Auglaize DD
County Board of Developmental Disabilities
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Fall
2026

The Grassroots Gazette

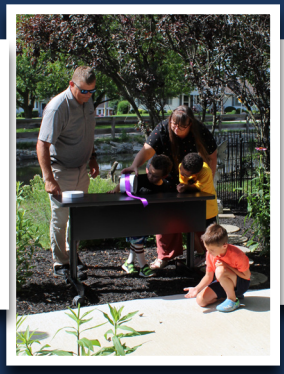
INSIDE!

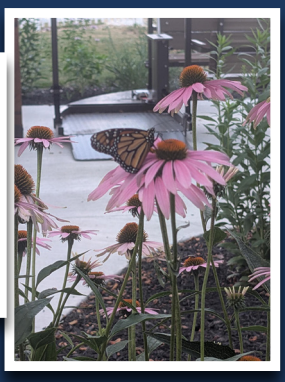
▶ 250 Years of Developmental Disability History

Accessibility in Full Bloom!

We celebrated the lives of some very special people, as well as the installation of a new accessible glider, during our 2nd Annual Butterfly Release in June.

Thank you to the Wapakoneta Area Community Foundation and Midwest Electric's Community Connection Fund for their generous donations toward the glider which is available for all to enjoy in the Wings & Blooms Community Garden.





250 Years of Developmental Disability History

A note from Superintendent Renee Kohler: From colonial-era moral judgments to 21st-century inclusion, the developmental disability history of the United States reflects a journey from exclusion and segregation to advocacy for rights and legal protections. As America celebrates 250 years, we look back at advancements gained through hard-fought battles and the evolution of disability services across the country, throughout the state, and right here in our own back yard!

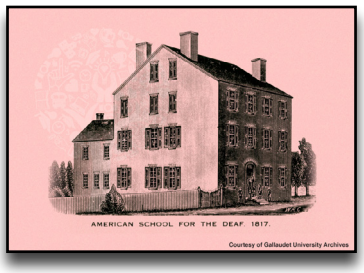
Colonial and Early National Period: 1700s-1800s

- Often viewed through a religious or moral lens, many disabilities were seen as divine punishment or a moral failing.
- People unable to be cared for at home by families were placed in almhouses and poorhouses, which were not designed for specialized care.
- The first formal support for people with disabilities came in 1776 when the Continental Congress established a pension law for disabled soldiers.

19th and Early to Mid-20th Centeries: Institutionalization, Education, Eugenics, and Segregation

Dorothea Dix

- Reformers such as ***Dorothea Dix*** exposed inhumane conditions in prisons and almshouses and advocated for humane treatment, leading to the creation of specialized institutions for mental illness and developmental disabilities.
- The ***American School for the Deaf***, founded in 1817, and the ***Perkins School for the Blind***, founded in 1829, provided education and rehabilitation, reflecting a belief that education could "normalize" people with disabilities, turning them into productive citizens.



American School for the Deaf, circa 1817

- The ***Eugenics Movement*** of the early 1900s aimed to "improve" the genetic quality of humans through selective reproduction.
- Indiana was the first state to impose compulsory sterilization laws in 1907, with 24 other states following suit.
- Often overcrowded and underfunded with poor conditions and abuse, state asylums, residential hospitals, and schools for people labeled "feebleminded" became central to public policy.

Auglaize School, circa 1956

Mid-20th Century: Civil Rights and Legal Protections

- 1953: the Auglaize School (later Auglaize County Board of Developmental Disabilities) was created through the efforts of local families who sought opportunities for education, enrichment, and socialization for their children
- 1967: Ohio's County Boards of Developmental Disabilities were established by the General Assembly
- 1968: Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) required that facilities funded or leased by federal agencies be accessible to people with disabilities

Judith Heumann, 504 Sit-ins

- 1973: ***Rehabilitation Act*** prohibited disability-based discrimination in federal programs and employment
- 1975: Education for All Handicapped Children Act (later ***IDEA***) guaranteed free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities
- 1977: ***504 Sit-ins*** took place across the nation as advocates demanded implementation of Section 504, guaranteeing civil rights protections, of the Rehabilitation Act

Late 20th Century: Advocacy and the ADA

President Bush Signs ADA into Law

- 1986: ***Early Intervention*** was created through a reauthorization of IDEA, establishing a statewide system of services for children from birth through age three with developmental delays and disabilities
- 1990: ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*** ensured equal opportunities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and government services
- 1995: Auglaize County students with disabilities were fully transitioned into the local, public school districts

- 1999: ***Olmstead US Supreme Court Decision*** detemined the unjustified segregation of people iwth disabilities is a form of unlawful discrimination under the ADA.
    - This ruling led to increased enforcement of the ADA, creating significant changes at the federal, state and local levels

21st Century: Inclusion and Community-Based Care

- 2001: Auglaize DD began accessing federal Medicaid dollars which previously paid for services only if a person lived in an institution
    - "Waiving" their right to receive services in an institution, people opted instead to receive services such as personal care, transportation, day programming, and vocational training in their communities

SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD

- The end of the "R" word:
    - 2009 – the words "mental retardation" were removed from Ohio's State and County Boards of Developmental Disabilities
    - 2010 – the "R" word is removed from Federal law
    - 2016 – the "R" word is removed from Ohio law
- 2014: Ohio's County Boards of DD were given ten years to cease the practice of authorizing and providing Medicaid services
    - 2015: The Auglaize Industries Board votes to continue an a private, non-profit, Medicaid provider in response to the mandate
    - 2016: The Auglaize DD Board, as the authorizer of services, votes to support Auglaize Industries in becoming a private provider of services
    - 2017: Auglaize Industries begins operating independently
- 2026: County Boards continue to advocate for the future sustainability of Ohio's unique county board structure, built on local support and partnerships

Wapakoneta Walmart employees celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) 2026

A Guide to the People, Places, and Ideas That Made History

- Dorothea Dix: womenshistory.org
- American School for the Deaf: onlineexhibits.library.yale.edu
- Perkins School for the Blind: britannica.com
- Eugenics Movement: indianadisabilityhistory.org
- Rehabilitation Act: eeoc.gov/rehabilitation-act-1973
- IDEA: sites.ed.gov/idea/IDEA-History
- 504 Sit-ins: youtube.com (search The 504 Sit Ins | History Honors 250)
- Early Intervention: ohioearlyintervention.org
- Americans with Disabilities Act: youtube.com (search How the ADA Changed the Built World | Crip Camp | Netflix)
- Olmstead US Supreme Court Decision: olmsteadrights.org
- Auglaize County Board of Developmental Disabilities: auglaizedd.org

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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:

September 26th
Auglaize DD Halloween Dance
September 30th - October 2nd
Synergy Conference
October 22nd
Wapak Halloween Parade
November 17th-20th
OCALICON

SCAN ME

2025 Board Members:

Kristine Stinebaugh, President
Kristi Klopfenstein, V. President
Judi Martin, Secretary
Steve Koenig
Amy Wellman
Randy Wilker

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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Watch us on YouTube
Auglaize DD

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