, and lots more activities to enjoy.

Raffle tickets are still available



to win a gift basket filled with gift cards valued at \$350. Tickets are still available by contacting Rowland at 740-353-0636 (or from any Special Olympics committee member) and cost \$1 each or six for \$5. Proceeds will benefit Scioto County Special Olympics, and the drawing will be held during the Falloween event.

"We're also selling t-shirts for a Star staff member who is battling cancer," Rowland said. The carnival is open from 5-7 p.m. on Oct. 26. Handicapped parking will be reserved for the front parking lot, and general parking will be located in the Mabert Road parking lot across from the school.

Admission to the carnival is just 50 cents, or free with the donation of a non-perishable food item which the DD will donate to a local food pantry. Inside the carnival, tickets cost 25 cents each (or five for \$1.00) and can be used for all of the games, food, and activities. Proceeds from Falloween ticket sales are used by the PTO to purchase Christmas gifts for students of the Vern Riffe School. For more information about the programs and services at Scioto County Developmental Disabilities, call 740-353-0636 or visit online at [www.sciotocountydd.org](http://www.sciotocountydd.org), and like and follow them on Facebook and TikTok.

## Two SCDD nonprofits participating Scioto Gives, Oct. 19

Two local non-profit programs will participate in the 2023 Scioto Gives fundraiser to help support programs and activities associated with Scioto County Developmental Disabilities. Qualifying donations made to Scioto County Special Olympics and Friends of DD through the event on Oct. 19 will be matched by The Scioto Foundation.

From 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Oct. 19, contributions will be received on the Scioto Foundation website, [www.sciotogives.org](http://www.sciotogives.org), by a simple procedure. Using the pull-down menu on the website, donors can select their charity and the amount they wish to give, list credit card information and press "donate." Donors may send checks to the Foundation at P.O. Box 911, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662 or they may transfer stocks during the designated 12-hour period on Oct. 19. Donors may also drop checks off at the Scioto Foundation's office from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the giving period, but the Foundation staff requests that those who want to make gifts by credit card do so

by online transactions during the designated timeframe.

Returning for Scioto Gives again this year is Friends of DD.

Friends of Scioto DD program is a nonprofit organization, created by Scioto County Developmental Disabilities, that works to fill the gaps where urgent monetary intervention is necessary for people served by Scioto County DD to remain independent and active in their community. New to Scioto Gives this year is the Scioto County Special Olympics.

The mission of Scioto County Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community, according to Jessica Hoffer, Scioto County

Developmental Disabilities outreach director.

"One goal of Scioto County Special Olympics is to provide the necessary equipment, uniforms, registration fees, and transportation costs for individuals with disabilities. Certain equipment can be costlier than average sports equipment due to the need for adaptive devices to play the sport for those with special needs. Adaptive equipment such as specialized wheelchairs for basketball can range anywhere from \$2,000 to \$5,000 for one chair. Scioto County Special Olympics wants to ensure that there are no barriers for people with disabilities to participate in the activities they love," said Hoffer. Additional information about Scioto Gives may be found on the Scioto Foundation's website, [www.sciotofoundation.org](http://www.sciotofoundation.org), or obtained by contacting Patty Tennant, program officer for donor services, at 740-354-4612.

## Scioto County DD August Board Meeting Activity

The Scioto County Board of Developmental Disabilities conducted their regular Board Meeting at the Carousel Center in Portsmouth, Ohio, in August. In addition to regular business, the Board took the following actions:

- Received updates from the Superintendent on the following:
- Recent meeting with DoDD Director Hauck
- Budget Bill amendments for financial and non-financial items
- Policy for Board members attendance at Board meetings
- Received report and recommendations from the Personnel/Finance Committee Chair from a meeting conducted 8/16/23.
- The following recommendations to the full Board were approved:
- Create a temporary Assistant Early Childhood

Director position

- Upon the departure of the current Director of Early Childhood, the Assistant Director will assume the role of Interim Director of Early Childhood for a period not to exceed six months, during which time the Superintendent will post, interview, and select the permanent Director.
- Once the employee assumes the interim position, the Assistant Director of EC will automatically be eliminated from the TO.
- Approved the Speech-Language Pathology Service Agreement between SCOESC and SCDD
- Approved VRS Bus routes for 2023-2024 school year
- Approved Superintendents Professional Development Plan
- Reviewed and discussed the updated Safety Card



# Brenda MacDonald honored for 40 years with Scioto County DD

*Scioto County Developmental Disabilities honored employee service with a banquet on Sept. 22*



## 40 Year Recipient

Scioto County Developmental Disabilities hosted an employee recognition banquet at the Scioto County Welcome Center on Sept. 22 to honor their employees' years of service. Among the recipients was Brenda MacDonald, who has worked with the organization for 40 years.

"This is an opportunity for us to recognize people, not only for their longevity but also for the quality of their work," said SCDD Superintendent Matt Purcell.

"We employ about 150 people full- and part-time, and we serve close to 900 individuals and their families throughout Scioto County. Our greatest assets are our experienced employees, and as they go through their careers and learn more they become assets to other employees as well."

Honored for 40 years of service during the banquet was Brenda

MacDonald.

MacDonald said even as a child she used to dream of being a teacher at Vern Riffe School, which was then known as Happy Hearts School. She has been an Intervention Teacher at SCDD for 18 years, but she started as the first agency's first behavior management specialist in 1983. "I've done a little bit of everything, but the last 18 years I've been back in the classroom and it's been wonderful," she said. "When I worked upstairs in administration, I wasn't with the adults or children all that often and I really missed that. I think God put this kind of work on me. People ask me when I'm going to quit – well, whenever He has something else for me." Also honored was Nancy Sand and Cindy Corielle (30 years); Becky Mault and Cindy Kayser (25 years); Leslie Weddington (20

years); Paige Donini and Jessica Hoffer (15 years); Beth Arthurs, Tom Sherman, Jeff Horner, Melissa Gamp, Carlisa Baker, and Pam Thompson (10 years); Cassie Clark, Andrea Dryden, Angie Taylor, Bill Adams, and Sherri Adams (five years); Eddie Davis, Bob Shultz, and Emma Journey (three years); and Travis Turner, Austin Hoople, Brooke Rosenagle, Amanda Literal, Bill Tackett, Kalyn Eastwood, Alexis Hart, Thomas Book, Morgan Weaver, April Kozee, Brian Holbrook, Kim Sturgeon, Breanna Broughton, Jamie Chamberlin, Andrea Valdes, Cynthia Carter, Sarah Huffman, MaKayla Coffey, Amy Kline, and Abigail Keathley (one year).

Employees were each given a pin to commemorate their years of service to SCDD.

Following the awards ceremony, keynote speaker Rik Roberts entertained the audience with his portrayal of Barney Fife from "The Andy Griffith Show" as he showed them "The Mayberry Method."

The goal of the keynote was to provide staff with actionable steps to improve leadership, productivity, and service recipient relationships. The focus is always to find better ways to serve others.

For more information about the programs and services at Scioto County Developmental Disabilities, call 740-353-0636 or visit online at [www.sciotocountydd.org](http://www.sciotocountydd.org), and like and follow them on Facebook and TikTok.

**See more photos on next page!**





**One Year Recipients**



**Three Year Recipients**



**Five Year Recipients**



**10 Year Recipients**



**15 Year Recipients**



**20 Year Recipient**



**30 Year Recipients**



**25 Year Recipients**





# Walk-a-Thon collects more than \$3,000 for Scioto County Special Olympics



Volunteers helped raise money for Scioto County Special Olympics during the annual Walk-a-Thon at Tracy Park, in Portsmouth, on Friday, Sept. 22. This year's event set a new record by attracting more volunteers, and more donations, than ever before!

"The Walk-a-Thon is our yearly kick-off to our Special Olympics activity, and it is one of our major fundraisers every year. It is a great way for our student athletes and our adult athletes to come together," said Theresa Rowland, Scioto County Developmental Disabilities outreach coordinator. Students from Vern Riffe School participated in the Walk-a-Thon, along with members from Star, Inc. and SRS. Student volunteers from Ohio University Southern walked alongside students and hosted a medical tent. Portsmouth West Middle School Choir sang the National Anthem and then stayed to walk, while K.C. Chatfield provided plenty of good music to help enjoy the beautiful weather. Officers from Southern Ohio Correctional Facility also

volunteered to grill food and helped collect donations from passing motorists. The officers were divided into two teams, red and blue, for a friendly competition to see which team could raise the most money. Team Red won the competition and will be presented with an award in the coming weeks, and together they raised more than \$1,400 from motorists. Goodwill helped sell Special Olympic raffle tickets at the event, to give away a gift basket filled with gift cards valued at \$350. Tickets are still available by contacting Rowland at 740-353-0636 (or from any Special Olympics committee member) and cost \$1 each or six for \$5. The drawing will be held during the SCDD Fall-o-Ween activity on Oct. 26.

"I think it was one of the best Walk-a-Thon's that we've had in a while. The weather was perfect and it was very well-attended. I think it was the most volunteers we've ever had," Rowland said. After all the donations had been collected and counted, more than \$3,000 was raised for the Scioto

County Special Olympics during the Walk-a-Thon.

"That money goes to help pay for Special Olympics activities. This year we're going to have a local Special Olympics volleyball tournament, and the Vern Riffe School Olympians will compete against the county school Olympians. That money goes for lunches for our Olympians, and paying for buses and helping give our coaches a stipend," Rowland said.

The Scioto County Special Olympics is also participating in the 2023 Scioto Gives fundraiser hosted by The Scioto Foundation. Any donations made to Special Olympics through Scioto Gives on Oct. 19, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. will be matched by The Scioto Foundation.

For more information about the programs and services at Scioto County Developmental Disabilities, call 740-353-0636 or visit online at [www.sciotocountydd.org](http://www.sciotocountydd.org), and like and follow them on Facebook and TikTok.

# Metzler selected as Director of Early Childhood Programs at SCDD



Catie Metzler has been hired as Director of Early Childhood Programs for Scioto County Developmental Disabilities (SCDD). The former program director Erica Wallace left the position in August to accept a job with Ohio Association of County Boards.

Metzler was first introduced to the program by Developmental Specialists working with her own child.

"My youngest daughter was in the early intervention program from the time she was nine months old until she turned three. I had

a Developmental Specialist that came to the house and worked with us, and she told me she thought I would be good at doing this and working with families; helping parents know what to do with their children. I thought she was crazy because I was very much invested in my own child and I was very exhausted by the extra work. I thought there was no way I could help anyone else," Metzler said.

As her daughter made progress in the program, she began to realize she could do this and she wanted to give back to other families the way that her Developmental Specialist had done for her. After reaching out to SCDD, Metzler was hired as a Developmental Specialist in 2017.

"It was so rewarding. I bonded with parents and caregivers immediately because I knew what they were going through. It was immediately fulfilling and I love coming to work every day," she said.

By the time Wallace announced she would be leaving the program, Metzler had worked her way up to Lead Developmental Specialist

and was already doing some of the leadership duties in the department. That experience helped make her the best choice for director.

"I'm still learning and there are big shoes to fill. Erica was an amazing director, and before that Tammy Nelson was our director and she was with this program from the time it was born. So I feel like I've had great guidance and mentorship. The administrative staff and all of the county board departments have been fantastic to answer questions and make me feel welcome," she said.

For more information about the Early Childhood program, visit online at [www.sciotocountydd.org](http://www.sciotocountydd.org) or the Help Me Grow website at <http://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/help-me-grow/help-me-grow>. Referrals to the program can be made either by the parents or caregivers, or by a pediatrician. For more information about the programs and services at Scioto County Developmental Disabilities, call 740-353-0636 or visit online at [www.sciotocountydd.org](http://www.sciotocountydd.org), and like and follow them on Facebook and TikTok.

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS!

### October

- Andrea Valdes
- William Balzer
- Breanna Broughton
- Daniel Halstead
- Abigail Keathley
- Thomas Koch
- Emma Lauder
- Kim Messer
- Shayla Rosenogle
- Donna Tackett
- Bill Tackett

### November

- Jamie Chamberlin
- Andrea Dryden
- Chad Phipps
- Angie Taylor
- Derick Whisman

### December

- Tammy Bolton
- Thomas Book
- Cyndi Carter
- Sarah Huffman
- Trisha Schmidt
- Lori Snyder
- Steve Sowkulech
- Travis Turner





# SSA Kristi Cyrus has been hired as SCDD's first Provider Liaison



The Scioto County Board of Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) has created a new position to assist local providers and better serve the community. Providers, referred to as direct support professionals, are private agencies or individuals who are certified to provide a variety of services such as in-home caregiving or transportation to people with developmental disabilities (DD). Kristi Cyrus, who currently works for SCDD, will be transitioning from her current role as a Service and Support Administrator (SSA) to her new position as the county's first Provider Liaison.

Cyrus began her career as an independent provider and worked one on one, for 10 years, with a person who received county board services. Afterward, she returned to college and earned a degree in social work and interned at the Clinton County Board of Developmental Disabilities until she was offered a full-time SSA job. She later moved to Scioto

County and started working as an SSA Assistant for SCDD in 2016, and quickly transitioned to SSA in 2017.

In September 2023, Cyrus will begin her new job as Provider Liaison. While many county boards across Ohio already have provider liaisons working within DD, this is a newly-created position for Scioto County. For several years supporting providers has been a focus at SCDD, with many responsibilities carried out by several different staff members. However, the progression of reallocating duties after a previous retirement brought a pathway for the creation of this role making it possible to have a dedicated person to concentrate solely on provider support needs.

"I have loved working both as a provider and an SSA. I think it has made me a better person. It has taught me patience and responsibility, and I love it so much. The reason I took on the Provider Liaison role is because

I want to help support providers to be able to deliver the best services to individuals with developmental disabilities in our community, and I want to help recruit new providers," Cyrus said. Jessica Hoffer, director of outreach at SCDD explained, "The field of DD has faced provider shortages over the past decade. People with developmental disabilities and their families rely on providers and the important work they do to ensure their care and wellbeing. Without enough of the right people in direct support professionals roles, the

health and safety of individuals with developmental disabilities are at risk."

Among her new responsibilities, Cyrus will be supporting providers throughout the process of becoming providers, understanding their requirements, and connecting them to more training opportunities.

"This position is greatly needed, and I'm excited about working with other counties to see how they've built the job around provider support. We're just learning how to have this position and what it's going to look like, and I want to be in the best position to help the providers of Scioto County have the tools they need to do a great job," Cyrus said.

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# SCDD VRS teacher's assistant earns national intervener certification



Scioto County Developmental Disabilities Tracy Smith, teacher's assistant at Vern Riffe School was among those recognized during a special banquet held in Columbus on Sept. 22, 2023, for those who have completed national intervener certification. Smith is the first person from Ohio ever to earn this certification.

An intervener is a support role in which certified interveners work directly one-on-one with students with sensory impairment, such as deaf or blind, to help them achieve their goals. The certificate program is a two-year online

Center who spoke primarily in sign language, and so many non-verbal kids with autism that sign language kind of became a second nature to me after a while. But I've never had a good background in braille, which is another thing that has fascinated me. So when this program became available I jumped at the chance," she said. She completed the intervener program this year, and submitted her portfolio and work to be reviewed by the national certification board in Utah. Having been approved by the board,

program offered by Shawnee State University, in Portsmouth, Ohio. Smith has been a teacher's assistant with SCDD since 2012, first working at the Carousel Center before moving to the Vern Riffe School in 2016.

"I've always had a fascination with sign language because I had several kids at the Carousel

she was invited to receive her certificate during a special honors banquet hosted by the Ohio Dean's Compact Conference in Columbus. "It was all about our children with special needs in all different parts of the country coming together to talk about their programs and procedures. My area is called low-incidence because there's not a lot of deaf-blind people out there. At the conference, they all come together to talk about what they are doing and brainstorm different things that can be done for our community," she said. She confessed it was overwhelming being in front of so many people, but felt comfortable because everyone was nice and welcoming.

"I got a lot of congratulations when they found out I was the first from Ohio to get this certification," she said. "I enjoyed it and I'm glad I stepped out of my comfort-zone and I did it. I think I found my niche because I really like doing this kind of work."

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# Welcome the newest faces around SCDD!



## **AMY PATRICK**

*Developmental Specialist*

Amy has a son, William, and daughter, Sophia, as well as dog (Boomer), cat (Scarlett), python (Sammy) and guinea pig (Captain). She enjoys reading and playing word games or searches. She said she has always loved working with children.



## **GABBY GUTHRIE**

*1:1 Aide*

Gabby has 2 kids, Asher and Bella, and she has enjoyed tumbling since she was 4 years old. She also works at KTDC as a tumbling instructor. She wanted to work with SCDD because she has been around it for so long, with her mother Tammy Guthrie.



## **BROCK ANTHONY**

*1:1 Aide*

Brock lives with his grandmothers, and they have a dog named Choppa. He likes to play video games, such as 2K and Madden, and he'd like to learn sports medicine. He chose this work to help guide kids to success and learn something new everyday.



## **BETTY BRANNIGAN**

*1:1 Aide*

Betty lives in Wheelersburg, and attended the United Medical Academy where she earned an associate's degree. She enjoys painting, playing cornhole, and cards. She chose this work because she has always enjoyed helping others.



## **GABRIELLE COLLINS**

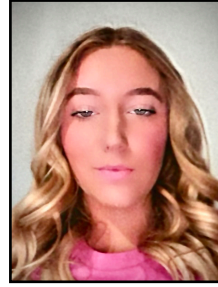
*1:1 Aide*

Gabby graduated from VRS. She has a guardian, Pamela, and a weiner dog named Louie. She enjoys basketball, church, and listening to music. She said she wanted to work with SCDD because she loves the people here and wanted to help give back.

welcome  
TO THE  
TEAM

**WILLIAM BALZER***SSA*

William lives in Chillicothe with his wife, Ashley, son, Richard, and their 3 cats and 2 dogs. He's a Freemason and enjoys gardening. He said he fell in love with this field of work 10 years ago when he started as a DSP .

**KOURTNEY TACKETT***1:1 Aide*

Kourtney is a Valley High School graduate and she has 2 siblings (Bill and Kim), 4 dogs, 2 horses, a cat, a turkey and a bearded dragon. She's also a barrel racer and likes to ride four-wheelers. She chose this work to be able to help kids.

**JESSICA LOGAN***1:1 Aide*

Jessica is originally from Garrison, Ky., and she has 2 kids, Ethan and Luke, as well as 4 dogs named Sparkles, Buddy, Scrappy, and Matilda. She enjoys crafts and gardening, and said she chose this work to make a difference.

**ABIGAIL MEYERS***1:1 Aide*

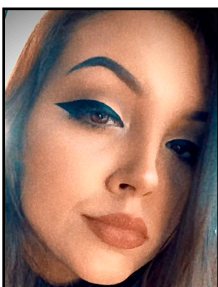
Abby enjoys taking walks, listening to music, biking, and playing Overwatch. Previous working in customer service, she made the switch to 1:1 Aide to help others and work closely with her twin brother, Andrew.

**BRANDON PUCKETT***1:1 Aide*

Brandon has a wife, Brianna, 2 sons, Logan and Lacen, and a daughter, Laiken. He also has 2 dogs, Bo and Rusty, and a cat. He enjoys coaching sports, and he chose this type of work because his son attending programs at SCDD.

**SHAYLA ROSENOGLE***1:1 Aide*

Shayla enjoys playing cars and trucks with her son, Braxton, and going on walks and listening to music. She said she chose this type of work because she loves children and wants to be able to help people who need support themselves.

**REGAN SCARBERRY***1:1 Aide*

Regan has 2 daughters, Neveah and Skyler, and a son, Mason, as well as 2 dogs (Roxie and Reese Cup) and a cat (Sweet Susan). She enjoys spending time with her family, and likes to read and draw. She chose this work because she has family members with disabilities.

**KAYDEN SHELTON***1:1 Aide*

Kayden has 5 siblings, 5 dogs, and 21 snakes. He breeds ball pythons and rats, and enjoys hiking and playing on his computer. He chose this work because he has been caring for his sister who is disabled, and he always felt like this was a calling.



## Upcoming Events:

### OCTOBER:

- 18 - Empowering Community
- 18- SSA Dept In-Service Day
- 19 - SCDD Board Meeting
- 19 - Scioto Gives: Special Olympics and Friends of Scioto DD participating. 8am-8pm
- 26 - SCDD Falloween 5-7pm
- 27 - VRS- End of grading period. Early Dismissal
- 31 - VRS and Carousel Trick-or-Treat

### NOVEMBER:

- 10 - All SCDD Programs Closed: Veteran's Day
- 16 - SCDD Board Meeting
- 16 - Jaycee's Christmas Parade: Please consider joining us!
- 20 -21 - VRS Parent Teacher Conferences
- 22- VRS Closed: Thanksgiving Break
- 23-24 - All SCDD Programs Closed: Thanksgiving Break
- 29-30 - OACB Winter Conference

### DECEMBER:

- 1 - OACB Winter Conference
- 14 - Outreach and Early Childhood Dept In-Service Day
- 21 - No School: All Staff Report
- 12/22 to 1/1 - VRS Closed
- 25 - All SCDD Programs Closed: Christmas

## In Memory of Timmy Knisley



With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Timothy "Timmy" Knisley. Timmy passed away at his home Friday, October 13th with his friends and SRS family at his side. Born on March 12, 1950, Timmy was 73 years old. He was

born in West Virginia and moved to Columbus Developmental Center at the age of 9, living in 3 different developmental centers around the state of Ohio before settling into his home with Scioto Residential Services (SRS) in 2002. Scioto County Developmental Disabilities thanks SRS staff for all the love and care they've provided to him through the years. We know how very special Timmy was to you all. We also thank STAR, Inc. and EYH staff for giving Timmy additional care and recreational fun during his time with us. There are several SCDD staff that have worked closely to ensure Timmy received the best care including current SSA Kim Sturgeon, PSF Lori Snyder and previous SSAs: Tom Sherman, Brittany Mitchell, Jessica Hoffer, and Kayla Wilder. Thank you all for your dedication to Timmy and thank you to those unmentioned who also helped Timmy along the way.

He is certainly missed and will be remembered for his contagious smile and playful personality. More information regarding a memorial service will be shared once it becomes available.

### HOW TO CONTACT US:

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