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- AND MORE!

SCDD awarded a 3-year accreditation by state

Scioto County Board of DD earns highest accreditation rating once again



Front Row: Jessica Hoffer, Director of Outreach; Matthew Purcell, Superintendent; Tammy Guthrie, Director of School Programs. Back Row: Steve Sowkulech, Director of Fiscal and Human Resources; Chad Phipps, SSA Director; Erica Wallace, Director of Early Childhood

The Scioto County Developmental Disabilities has been awarded another three-year accreditation from the state of Ohio, following a rigorous application and review process that began last fall.

State accreditation is a regular and recurring process in which the state of Ohio reviews all of the programs and services offered by the local boards of DD to ensure they are maintaining state standards. Upon completing the application process, the state of Ohio can award accreditation for anywhere between one to three years.

“Accreditation makes sure we’re meeting all of the standards of Medicaid, Department of

Developmental Disabilities, and the Ohio Revised Code,” said Scioto County Developmental Disabilities SSA Director Chad Phipps. “Health and safety is at the forefront, as well as behavior support, employment and board practices, and our individual service planning and waiver authorization. They also review our Early Intervention program, and we did really well with no citations in that department.”

The process always goes into the community to speak with individuals being served by the SCDD.

“There’s how it looks on paper, but they also want to get that feeling that we’re doing all we can in our

community,” Phipps said.

Showing its continued commitment to excellence, the SCDD was previously accredited for the maximum term of three-years in 2019, and now has earned the maximum term again in 2022.

“We are blessed to have a good team of solid folks. We feel really good to have received the highest accreditation both in 2019 and 2022,” Phipps said. “We continue to expand our services and we want to be sure we’re hitting every individual and their family in Scioto County, if they wish to receive our service.”

Welcome the newest faces around SCDD!

BARBARA DAVENPORT

Service & Support Administrator (SSA)



Barbara is married to David, and they have four dogs (Fenix, Lo, Punky, and Chicka). She enjoys gaming and playing Dungeons and Dragons. She has a Master's of Science from the University of Cincinnati.

BRANDON CRAFT

Service & Support Administrator (SSA)



Brandon said he is compassionate about helping others and wants to be a voice and support for people who may not have one. He enjoys playing basketball, and spending time with his family and friends. Brandon has a Bachelor's of Arts in Social Science from SSU.

LEXI SPARKS

Petermann Bus Aide



Lexi enjoys helping others, and she said she wants to help individuals with disabilities see that they are more capable than many people realize. Lexi has a daughter, Parker, and enjoys painting, listening to music, and spending time with family.

VANESSA NOLEN

Human Resources Specialist



Vanessa is married to Josh and has three daughters, two grandchildren, and two dogs and three cats. She enjoys reading and writing. She has a BA from Shawnee State University and more than 15 years experience in human resources.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Maintenance



Michael is married, with four children, a cat and a dog. He previously worked in construction, and he still owns his own small construction company. He enjoys hunting, fishing, and outdoors.

MYA MORRIS

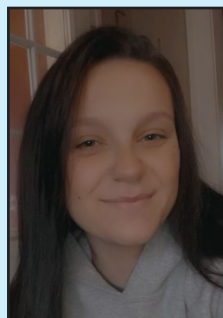
Service & Support Administrator (SSA)



Mya enjoys cheerleading, crafts, camping, and spending time with her family and friends. She has a bachelor's from Shawnee State University in Marketing, and she said she joined the DD because she wants to help make a difference.

TEARIA WILSON

Petermann Bus Aide



Tearia said she has always been the type to help others and wanted to put it to use by working as a Bus Aide. She graduated from Portsmouth High School, and she has a 4-month-old son with whom she enjoys going on nightly drives.



Starrett hired as SCDD Special Olympics basketball coach

After two years without games, the players of the Scioto County Special Olympics are excited to get back on the court. Traditionally the students and adults have played in the same league, but this year they've been separated into their own divisions. To start things off, the Scioto County Development Disabilities has hired Brandy Starrett as the new coach of the adult Special Olympics basketball team, known as the Shooting Stars.

Starrett is a former substitute teacher at SCDD's Vern Riffe School in Portsmouth. Several years after leaving that job, she completed her nutritional certification and now manages Iron Body Fitness in Portsmouth.

"When I heard there was a coaching job open, I messaged them to find out what the hours would be because I absolutely loved that job so much," Starrett said.

Theresa Rowland, outreach coordinator with the SCDD, said they were thrilled to have Starrett leading their Shooting Stars.



"She is perfect for our adults. She has experience in the DD world as a substitute teacher for the Vern Riffe School, and she has such a love for our individuals," Rowland said.

There are 13 players and cheerleaders on the team. As coach, Starrett brings them into her gym for practice on Tuesdays, and then they also practice at the Southern Ohio Medical Center Life Center on Thursdays. They played their first game in Piketon on Jan. 10, and then played the Wellston DD on Jan. 19 in Wellston where they won 30-20. Home games will be played at the SOMC Life

Center, but later may be moved to accommodate more spectators.

"It's so fulfilling. It's a pure joy that you don't get in any other community. I love the excitement that they have, and I try to give them knowledge about health and fitness for their overall well-being. It's just about getting them up and moving and having a good time," Starrett said.

Spring sports will bring new activities, and Rowland invites anyone who would like to participate to contact her at trowland@sciotodd.org or call 740-353-0636.

Pep rally celebrates VRS Special Olympics team

Students at the Vern Riffe School in Portsmouth came together on Thursday, Jan. 12, to celebrate their VRS Cardinals Special Olympics team in a pep rally at the school.

"For the past couple of years we've been limited in what we can do. We finally got the OK to open up the gym and play ball," said Rita Arthur, coach of the VRS Cardinals. "It's more of a celebration for our kids here at the Vern Riffe School to get back to playing basketball. We want to let the kids know it's OK to be kids again."

The season began on Thursday, Jan. 19, and will compete with school districts throughout the county. The Vern Riffe School's Special Olympics team also has teams competing in volleyball, bowling, and track and field.

"We are very excited for the start of a new year and getting out kids out to play. The last couple of years



we've had to have masks on, and we played but we couldn't have all of the kids and families in the gym with us because of COVID. So this year we're all opened up and ready to go, and our kids and staff are really excited about it," Arthur said.

SCDD creates two new school positions

Two longtime employees of Scioto County Developmental Disabilities have new job titles this year, following board action in January. The Lead Teacher position, held by Dana Jones, is now Classroom Services Facilitator, and Kim Miller has been promoted from Teaching Assistant to One-on-One Team Leader.

The job of Classroom Facilitator is new to SCDD, and it is an expansion of the former Lead Teacher job. The position is aimed to bring additional guidance and training to staff with an ultimate goal of attaining a high standard of education for the students of Vern Riffe School along with improved staff retention. Staff will receive intensive mentoring and consistent feedback from the Classroom Facilitator in order to allow for a more conducive learning environment. Jones explains that she was already doing many of her new responsibilities unofficially as Lead Teacher.

"We had some turnover and my experience and expertise brought these needed supports to the table. That pushed me forward to make sure they were done correctly. I was staying after school longer than my contracted hours. I was really doing two jobs with one, and I think the board recognized that," Jones said.

Some of her new official duties will now include more hands on support and training to classroom teachers, offering education to potential students and families of services offered, implementing monthly safety drills, assigning volunteers, doing observations of new student referrals in their home school districts and acclimating them to the Vern Riffe School building, and managing the state testing for students.

"I am excited but I'm also sad to leave the classroom. I've been there for over 30 years and I'm not ready to retire, but stepping into a new role will be an exciting change," Jones said.

Miller joined SCDD 26 years ago as a teaching assistant



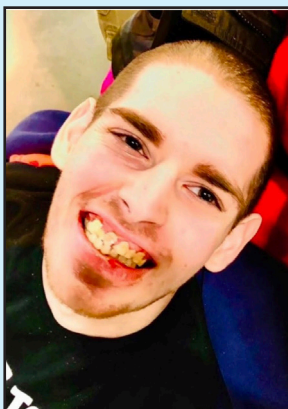
when her son Daniel Miller started preschool. She was promoted to the new role of One-on-One Team Leader in January.

"I'm very excited to take on this new job. It's going to be very different because I've been in the classroom for so many years," Miller said. "My new job will be helping classrooms with one-on-one services to students and getting information ready for other people to step in, like substitutes. I plan to prepare binders for every student that has a one-on-one plan with all their likes and dislikes and IEP goals. My primary focus will be to prepare and support all the one-on-ones with their students."

Miller will be utilizing these materials to provide training to one-on-one aides who are providing individualized supports. Vern Riffe School Principal Tammy Guthrie said both Jones and Miller are excellent picks for these new roles.

"They are both experienced and dedicated to our school and agency, and they have a terrific ability to work with everyone who makes up the school staff. They have leadership traits that will serve them well in these new roles, and help the DD provide our services to the community," Guthrie said.

Dustin Pack: 1994-2023



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dustin Pack on Feb. 10, 2023. Dustin was loved by many in this organization and will be immensely missed. He was a 2016 graduate of Vern Riffe School and the son of former Teacher's Assistant, Nakia Peters as well as the stepson of SCDD Board Member, Jon Peters.

Thomas Parlow: 1940-2023



It is with a heavy heart we report the passing of long-time Petermann Bus Aide, Tom Parlow on Jan. 4, 2023. Due to the immense reach of Tom's heart and his love for our students, our staff paid their respects, and the VRS was closed on Jan. 9 for staff and students to attend services.

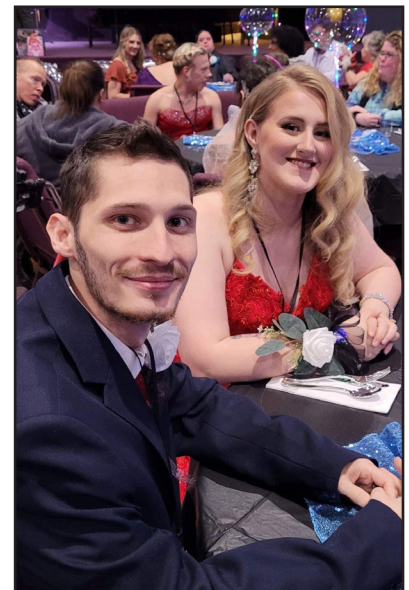
SCDD staff complete Executive Leadership training

Three staff members from the Scioto County Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) were invited to participate in the Executive Development Program offered by the Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB). The staff members were Catie Metzler, early-childhood team leader; Theresa Rowland, outreach coordinator; and Brittany Mitchell, SSA team lead. The program is offered every two years to county board employees throughout the state of Ohio who have been identified by their local boards and who have shown interest and initiative in the workplace and who display leadership skills. Selected employees are invited to participate in a 10-month leadership training. “We identify what we consider high-potential employees who we see as potential leaders and an asset to this organization. To date, we’ve been really proud of the people we’ve sent up. A lot of them are here still,” said Matt Purcell, SCDD Superintendent – who also participated in the Executive Leadership Program in 2012. He said it is an investment for the county board that has paid for itself many times over by developing better leaders and building a stronger staff to serve the community. “To be asked to participate is just a vote of confidence from the county

board. I was blown away by the amount of information that I was able to get from these days,” Rowland said. “We heard from lots of guest speakers from Ohio libraries and Ohio State. We visited the Capitol and the Statehouse. It was a very well-rounded addition to my knowledge base of county boards.” Mitchell said it made her feel appreciated when she was selected to participate in the program. “It made me feel pretty good about myself that they wanted to send me to a year-long training that dealt specifically with leadership. It helped me solidify my work as part of this organization and it also helped me know that I definitely have a future in the developmental disabilities world. I absolutely love this field and I can’t imagine not working in it,” she said. Metzler also appreciated meeting others from county boards throughout Ohio and learning more about what other DD programs offer to kids



beyond her own department. She was part of a team that completed a capstone project which won a trophy for Most Creative solution to an issue facing the field of developmental disabilities. “There was a lot of education about exactly what county boards do, and that was helpful because I’m in early childhood and my whole world revolves around kids aged 0-6 and I know a lot about what happens to these kids, but what happens when they turn 6 and move on to more older-childhood and adult roles,” she said. “I don’t have as much knowledge about what those DD services look like. So this was a nice way to get a glimpse at the other departments and how the whole system works together.”



Upcoming Events:

February

- 28 - Wear Jon's Support Squad shirts or purple to support Jon A as he returns to school on this day.

March - DD Awareness Month

- 1 - DD Awareness & Advocacy Day - Virtual Event held in the Carousel Conference Room for Self Advocates (10 am - Noon)
- 2 - Scioto County Commissioners Proclamation of DD Awareness Month in March. 10 am
- 2 - Dr Seuss Day - wear Dr Seuss attire or dress as your favorite Seuss Character.
- 3 - National Employee Appreciation Day. Ice cream sundae bar located in kitchen next to VRS gym from 11-1
- 9 - Special Olympics game: Cardinals vs Shooting Stars at VRS -10:30 am
- 16 - 10:30 am Special Olympics game VRS Cardinals vs Open Door
- 16 - 5 pm Board Meeting at Carousel Center Conference Room
- 17 - VRS Early Dismissal - End of 3rd Grading Period
- 18 - St Patrick's Day Parade - line up on Market Street at 10 am
- 20 - Library event in the afternoon with Chris Cooley at Scioto County Public Library reading with visually and hearing-impaired supports. Time TBA
- 21 - Southern Ohio Advocacy Group Meeting in Chillicothe (Ross County DD) 11 - 12:30
- 21 - Down Syndrome Awareness Day - wear mismatched socks
- 21 - VRS Parent Teacher Conferences 3:15 - 6:45 pm
- 22 - Totally 90s Pep Rally and Special Olympics Teams vs Staff Basketball game - VRS Gym - Time TBD
- 23 - VRS Closed - Staff Report for Staff Training - Parent Teacher Conferences to take place prior to Hardwood Heroes game.
- 23 - 10th Annual Hardwood Heroes Celebrity Basketball Game at SSU. Tip-off at 6 pm
- 24 - VRS Closed
- 29 - Human Rights Committee Meeting at 10 am Carousel Center Conference Room
- 30 - Special Olympics "Big Game" at Ironton: VRS Cardinals vs Open Door school 10:30 am

APRIL - Autism Awareness Month

- 1 - Autism Project of Southern Ohio: Autism Acceptance Month Event at Adam's Flying Pig Coffee House 1 - 4 pm
- 7 - Good Friday, all SCDD Programs closed
- 10 - VRS Closed

SCDD January 2023 Board meeting

- New board member Ellen Lucinda (Cindy) Murray was sworn in.
- SCDD officers elected President Michael Arnett, Vice President Anthony Mantell, and Recording Secretary Cindy Gibson.
- 2023 Standing Committee Members were appointed.
- Accepted the expenses and fiscal Report.
- Discussed a 6.5% DSP rate incentive option now in effect and opened for Providers.
- Approved TO changes for two newly created positions: One Classroom Facilitator and One Lead 1:1. A third recommended change to the TO is the abolishment of the Lead Teacher position, as it is no longer needed with the addition of the Classroom Facilitator.
- Approval of the 2023 Non-Federal Share of Match Obligation Resolution.
- Approved allocation of IDEA Part B Funds (Federal Awards).
- Approved continuing ADS COVID Assistance Grant/ Fund
- Approved 2023 Strategic Plan.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Scioto County Board of Developmental Disabilities
2619 Gallia Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662-4898

Telephone: 740-353-0636
Fax: 740-353-0780
24-Hour Emergency Line: 740-353-4677

You can also find us on Facebook, and online at www.sciotodd.org.