CLERMONT COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

A YEAR OF CHANGE

2020 Annual Report

2040 US Highway 50
Batavia, OH 45103
(513) 732-7000 - clermontdd.org

Dan Ottke, Superintendent
MISSION
To help those we serve expand capabilities and navigate the possibilities.

VISION
We envision a culture comprised of inclusive communities where people with disabilities thrive and live a life on their own terms.

PHILOSOPHY
Individuals and families served by the Clermont County Board of DD have the right of choice and flexibility regarding what, how and where services are provided. Individuals and families will be empowered to make decisions, become partners and work cooperatively with professionals, and exert control over the services provided to them.

WE BELIEVE that persons with developmental disabilities have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, be able to take reasonable risk and be protected from exploitation, abuse and degrading treatment.
WE BELIEVE that infants and toddlers learn best in their natural environments, doing things they enjoy and with people with whom they are familiar.
WE BELIEVE that educational services will honor the informed choice of the individual or individual’s family in partnership with local school districts.
WE BELIEVE that adults with developmental disabilities have the right to make choices regarding their lifestyle, their working environment and their living arrangements.
WE BELIEVE in providing adequate information to make informed choices. We believe in the importance of ongoing life planning and supporting individuals and families through the many transitions of life.
WE BELIEVE that adults have the right to work in the community in accessible workplaces, with access to the supports necessary to be successful and the right to wages and benefits provided to other workers in the same setting. We believe individuals should be encouraged to seek employment first.
WE BELIEVE that persons with developmental disabilities have the right to have access to the supports and services they need to be participating members of their communities, including transportation, recreation, social outlets and friends and regular interaction with peers who do not have disabilities.
It is hard to put into words and summarize what 2020 was like for our agency and for those it serves, their families, and our provider partners.

No one could have predicted at the end of 2019 what our county and country would go through in the span of a few months. As I was preparing this summary and was looking back at my monthly reports to our Board, I do not think it would be too dramatic to say that 2020 will go down as one of the most challenging, difficult years faced by this agency in its 50+ year history.

From March through the rest of 2020, much of our work concentrated on how to support those we serve, their families and our providers weather the COVID-19 pandemic along with pivoting our service delivery models to remote services and learning. While our agency had GoToMeeting accounts and virtual meeting platforms, we had just dabbled in the use of them. Like everyone, COVID-19 immediately sped up everyone's learning curve with using this technology. It will certainly change how we use it to create efficiencies for our staff and how we meet with and support those we serve.

In the early part of the pandemic, we were very involved in trying to find ways to secure Personal Protective Equipment for our staff and our provider community. As everyone experienced initially, it was difficult to obtain this equipment. We worked very closely with State partners and our County Emergency Management Agency to find masks, gloves, gowns, and eye protection. Staff and leadership in our School Age program had to quickly pivot to online learning to a platform called Schoology, which lasted through the rest of the Spring. While we were able to open for in-person student learning from August to October, due to significant spikes in case counts Wildey School returned to online learning through the rest of 2020 to ensure the health and safety of the students.

One of the most difficult outcomes of the pandemic was the closure of our Adult Program. For many, many years Clermont DD had operated an Adult Program that offered both work and activities programming for adults, serving many through a contract with Southwest Ohio Developmental Center. It was apparent that the pandemic would be a long-term challenge and after discussing it with our Board, it was decided that we would no longer operate these services moving forward. While we were able to provide for the service needs of those impacted by the program closure, it was sad to have to say goodbye to those that attended the program and many of the staff that had been so dedicated to providing good services.

I want to use this opportunity to thank our staff and their ability to quickly pivot and do what it took in this year to continue to meet the needs of those we serve. Our Early Intervention staff had to quickly adopt to an online model of coaching through a phone or a screen vs. seeing a child in person. Same for our School Age staff who made those fast adaptations. Our Behavioral Health team continued to provide counseling and Behavior Support Services to the many on their caseloads.
Our Community Employment team continued to support individuals that were looking for a job or helped individuals maintain a job in those difficult days of massive layoffs. Our Business Operations, HR, IT, Custodial and Maintenance staff were amazing in keeping our facilities clean, sanitized, and maintained. Our Community Supports staff continued to reach out to those on their caseloads doing what they could to make sure individuals had the things they needed, including supplying food boxes, when necessary.

Finally, we experienced some loss on our Board for different reasons. We were saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Kim Brady in the middle of the year from cancer. While Dr. Brady had not been on our Board long, he had been a joy to know, and we were all appreciative to have his expertise on our Board. He will be missed. Kim Pellington, one of our long-term, fully-tenured Board members reached her term limit at the end of 2020. We owe a significant debt of gratitude to Kim for her 12 years of service and her advocacy for those we serve and her passion for our mission.

We are so very appreciative of the Clermont County community and its support of the work that we do!  We hope you find our report informative and thank you for your continued support of the work!
CORE VALUES - SURE

Safe and Supportive Environment
for individuals we serve, families, visitors, staff, and the community.

Understand
our mission, our values, our jobs, our mandates, and to ensure that others understand.

Responsibility and Respect
for individuals we serve, each other, the community, to manage resources efficiently, and
to provide access to efficient services and programs.

Engage
with the individuals we serve, families, advocates, each other, and the community.

BOARD MEMBERS

**Clermont DD Board**
Robert Grant, President
Kim Pellington, Vice President
Emily Chesnut, Secretary
Dr. Kim Brady
Michael Chapman
David Thamann
Mary Jane West

**Clermont DD Empowers Me Board**
Julie Wood, President
Jeff Weir, Vice President
Cory Wright, Secretary
Jeff Diesel, Treasurer
Donald A. Collins
Lisa Davis
Jodi McPherson
Pete Miller
Brad Toff
Stefani Warren

Clermont DD Board Swearing-In Ceremony in January, 2020 (from left): Clermont County Commissioner Claire Corcoran, Robert Grant, Emily Chesnut, David Thamann, Kim Pellington, Dr. Kim Brady, Mary Jane West, Michael Chapman, and Superintendent Dan Ottke. Commissioner Corcoran conducted the ceremony prior to the beginning of the January meeting.
Each year, the Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities hosts the Good Fortune Awards Recognition Dinner to honor various people who do great things for the people we serve. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to offer dinner, and the awards ceremony was a socially-distanced event held at the Wildey Center. Honorees entered the cafeteria doors, checked in with registration, and were escorted down the hall to the center hallway lobby where they received their awards and exited the building. Each person honored received their certificate/award, plus a cupcake made by Clermont DD Volunteer Michaela Vogel; award winners received fresh flowers from Award Committee Member Brittney Meguire. It was a great night, and one that the pandemic DID NOT RUIN! (Those marked with an asterisk (*) are pictured below.)

**Direct Support Professional of the Year**  
Kathy Lee

**Provider of the Year**  
Verna Goeke, Pine Ridge Pine Village, Inc.*

**Families Connected Advocacy Award**  
Rachel Perlstein*

**Volunteers of the Year**  
Kathy Gibson and Santa Shop Elves*

**Self Advocate of the Year**  
Scott Baker

**Employer of the Year**  
BestNest

**Triumph Staff Award**  
Maria Johnston, Wildey School

**Community Leader of the Year**  
Ed Humphrey  
Clermont County Commissioner

**Friends of DD Award**  
Pam Suldovsky, Clermont Family DJFS

**Partnerships & Collaborations**  
Clermont County Pandemic Food Hub  
Marcie Langendorfer, United Way Greater Cincinnati  
Alida Hart, IPM Food Pantry  
Sheila Hinton, Clermont Family YMCA  
Gretchen Behimer, Clermont Family & Children First
There are seven commitments that are practiced in the Sanctuary Process. These are nonviolence, growth and change, democracy, social responsibility, open communication, social learning, and emotional intelligence.

The Sanctuary Model promotes change in an organization and addresses the way in which chronic stress, adversity, and trauma influence individual behavior, as well as recognizes the ways in which whole organizations can be influenced by chronic stress, adversity, and trauma.

The Seven Commitments & Four Pillars

There are seven commitments that are practiced in the Sanctuary Process. These are nonviolence, growth and change, democracy, social responsibility, open communication, social learning, and emotional intelligence.

There are four elements that make up the basic implementation process: Evaluation, Training, Planning, and Practice. Certification standards were developed by the Sanctuary Institute.

2020 Highlights:

2020 was poised to be a banner year. After in-depth surveying and staff input, our Sanctuary Core Team developed the first Clermont DD Health & Wellness Plan. We created Gathering Rooms where individuals, staff and families could connect and recharge. We established a Wellness Committee to host Family Nights at the gym and walking groups, a Sunshine Committee to support unique department needs and recognize important life event, and the framework for an agency-wide Communication Plan. We were in the process of completing the Tri-State Trauma Network Learning Community with the National Council for Behavioral Health, and then COVID-19 hit. Our Sanctuary recertification, slated for the fall, was postponed and everything moved to remote/virtual. But our team rose to the challenge. Some of our activities included:

- Coordinated and hosted the COVID Connections Meeting—a weekly inter-agency/community-wide meeting to discuss services and challenges during the pandemic.
- Provided a Caregiver Support Group—last Monday of each month.
- Hosted a Mary Vicario 2-day Foundational Trauma Training—grant funded through OMHAS, reaching over 120 individuals from agencies across the country and around the world.
- Supported multiple Zoom cafes throughout the agency—mini meetings to stay connected with each other—such as:
  - Bring a Special Guest to Lunch
  - Coffee Breaks for staff to catch up
  - How I Wish I Could Spend my Summer Vacation
  - After Hours Get Togethers
  - Taco Tuesday.
- We sent personalized birthday greetings to every staff member on their birthday.
- We created our own SharePoint page, an intra-agency communication platform through Microsoft Office, to share events, photos, and departmental updates.
- We formed the first Clermont DD Inclusion Committee to address the needs of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility within our agency and the individuals we serve. Through this group, we started a book club, to explore diverse populations and experiences.
When the State of Ohio was shut down on March 12, 2020, we were truly unaware of what this would mean. The Wildey School and Adult Services programs at Clermont DD both closed and began working with children and adults in a virtual way.

Residential providers were under the Governor’s Orders to close their doors, in order to keep the individuals who lived within their walls safe from the COVID-19 virus. Just like at nursing homes, visitations from friends and family were put on hold for most of 2020. Luckily, their direct support professionals worked hard to maintain stability for the individuals who resided within these facilities while working hard to keep them safe.

Superintendent Dan Ottke sent a letter home with each student and adult so they would be aware that they could call upon any staff at Clermont DD to assist them throughout the transition from life as we knew it to staying at home 24/7. He attended numerous virtual meetings with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD, to not only make sure Clermont DD was on the same page as other county agencies, but to offer any assistance we could.

Independent and agency providers that assisted adults living on their own stopped working due to the Governor’s Stay-At-Home Order. Clermont DD quickly gathered a Needs Task Force together the third week of March, to address the needs coming in from individuals, families, parents, and providers. Those on the task force were members of staff from various departments. The biggest need for most families and adults was food and how to obtain it for those who lived independently and relied on providers to assist with shopping. At that time, Clermont DD began working with United Way to start a food hub. This began almost immediately and would continue until December, 2020. United Way staff began delivering food bags to Clermont DD that were picked up by Service and Support Administrator to deliver to individuals; a few weeks later, InterParish Ministry (IPM) became involved. Each week, Marcie Langendorfer and Sheila Hinton picked up the food from IPM and delivered it to Clermont DD where Community Relations staff sorted it and prepared it for pickup. People from all areas of the agency were able to participate; food was picked up at Wildey and delivered by Service and Support Administrators, Teachers, Early Intervention Staff, and Activity Staff. Keeping people fed became a priority when “running to the store” was no longer an option for most people.

Activities were immediately suspended in March, just prior to the first stay-at-home order that was put into effect. When it became apparent that this was going to last a while, we cancelled April activities with the feeling that we might have to cancel May’s as well. We began hosting virtual activities in May (that continued through 2020 into the new year), which kept everyone’s spirits up and assisted them to learn new ways to communicate through Zoom. It was at this time we also learned the very sad news that Special Olympics State Games were cancelled this year, and no practicing or gatherings of other Special Olympics events would take place until after July 6. Unfortunately, that was continued later in the year to all Special Olympic activities for the rest of 2020.

The Clermont Emergency Management Agency (EMA) put together daily conference calls beginning on March 13 that continued daily until mid-April, when they were cut down to calls on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Later, it was cut to one call per week. During these calls, Clermont DD received information from the Public Health Commissioner, as well as local EMS, fire, law enforcement, hospital doctors, and other social service agencies. Additionally, the EMA set up an Unmet Needs Committee that met virtually each Wednesday for social service agencies to discuss any needs that were unmet within their population.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) was very scarce at the beginning, but Clermont DD’s Facilities Maintenance Supervisor had a bit of a stash we shared with providers. As we received more supplies from either vendors or from the Emergency Management Agency, we continued sharing with providers who could not find necessary PPE such as masks, gloves, gowns, and sanitizers.

Most of our staff began working remotely from the very beginning of the pandemic. This left a skeleton crew of administrative staff that included: Superintendent Dan Ottke and his Executive Secretary Janie Pfankuch; Business Operations Director David Sininger, Community Relations Director Lisa Davis, and staff Suzanne Diesel and Angie Stanton; Community Support Services Director Sharon Richmond; Early Childhood Director Beth Martin; Wildey School Principal Jody Bailey; Facilities and Maintenance Supervisor James Taylor.

Clermont DD is a trauma-informed care agency and promotes self care for families, individuals, AND staff. During this time of uncertainty, Lori Watkins, Behavioral Health Services Director and the Sanctuary Core Team (made up of Clermont DD Staff) held several virtual events to check-in with staff weekly. These were pick-me-ups for those who were essential workers in the office, as well
as a connecting time for staff who were working from home. Behavioral Health Services also continued therapy on a virtual basis with those who typically received in-person services.

There were many adults who were essential workers during the pandemic. At least 53% of the Community Employment Services Department’s workforce were employed during this time. These were individuals who worked in jobs at Kroger, Walmart, Tractor Supply, Round Bottom Recycling, and the kitchen at the Pine Brook Retirement Facility. Additionally, those who worked at Deimling/Jehilo Plastics made hand sanitizer containers that were shipped to other companies to be filled and distributed to stores. People often have the misconception that, at Clermont DD, we are “taking care of” people who have disabilities...during the pandemic, it was the people who had disabilities who were taking care of our communities in many, many ways.

By June, we learned the Clermont County Fair would not be taking place in its normal capacity. Our work with the Fair Board on the Paging Booth as well as hosting an informational booth in the Commercial Building were cancelled, as were most of the expos we attended each year like National Night Out, back-to-school events, etc. We kept busy with some community work, like assisting the Clermont YMCA and United Way to get 300+ boxes of food to people in Brown County, as well as stuffing boxes with information about county services with the National Guard and FreeStore FoodBank.

It became apparent that our Adult Services Program would be coming to an end. This was something that was discussed for a long period of time with our Board and the decision to end the program did not come easily. Many of the people being served onsite at the Donald A. Collins Center were from the Southwest Ohio Developmental Center who were put on lockdown/stay-at-home from the very beginning; the others who lived at home were able to be placed on waivers so they could attend other providers’ day services in the community. With that came the layoff of staff and the closing of this program. It was a very sad spring. It also left us with the Donald A. Collins Habilitation Center building being vacant; it was auctioned on September 29, 2020.

Throughout the entire pandemic, the needs of the individuals served at Clermont DD were at the top of our list of items. The Wildey School began learning about the Schoology online learning platform in April and met with students/families each day to assist them with learning until the last day of school. Graduation was cancelled but was planned for later in the summer. Telehealth therapies were put into place for everyone receiving services in our Behavioral Health Department; Early Intervention families began using GoToMeeting and Zoom in order to provide necessary therapy and sessions with infants and toddlers; we even purchased special tripods for families’ phones, so the children could participate in the sessions without being distracted by the meeting taking place via phone. Service and Support Administrators checked on the individuals on their caseloads every day and continued to find resources in the community to assist with whatever the individuals’ needs were. Our main switchboard was answered from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, to field many calls asking about services. The Intake Department was busy with calls for new individuals seeking programs and services, our Facilities/Maintenance Department began deep cleaning and renovating the Wildey Main Entrance at the Wildey Center that was already scheduled to take place, and the Business Operations Department continued with their regular duties of processing payments of bills, Medicaid billing, payroll, etc. In short, it was business as usual, with most people doing this business from home.

As summer drew to an end, the School Age Department moved from the center hall of the Wildey Center to the former Adult Services wing to prep for returning in person. This gave them their own entrance and their own wing, so the students could be kept away from any cross-contamination of visitors in and out of the buildings. As the new school year began on August 19, everyone held their breath...but all is well as of this writing! Staff use masks and face shields every day, and cleaning takes place between staff and the custodians who have staggered their hours to accommodate this cleaning schedule.

On September 18, we were scheduled to hold our all-staff inservice…and we did. This meeting was held on Zoom, which was a first for our agency. We celebrated staff for years of service, had special guest speakers including Julianne Nesbit, Clermont County Health Commissioner, and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Director Jeff Davis. We also broke out into groups to discuss how people had handled the pandemic, what they had learned, and what they disliked the most.

We were able to hold the 2020 Graduation Ceremony on September 24 for a crowd limited to graduates, their families, and staff. Speakers were Superintendent Dan Ottke, former Superintendent Donald A. Collins, and Principal Jody Bailey. Everyone was social distanced and only sat with family.

There were other milestones that we achieved during this uncertain and scary time. One thing was always at the forefront of our minds: continued services to children and adults who have developmental disabilities and their families, and service to our community.
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

What an incredible year, without a doubt one of the most challenging we’ve ever seen at Clermont DD. Our Behavioral Health Team did an incredible job maintaining services to individuals through groups, virtual sessions and one-on-one supports. In 2020, our team served 146 individuals through multiple capacities, including:

- Behavior Support (91)
- CITE referral and oversight (21)
- Grant-funded programs (RISE 2.0 – 8 and Resilience Project – 18)
- Mental Health support (44)
- Psychiatric medication management (32)
- Human Rights Committee (15)

2020 Overview:

- Completed the Tristate Trauma Network Learning Community.
- Collaborated in developing Clermont DD Health & Wellness Plan.
- Established agency’s first Inclusion Committee with a vision to create a community that celebrates and supports diversity 365 days a year.
- Building and growing cross-system and cross-agency partnerships with Hamilton DDS, Clermont County Children’s Services, Pressley Ridge, Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health, Clermont County Family & Children First Council, Child Focus, Inc., Clermont County Mental Health & Recovery Board, Hope Community Center, Applied Behavioral Services, and Finding Hope Consulting.
- Organized and hosted two-day Foundation Trauma training presented by Mary Vicario with attendees from local hospitals, provider agencies, courts, and more.
- Co-facilitated groups on Women’s Healthy Relationships, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, and Internet Safety.
- Hosted five University of Cincinnati Bachelor of Social Work interns.
- With the Community Support Services Department, formalized a Transition Process for youth transitioning from Children’s Services care and control to Clermont DD primary services and trained Children’s Services and Service and Support Administrators.
- Presented monthly in-house SURE and quarterly Sanctuary training.
- Provide ongoing training and support to local providers, systems, and partners.
- Continued to partner with St. Aloysius in preparation of Sanctuary recertification.
EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early Intervention (EI) Services are provided by the Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities for children under the age of three. This program follows rules from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and from Part C of I.D.E.A. The overarching goal of Early Intervention is to increase the family and caregiver’s competence and confidence in helping their child learn and grow. The early childhood programs operating under or coordinated by Clermont DD in 2020 were:

**Early Intervention Services** - Specialized services for children under the age of three with a developmental delay, disability, or a diagnosed medical or physical condition.

**Early Intervention Service Coordination** - System for the coordination and implementation of services for children birth to three.


2020 Overview:

- Received 418 referrals.
- Completed 384 evaluations of children and families.
- Had an average enrollment of 218 children.
- Clermont County Early Intervention partnered with Child Focus to provide Early Childhood Mental Health services to families served. Clermont DD EI continued to provide Early Childhood Mental Health as a primary service when needed.
- Received the highest designation ("meets requirements") from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities for our services, based on a variety of measures. This included 100% adherence to specific compliance indicators.
- State-generated family survey results brought in overwhelmingly positive responses from families served. Clermont County EI received a 100% positive response rate on ALL questionnaire items. Families reported:
  - “I love our Zoom PT sessions!”
  - “I’m thrilled and thankful my son can get the help he needs early on.”
  - “We are very grateful for the services we received and the progress that our son made over the last year.”
  - “The staff were all great!”
- Across the state, EI implemented new protocols and processes for completing virtual evaluations.
- Pivoted to virtual service provision in an immediate fashion due to the pandemic. Families did not experience a delay in service provision and reported positively on virtual service provision in the family survey.
2020 Overview continued:

- Initiated an internal system to lend tech devices to Early Intervention families who did not have access to equipment to complete virtual Early Intervention activities.
- Created a virtual lending library for both families and professionals. This was shared state-wide, at the request of Clermont County's ODODD EI program consultant.
- Staff completed trainings to expand their skills in evidence-based practice in Early Intervention, virtual service provision, and virtual eligibility determination.
- All service coordinators and service providers received updated technology devices and relevant equipment in order to support virtual service provision.
- Partnered with local resources to support families with a variety of needs (mental health, addiction, food, housing, holiday needs) during the pandemic.

Areas of Oversight:

- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities: Ongoing support and monitoring of all components of the implementation of Part C services, including IFSP outcomes, transition, and evaluation and assessment, all per DODD requirements.
- Local Family and Children First Council: Ongoing feedback and recommendations provided regarding both budgetary and programmatic aspects of Clermont County’s EI Service Coordination program.

Individuals Served by Early Intervention:

- Total individuals served in 2020: 889 waiting list – 0
- Total children in the system as of 12-31-20: 238 waiting list – 0
WILDEY SCHOOL SERVICES

Thomas A. Wildey School is located on the Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities’ main campus in Batavia, Ohio. The school is licensed as a public separate school through the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

Thomas A. Wildey School partners with all of the local school districts in Clermont County to provide specially designed instruction for students as Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams see fit. When an educational placement at Thomas A. Wildey is deemed appropriate by the student’s IEP team, the school district of residence is responsible for 100% of the cost to educate the student as well as providing special transportation.

The School Age program provides specially designed instruction to students impacted with disabilities as young as kindergarten and all the way past high school. Students are placed in classrooms based on age. Each classroom does not exceed a 60-month age range as required by ODE.

We ended the 2019-20 school year operating seven classrooms and began the 2020-21 school year operating eight classrooms. Our classrooms are designed to meet the unique needs of our students. The majority of our classrooms are designed for students who are impacted by low incidence disabilities. The daily focus is meeting health, safety, physical, social-emotional, sensory, and educational needs. We also have a Social Communication classroom which focuses on providing visual structures and supports while providing meaningful educational opportunities and experiences. For our oldest students who have deferred their high school diplomas, we offer a transition program which focuses on functional academics, daily living skills, and behavior modification in preparation for the adult world. We limit our class size to 6 students per class with an average staff-to-student ratio of 1:2. Our average enrollment is 42 students.

2020 Overview:

- January 2020 - We transformed an office space into a new sensory room for our students to enjoy. Students began stocking and pushing the snack cart around the agency for staff to purchase healthy treats in the afternoons.
- February 2020 - The Wildey Way Committee planned our first all-school dance. Lisa Davis and Angie Stanton were our fabulous DJs.
- March 2020 - COVID-19 became a reality in Ohio.
- March 12 - Governor DeWine ordered all Ohio Schools to close for 3 weeks.
- March 13 - The last day for in-person instruction, remote learning preparation began. It was decided that Schoology would be our online learning platform. Staff posted an hour of new content each school day on their “Course.” Families also participated in weekly phone calls with their child’s team.
- March 30 - Governor DeWine ordered all Ohio Schools to close until May 1st.
- April 20 - Governor DeWine ordered all Ohio Schools to close through the end of the 2019-20 school year.
- May 28 - The 2019-20 school year ended remotely.
- July 2 - Ohio’s Reset and Restart Education planning tool for the 2020-21 school year was released.
- July 6 - We began moving the School Age program to the former Adult Services hallway. This move allowed us to comply with the guidelines set forth within our Reset and Restart plan.
2020 Overview continued:

- **August 19** - The first day of school for the 2020-21 school year. We had 60% of students return to in-person learning. Per parental choice, 40% of students continued with remote learning. Staff were equipped with and wore face masks. They also wore face shields and/or protective eye wear.

- **September 24** - Four graduates from the 2019-20 school year graduated in a socially-distanced outdoor ceremony.

- **October 12** - A staff member tested positive for COVID-19. Through contact tracing with the Clermont County Board of Health, 8 staff and 4 students were quarantined. Students returned to remote learning through the end of December, 2020. In addition to Schoology, our remote learning plan included:
  - Individual Virtual Sessions: 1:1 session with the student and teacher/staff using GoToMeeting.
  - Group Virtual Sessions: group session with the student and teacher/staff using GoToMeeting.
  - Individual In-Person Therapy Sessions: A 30-minute weekly, in-person therapy session was offered to all students.
  - Individual Swim Sessions: With approval from the Clermont County Board of Health, we offered each family the opportunity to come and swim with their student. Under the supervision of our lifeguard, only one parent/caregiver and student were in the pool at a given time.
  - Snack from the cafeteria: A small healthy snack was packaged for each student to take home after their in-person therapy and/or swim session.

- **December 2020** - Planning began for a blended learning model to start in January 2021.

The Wildey School Rainbow Picture (colors begin in the back, with each class depicting the rainbow in order: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet with White for Clouds.

Taken one week before the Stay-At-Home Orders.
Looking back on Adult Services and the time that so many individuals spent receiving services within the walls of our day programs elicits many fond memories. As we all know, 2020 brought a change to life as we know it and a cause to change course in how we live life and how Clermont DD provided services to adults with disabilities. Due to the pandemic that hit our nation, Adult Services was forced to close our doors to individuals and made us re-evaluate how we provide services. The traditional day program was permanently closed and people were offered waivers. As the restrictions began to be lifted, people took those funds and made choices about how and where they wanted to receive services. For many, it meant they would depend on Independent Providers to meet their needs in the community, for others they selected private providers of day services, and yet for others, they chose community employment and use the Community Employment Division of our agency for job placement, job coaching, and follow-along services.

We are proud of the work that we have done within Adult Services from its inception in the late 1960’s until the final day of operation in March of 2020. The faces changed from time to time but our philosophy of providing quality services, with friendly, professional staff that promoted respect to and independence for individuals served stood the test of time. It was always our goal to provide a place for people to learn work skills and earn a paycheck if they desired. We had work contracts with American Micro Products, Deimling Jeliho, and Reliance International at the beginning of 2020. The work was brought in house, completed by individuals, and returned to the company for distribution to their customers. We often received accolades for the work participants produced, and this always made us proud of the accomplishment. For many, this was the only opportunity to gain work skills. In addition to the work program, the Community Integration Program housed at the Wildey Center was thriving with opportunities for everyone to get involved in their community through volunteer opportunities at St. Vincent DePaul and the Clermont County Park District, and Community Integration experiences when eating out, going to the movies, or shopping for supplies at Walmart, just to name a few. Regardless of a person’s program of working at DAC or community integration at Wildey, it was our main objective to help people flourish in their day program and have fun with a sense of value.

While 2020 only saw a few short months of face-to-face service with individuals and staff, our work continued through the initial stages of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Our staff made phone calls, sent “Thinking of You” cards, and took it upon themselves to show support to people they had served for so long by sending gifts and making “Window Visits” to residents at SODC and a few private residents. We’ve heard it said that “just because our doors closed, our hearts and minds are still open to serve.”
In June of 2020, Adult Services staff were laid off and the decision was made to close our programs permanently. The buildings were emptied and the Donald Collins Building was auctioned. We leave our programs there, knowing that we served people well through the years and began the necessary work to move them forward through the waiver process to choose options for services that are progressive and promote growth and development for each person, keeping with the times.

LEGACY
Carve your name on hearts
Not tombstones.
A legacy is etched into the minds of others
And the stories they share
About you.
~Shannon L. Adler~

May the work you have done with people carry on within them and create our legacy.
Tim and Amy
COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Community Employment Services Department was formerly part of Adult Services until their closure in June, 2020. Now, we are a stand-alone program, designed to assist people with developmental disabilities to find meaningful and competitive employment in the Clermont County and Greater Cincinnati area.

Although the COVID-19 Pandemic was difficult to get through, 53% of those enrolled in Community Employment Services were essential workers throughout 2021. They worked throughout the Governor’s Stay-At-Home Orders at businesses such as Walmart, Kroger, Tractor Supply, and others. Some often have the misconception that we, at Clermont DD, are “taking care of people.” During the early months of the pandemic, it was these essential workers who were taking care of their communities in many, many ways!

2020 Highlights:

- 15 job seekers accepted employment in year 2020; (down significantly from last year’s figures, but we were proud of this number, considering the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Average hourly wage was $10.28.
- Average workweek was 18.66 hours.
- 60 employees worked in over 52 area businesses.
- Our Transition program provided Pre-Employment Transition Services to 27 students throughout the school year. This was conducted remotely due to COVID-19.
- During the summer, we provided Career Exploration services remotely to 4 students, while 9 students worked in our Summer Youth Work Experience at local businesses: Bethel Park District, Wildey School, and Holiday Inn Eastgate.
- Continued to provide quality services to persons served, navigating COVID-19 restrictions.
- Continued to work to place people in full-time, competitive jobs with benefits and competitive hourly wages.
- Angela Kenney accepted the Commissioners Proclamation for October’s "National Disability Employment Awareness Month." Angela was an essential worker, whose position as a Patient Ambassador was a frontline worker at Mercy Anderson Hospital.
- Awarded the "Employer of the Year" Award to BestNest at the Good Fortune recognition event.

Essential workers include Austin Porter of Tractor Supply (above) and Ethan Stuempfle of Kroger Eastgate (right).
The Community Support Services Department helps support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by determining eligibility, facilitating assessments to determine service needs, identifying available resources, and facilitating service planning that ensures that individuals/their families have choice and control in planning, while maintaining the health and well-being of the individual being served. Some resources that are considered include Family Support Services, Medicaid Waivers, Private Insurance, Medicaid Cards, other public funds, personal assets, and natural supports. Efficient utilization of available resources is necessary to maximize the number of individuals who can be supported while balancing our fiscal accountability to taxpayers who make these services and supports possible. Areas of service are based on rules and laws set by the State of Ohio, as well as budgets and priorities of the Clermont DD Board. Components of services within the Community Support Services Division includes Intake, Eligibility, Referral, Waiting List Management, Data Management, Management of Locally Funded Services, Service and Support Administration and Investigations.

2020 Overview:

- As we all know, 2020 was a difficult year for many. We made it our priority to continue providing essential services for those with disabilities while adhering to new health and safety standards.
- We acknowledged the Direct Support Professionals, our front-line heroes. They showed up, day after day, to make sure the people we support were not only cared for but also cared about. Their commitment has never been more visible. Thank you for your dedication and partnership! (The banner at right was placed at the Wildey Center.)
- The pandemic has provided us with some efficiencies. Technology and Zoom have allowed us the opportunity to maintain contact with our individuals, providers, stakeholders, and partners. We are grateful these virtual options were provided to us.
- We have learned from and supported each other, we have greater empathy for others, and we have greater appreciation for what was "normal." Individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, Providers and staff continue to develop creative ways to adapt. Sadly, we are also aware that some have experienced loss during this time. Our thoughts remain with those families and friends.
- There were 358 eligibility referrals handled through Intake, resulting in 199 Individuals completing the process and being determined to be eligible for our services.
- We finalized the review of the Transitional Waiting List which placed Individuals with a Current or Immediate Need on the new Waiver Waiting List. We have achieved getting down to one Waiting List.
- The number of referrals for our Family Support Services program increased as it was a resource available to individuals and their families to meet needs presented during the Waiting List Assessment interviews. Additional funds were directed mid-year to FSS.
- We refinanced our locally funded Individual Budget Program by offering Medicaid Waivers to the 111 Individuals who had been participating in these services.
- We allocated 30 Level One Waivers for Adult Service Refinance when the Clermont DD Adult Services Programs unexpectedly ended in May.
- We allocated 27 Level One Waivers to transitional graduates in need of an adult day program or assistance in obtaining employment.
2020 Overview continued:

- Total Waiver Enrollments in 2020 were 14 Individual Option Waivers, 5 Individual Options Waivers for Individuals exiting an ICF facility, 66 SELF Waivers and 83 Level One Waivers.
- As a result of the increase in the Waiver numbers, 3 new SSAs joined the CSS Department.
- Communication increased between SSAs and Individuals on their caseload. SSAs made frequent calls with Individuals living on their own, those living in 24/7 provider supported homes, and those living with family.
- The SSAs helped Individuals navigate obtaining their stimulus checks and other benefits and encouraged participation in the voting and census processes.
- Communications with providers increased as well. Everyone worked hard to maintain a strong relationship of support to obtain needed Personal Protection Equipment and to find back up resources with the threat of acute workforce shortages.
- We held five Provider Meetings, moving to a virtual platform beginning in May and discovered this increased participation and allowed for sessions to be recorded for future viewing.
- The Common Threads Network of Southwest Ohio hosted its 7th Annual Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Updates as a virtual event in November. As members of the CTN, we assisted with the planning of the event. Speakers from DODD included Director Jeff Davis, and some of his cabinet members.
- The Investigations Unit reported the number of MUIs in 2020 was 261. This represents an 8% decrease from 2019. Additionally, the Investigative Unit assisted Staff and Providers in reviewing 400+ Unusual Incidents to determine if they rose to the level of a MUI.
- As we reflect upon 2020, we want to express our gratitude to our partners who have helped keep people as safe and healthy as possible through the pandemic.
- Several staff received recognition for their years of service during the All Staff Inservice on September 18.

New Staff in 2020
Keith Hammond
Samantha Hurm
Clinton Pangallo
Chrystal Wood

5 Years
Meg Kennedy
Joyce Luce
Christy Monsson
Alex Savage

20 Years
Christine Darling
Debbie Donahue
Holly Strum
Dan Sullivan
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Communications and Community Relations Department has four main areas that help tie the Clermont DD agency to the community. These areas are press/media relations, volunteer coordination, community activities, and fundraisers/events/awareness activities.

2020 was very challenging as most events we attend or create/implement each year were cancelled. Still, we were able to continue to spread awareness about our agency through virtual platforms.

2020 Highlights:

- DD Awareness Month was celebrated in March:
  - Clermont County Commissioners Proclamation in February.
  - Held an internal Awareness Month Logo contest. Chrystal Wood’s design was chosen by the Clermont DD Board as the winner. Chrystal is the Investigations Administrative Assistant and was honored at the February Board meeting.
  - Self Advocates attended the DD Advocacy and Awareness Day at the Ohio Statehouse.
- Community activities for teenagers and adults were cancelled when the Governor of Ohio enforced the Stay-At-Home Order on March 12. In April, we began virtual activities on Zoom that included Self Advocacy Meetings, “Say Hello with Angie” weekly gatherings, trivia, ice cream socials, and more.
- Volunteer opportunities were put on hold due to the pandemic; however, college classes resumed and we were honored that interns from the University of Cincinnati as well as other local colleges chose to complete their social work clinical hours with our Behavioral Health Services Department.
- Regular awareness events such as the Empowering Families Symposium, Clermont Sheriff’s National Night Out and Clermont County Fair (to name a few) were cancelled. Although we couldn’t attend in person, we donated composition books to the Felicity Cool Tools for School back-to-school program in August.
- Participated on the Safety Net Alliance Executive Committee and produced quarterly virtual learning events. At least 80 people were in attendance for each event.
- Assisted with planning virtual Superintendent Forums in July and November.
- Partnered with the OSU Extension Office to present virtual SNAP-Ed Healthy Cooking Classes throughout the year.
- Continued to boost membership for the Cerkl newsletter.
- Facilitated the 10th Annual Good Fortune Awards October 27. Only award recipients and their families were invited to attend the socially-distanced event that was held at the Wildey Center. We recognized Kathy Gibson and her Santa Shop Elves as Volunteers of the Year.
- Participated in a socially-distanced WJAA Haunted Woods Kids Day on October 24.
- Helped host a virtual community play date in October with the Early Childhood Coordinating Committee.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

2020 Highlights (continued):

- We offered our assistance to the Emergency Management Agency by participating on daily and weekly calls throughout the pandemic. We were also part of the Unmet Needs Committee, which was specifically designed to address the needs of non-profit and government partners during the pandemic.
- Assisted the Clermont Family YMCA to load, transport, and distribute food boxes to families in Russellville, Ohio, as part of the Pandemic Food Hub (pictured below, top left).
- Held two in-person events in October and December: a Haunted Drive-Thru was held on October 21 and a Winter Wonderland, including gifts from the Mt. Carmel American Legion Ladies Auxiliary, took place on December 17. (Below, bottom right)
- Assisted families to receive Thanksgiving Boxes from Crossroads Eastside Church on November 22. In 2020, we served 41 families/individuals through this program. (Below, top right)
- Hosted a virtual Giving Tree through Sign-Up Genius. Gifts from this tree went to youth participants of Empower Youth's Winter Wonderland and the Mercy Clermont Adopt-a-Child Campaign. Clermont DD staff were VERY generous, as we were able to be part of serving 223 families!
- Helped facilitate a volunteer-driven, drive-thru Santa's Workshop for individuals to receive family gifts on December 6. This was held in the Wildey Bus Circle this year, due to the pandemic. (Below, bottom left)
SELF ADVOCACY AT CLERMONT DD

Turn Up Clermont had a great year of learning, networking, and creating relationships within the self advocacy group. We attended the DD Advocacy and Awareness Day at the Ohio Statehouse on March 4 to kick off Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Just one week later, our whole world changed when we were placed under Stay-At-Home orders from the Governor on March 12. After the initial shock, we went about our work like any other day! Many of us were essential, front-line workers, while other members of our group kept our homes running for our families.

Our first virtual Self Advocacy Meeting was in April. It was different, but we learned we could still impact ourselves and our communities through Zoom and Facebook Live. Because in-person events at the Clermont Chamber of Commerce were cancelled, our networking opportunities were postponed. However, we were still able to accept the DD Awareness Month proclamation from the Clermont County Commissioners in March. This was handled by 2019 Self Advocate of the Year, Ellen Thompson (pictured below).

2020 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To celebrate, we hosted a Honk and Wave event at the Union Township Veterans Park (pictured). Video from this event was included with Hamilton County DDS's event and was published on several social media platforms. We were proud to participate.

We welcomed a few new faces to our virtual meetings throughout the summer and fall. In October, Scott Baker received the 2020 Self Advocate of the Year Award at Clermont DD's Good Fortune Award Ceremony in October. Our hope is that 2021 brings a brighter future. Until then, we will continue to work on advocating for ourselves and others!
BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Business Operations Department provides several key functions to the agency: fiscal operations, information technology, risk management and safety, human resources, administrative quality and compliance, facilities management, and transportation management.

2020 Highlights:

- Facilitated the renewals of several contracts and grants including National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, Public School District contracts for School Age Services, Title XX, Provider Contracts for Room and Board and various service contracts for individuals.
- Closed the Adult Service program initiating layoffs in accordance with the Bargaining Unit contract due to the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Sold the Donald A Collins building.
- Established a COVID-19 emergency relief program for providers to help with additional costs and revenue loss as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Provided a free Personal Protective Equipment supply store for providers (pictured below, right).
- Entered into contract with Cincinnati Bell to bring fiber internet service to Wildey and a new voice over IP phone service.
- Replaced the Wildey gym facia (pictured below, left).
- Renovated the Wildey main entrance to provide better accessibility and increased the waiting area with an Ohio Bureau of Workers Comp Grant.
- Installed Forticlient to our network to improve remote desktop security.
- Instituted a repetitive Server Backup Solution to include cloud based, local and removable local.
- Implemented Mobile Device Control for all mobile devices.
- Implemented Gatekeeper Anywhere for remote case notes.
REVENUE & EXPENSES

2020 Revenue
$18,978,461

2020 Expenses
$15,697,269

Expenses:

Adult
• Adult Services
• Employment Services
• Enclaves
• Individual Budget
• Self Determination
• Mental Health

Transportation
• Adult Transportation

Service and Support
• Case Management
• Service and Support
• Staff involved in Community Services
• Investigations

Community Services
• Supported Living
• Family Resource Services
• I/O, Self, Level One
• Room & Board
• A Non-Waiver Community Svc

Early Intervention
• Early Intervention
• Regional Infant Hearing
• Help Me Grow

School Age
• School Age

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Therapists and counselors from GCB continued working with Clermont DD staff to provide weekly group sessions for individuals to receive Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). These were switched to virtual platforms when the pandemic began and continued throughout the rest of the year in a virtual format.

Clermont County Emergency Management Agency

Clermont DD began attending daily EMA meetings at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. These moved to three times a week and then every-other week throughout 2020. During these meetings, Clermont DD staff reported updates on what we were doing (i.e. food hub, attention to group home residential settings and provider needs, ensuring those staff had necessary PPE, etc.). We were also invited to attend Unmet Needs Committee Meetings, which were for all faith-based and non-profit organizations to discuss their work during the pandemic. These meetings were beneficial and assisted Clermont DD to stay within the Public Health Department’s focus when determining PPE needs and vaccine clinics that were discussed at the end of 2020.

Clermont County Safety Net Alliance

Throughout 2020, Clermont DD assisted the Safety Net Alliance to hold quarterly Zoom meetings. Topics included ways to assist people through the many, many issues related to the pandemic. Usually 80-100 people from various faith-based, non-profits, and businesses attended each event.

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