Auglaize DD
County Board of Developmental Disabilities
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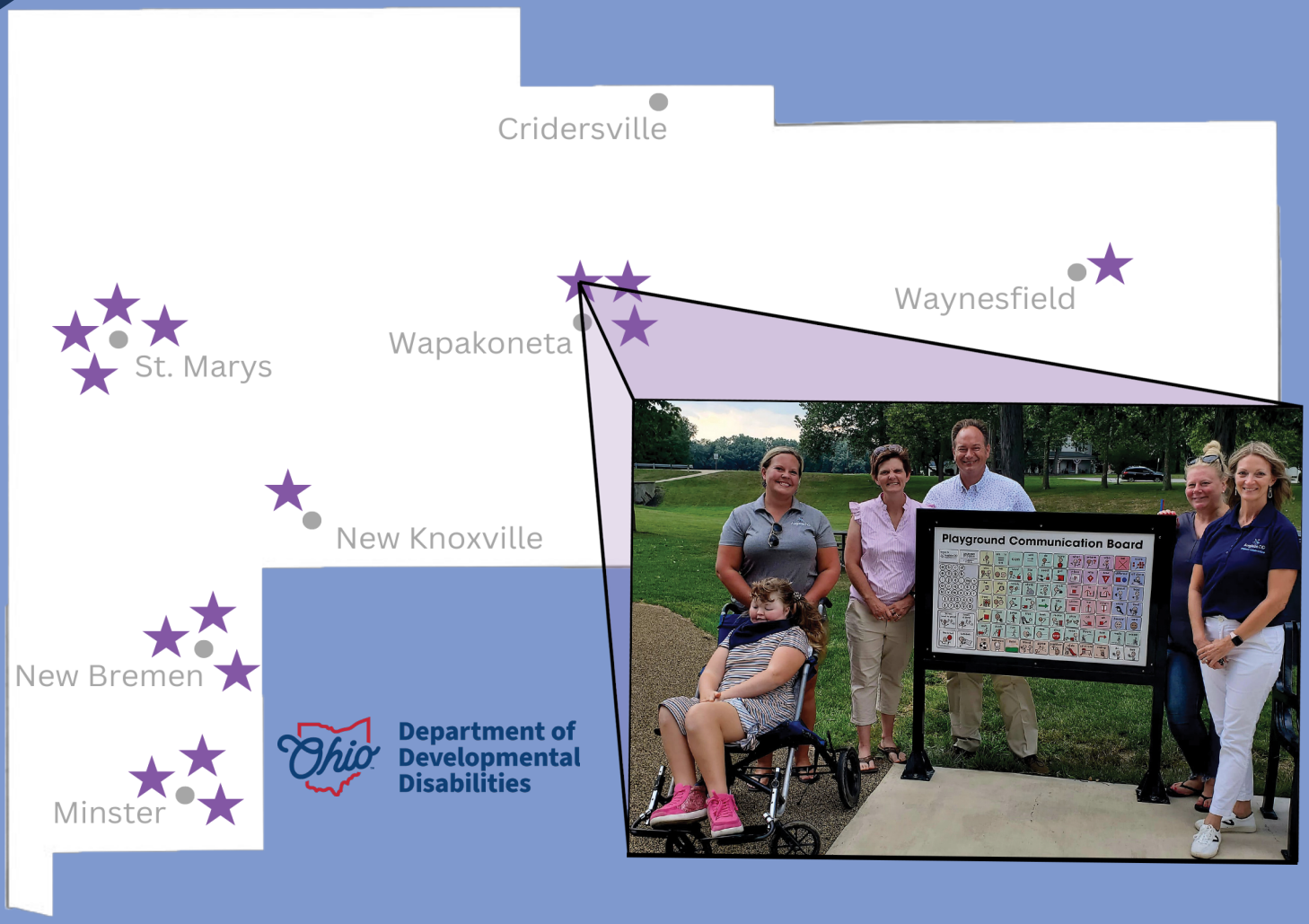
FALL
2024

The Grassroots Gazette



Auglaize DD was able to access American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) dollars through the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, allowing us to donate 15 Playground Communication Boards to local schools, parks and playgrounds throughout Auglaize County. Generous donations from the Minster Service Club helped us surpass our original goal of 13 boards!

As we reached out to community leaders to identify needs, we were thrilled to learn of other projects happening within the county:

- The Wapakoneta Service Club donated 2 boards to Wapakoneta City Schools.
- Breaking the Labels Adult Day Services of Celina donated a board to the Village of New Knoxville Community Park.

We are grateful for our project partner, Creations by Design in Minster, for customizing the boards and taking the time to meet with board recipients, ensuring the signs would meet their unique needs. We are incredibly proud to be a part of area communities that value inclusion and foster independence for people of all abilities!

Sharing Strategies, Services & Superintendents

From the Superintendent - Renee Kohler

Superintendent Renee Kohler

You may have heard that as of August 1, 2024, I began serving in a shared role as the superintendent of both the Auglaize County Board of DD and the Allen County Board of DD, but what does that mean exactly?

Specifically, it means I assumed the responsibilities of superintendent for both county boards upon the retirement of Allen County's superintendent, Theresa Schnipke, who is now in a transitional role as assistant superintendent in Allen County after 34 years of service to the developmental disabilities field. It also means the Board members, Theresa, and I believe both Boards are in a good place where strong teams and strong leaders work everyday to ensure services to people in both counties are of the highest priority.

On a larger scale, shared superintendency is addressed in Section 5126.0219 of the Ohio Revised Code: "If the superintendent position becomes vacant, the county board first shall consider entering into an agreement with another county board for the sharing of a superintendent." As of publication, there are 11 superintendents sharing a total of 23 counties. Many of these shared agreements are new and others have been in place for several years.

While sharing a superintendent may be new to Auglaize DD, sharing other positions and services is not. We have previously purchased services from the Allen County Board of DD, and we are a member of the West Central Ohio Network Council of Governments (WestCON COG) which allows its 12 member counties to participate in shared services and/or purchase various services as needed. In fact, 92% of Ohio's County Boards of DD share various services through COGS, which allows for cost savings, creativity and flexibility in working to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities. This one-year agreement between the Auglaize and Allen County Boards will allow both Boards to assess the efficacy of such an arrangement.

Circling back to what this arrangement means at the local level. While undoubtedly challenging, this is an opportunity to serve beyond county borders as both boards learn from each other, create more efficiencies, and increase stewardship of taxpayer dollars. It is fiscally responsible of both boards to consider and pilot shared services in this manner. My time is split between both boards on a weekly basis with many tasks including regional and statewide meetings, workgroups, conferences, and trainings contributing to my work at both boards.

The map shown above is color-coded to highlight the Ohio counties that currently share a superintendent.

One thing this change does not mean is that this is a merger of the 2 county boards. Both boards will maintain their own personnel and programs and continue to operate as separate entities.

Although I started at in the DD field at the Allen County Board 25 years ago, much has changed, and there is a huge learning curve as we begin this endeavor. I am enjoying meeting more people who comprise our complex system, and I always look forward to the fun activities and events that bring us closer to those we support. As we explore the future success of such an undertaking, we must ground ourselves in the present, relying on the basics of strategic planning, organization, communication, strong teams, and maybe just a dash of grace.

Planning for Growth

Auglaize DD created the Childhood and Transition Services (CTS) Department four years ago, in the fall of 2020, to increase supports for children and families transitioning out of Early Intervention at age three into school-aged services. Our goal was to bridge the gap from Early Intervention, throughout childhood and high school, and into adulthood. With this mindful engagement of families as their children transition through childhood, our CTS Department has grown exponentially.

20% of EI children transition to a CTS Service & Support Administrator (SSA) at age three

- This averages out to 11 new children, ages 3 – 5, per CTS caseload per year

30% of 5-year-olds are determined eligible to continue DD services at the age of six

- This averages out to 13 children, ages 6-14, per year.

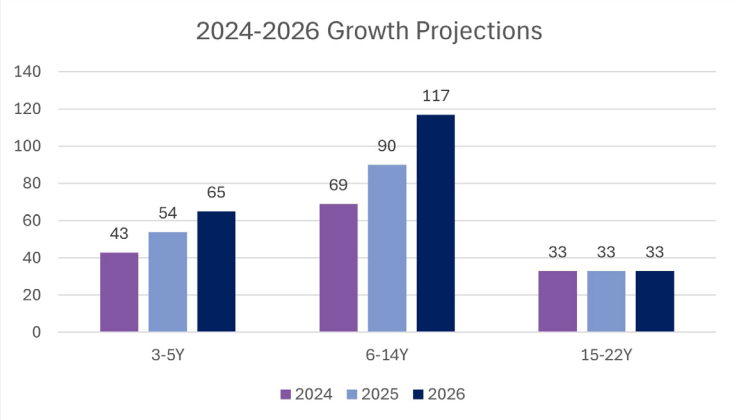
CURRENT CTS NUMBERS

145 children and families are currently being supported by CTS SSAs.

- This number is projected to increase 30% by the end of 2026

48% percent of children served by CTS have an autism diagnosis or suspected diagnosis.

- 56% of these children are between the ages of three and five years old



Auglaize DD will use this data to further develop supports for this growing population as part of the 2025 – 2027 Strategic Plan.

Reflecting on a Lifetime of Service

Vicki May 1960-2024

Many of you are aware we lost a dear friend and colleague when Vicki May passed away unexpectedly after a brief illness on July 31st. Vicki worked in various positions throughout the years at the Auglaize School, in Early Intervention, and most recently, providing program support to both the EI and SSA departments as well as to anyone else who needed it. She would have celebrated 39 years with the Auglaize DD Board on September 18th.

Vicki was known for making every event special and for having most tasks completed before you could even finish asking! She knew exactly where to find everything and remembered every child and adult served by the Board. Graciously, Vicki's family requested the Auglaize DD Legacy Scholarship be one of the benefactors of donations made in her honor. Vicki served on the scholarship scoring committee earlier this year and, per her family, she was proud to be a part of this offering to the community.

While we miss Vicki immensely, we are grateful for the time we got to spend with her. Just as she was proud to be a part of the Auglaize DD team, we are proud of her and find comfort and inspiration in the number of lives she impacted over the years.

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20 E. First Street
New Bremen, OH 45869

Our Mission:
To ensure individuals with developmental disabilities have access to quality supports, providing them opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities.

Upcoming Events

October 2nd - 4th
Synergy Conference
October 12th
Halloween Dance
October 24th
Wapak Halloween Parade
October 29th
Boo! on the Moon
November 19th - 22nd
OCALICON

SCAN ME

2024 Board Members

Kristi Klopfenstein, President
Jodi Liu, V. President
Kristine Stinebaugh, Secretary
Steve Koenig
Judi Martin
Amy Wellman

Contact Information:

Auglaize County Board of DD.....419-629-2419
Early Intervention.....419-977-2210
Report Abuse, Neglect or Theft.....419-629-2419
After Hours/On-Call SSA 419-629-2419

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