

INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:

Walk for
Awareness 1

DD Awareness 2
Month

Adams speaks
to Legislators 3

New faces at 4-5
SOCOG

Anniversaries 6
Recognized

Trailblazers 7
take court

Tech Ambassa- 8
dors in Athens

SOCOG Counties Celebrate DD Awareness Month

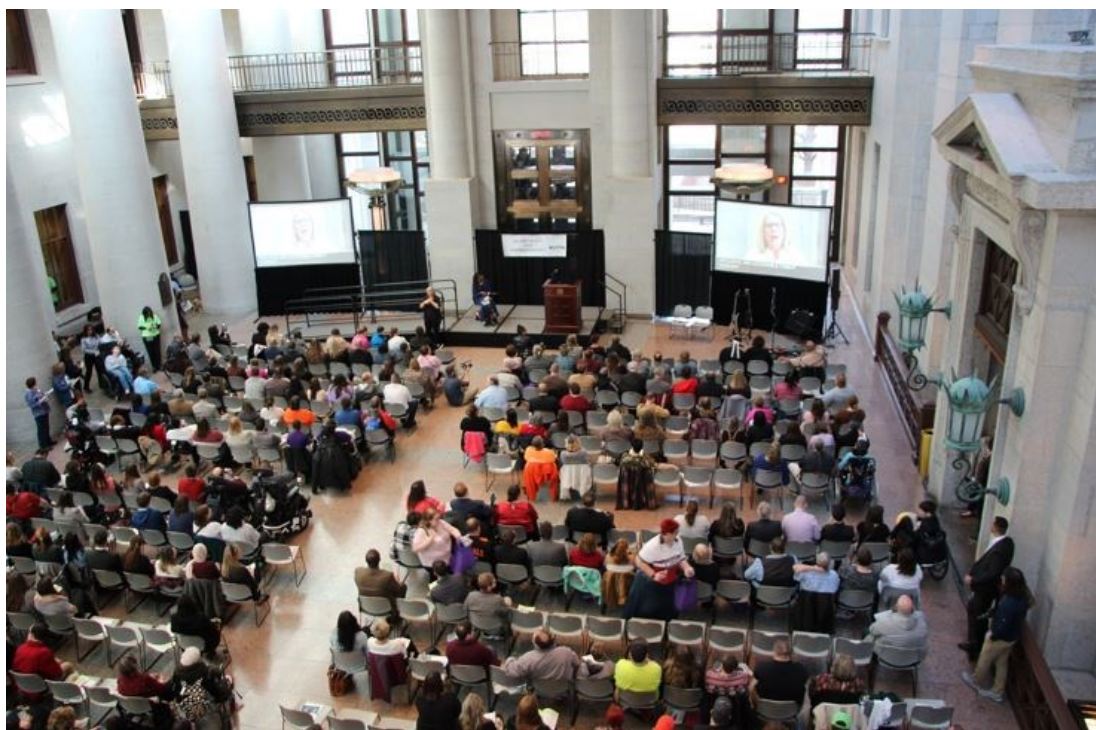


Photo: Ohio Department of DD Facebook Page



Photo: RCBDD

Above: Self-advocates, friends, families, and supporters from throughout Ohio gathered on March 1 at the DD Advocacy Day at the Statehouse.

Left: The Ross County Board of DD and Pioneer School kicked off DD Awareness Month with the 1st Annual Walk for Awareness on March 2. Chillicothe Mayor Luke Feeny and Superintendent Amy Beeler both spoke at the event and the Pioneer School choir entertained the attendees.

DD Awareness Month



Above: The Lawrence County Commissioners recognized DD Awareness Month with a special proclamation at their March 6 meeting. (Photo: LCBDD)

Many of our counties held watch parties for the Kickoff of DD Awareness Month which took place at the Ohio Statehouse. Pictured above is the watch party at the Scioto County board and to the right is the Pickaway County board watch party. (Photos: SCBDD, PCBDD)



OACBDD CEO Adam Herman visits SOCOG board



OACBDD CEO, Adam Herman, attended the October meeting of the SOCOG Board and discussed many challenges County Boards are facing. Topics of discussion included waiver redesign, rate increases, DSP and county board employee pay.



Bill Adams speaks to Ohio legislators

SOCOG’s Advocate Bill Adams was among several association representatives, county board members, providers, people with DD, family members, and DSPs to testify in the House Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee in support of the DD Budget Coalition’s request for additional state funding to combat Ohio’s DD workforce crisis on March 15.

Photo: Open Door Columbus

New Faces and Changes at SOCOG

Since our last newsletter was published, there have been several changes to the SOCOG organization chart and new faces have joined our team. We are very thankful to have brought so many great talents to SOCOG.

Sean Kallner
Business Manager



One of the most recent and biggest change's to our team is the addition of Sean Kallner. Sean replaces Lori Yoakem who managed the finances of SOCOG for 14 years.

Sean comes to us with 23 years of experience in finance and a master's degree from Liberty University.

He and his wife have five children. They have lived in Ross County since 2015.

Alyssa Oates
Representative
Payee



For many years Patty Richardson and Marsha Green were the faces of the SOCOG Representative Payee Department. In 2022, they decided the time had come to retire and pass the baton.

Alyssa Oates began her training in the payee department last July and Danielle Pavick came on board in October. They have been operating the payee department since Patty and Marsha officially retired in December.

Alyssa lives in Chillicothe with her boyfriend, two dogs, and too many

horses. She received a bachelor's degree from Kansas State University and master's degree from New Mexico State University.

Danielle lives in Waverly with her son and fiancé. She comes to us from Scioto County Board of DD where she worked as an SSA. She holds a bachelor's degree from Shawnee State University.



Danielle Pavick
Representative Payee



Diana Howard
Fiscal Clerk

In late 2022, the SOCOG board approved a new position—Fiscal Clerk. This position provides support to the business manager by entering bills, reconciling payee bank accounts, and making bank deposits.

Diana Howard began work in January. She brings 15 years of experience in fiscal work. She has an associates degree from Ohio University.

Diana lives in Chillicothe with her husband, youngest daughter, and two dogs.

Angie Welch

Investigative Agent



Angie Welch was brought into the SOCOG investigative team in October. She covers Clinton, Pickaway, and Pike Counties.

She was a SSA in Brown County prior to joining SOCOG. Her bachelor's degree was earned at Wilmington College.

Angie is a resident of Hillsboro.

Joshua Chavez, a graduate of Ohio University, came to SOCOG in January as an investigative agent. He is assigned to Gallia, Meigs, and Vinton Counties.

His work experience before joining SOCOG included law enforcement and funeral direction.

Joshua, his wife, and their children reside in Jackson.



Joshua Chavez

Investigative Agent



Nathan Horsley

Special Project Manager

Nathan Horsley returned to SOCOG in September, replacing Courtney Davis as Special Projects Manager.

Nathan has been working in the DD field since 1999 and held roles as program specialists, SSA, and early intervention supervisor.

Nathan and his wife reside in Bainbridge.



Amy Forgie

Brown County Advocate

Amy Forgie was hired by the Brown County Board of DD to ensure that self-advocacy opportunities are available in their county.

She represents the board in a variety of meetings and conferences, including SOCOG's own Southern Ohio Advocacy Group.



SOCOG is currently accepting applications for the following positions:

**INVESTIGATIVE AGENT
(Part-time)**

**SSA Assistant
(Ross County)**

If you know anyone who might be a good fit for our team, please encourage them to send an application or resume to Kelli Gothard at kgothard@socog.org

SOCOG Anniversaries Recognized



At the December staff meeting, SOCOG staff were recognized by Executive Director Kelly Rosler for special anniversary employment dates. Each was awarded a plaque.

Staff recognized were:

Jodi Kinker—15 years of service

Tiffany Stephenson—10 years of service

Juliana Speakman—5 years of service

New Provider Training Schedule

In order to more efficiently serve our counties and providers, SOCOG has made revisions to our training schedule. The Annual Provider Training and Medication Administration Refresher are now offered only three times per year. This year's dates are:

March 28

Medication Administration Refresher *(ZOOM Available)*

Annual Provider Training - SOCOG

July 25

Medication Administration Refresher *(ZOOM Available)*

Annual Provider Training- SOCOG

November 28

Medication Administration Refresher *(ZOOM Available)*

Annual Provider Training - SOCOG

QUARTERLY/ANNUAL/SEMI-ANNUAL TRAININGS

Medication Administration Training

March 8 and 9
July 19 and 20
November 8 and 9

First Aid/CPR

February 3
May 5
August 4
November 3

John Pekar retires from County and SOCOG



John Pekar, who retired at the end of 2022, was honored at the November SOCOG board meeting with a special luncheon and cake after the meeting.

Blazing New Trails

Last year Ross County Board of DD applied to have a new Special Olympics program accredited that would combine existing programs under one Local Coordinator. The application was approved, and the newly accredited program is now called Ross County Special Olympics.

With the season ending at the end of February, we felt that it was fitting to have our Athletes recognized for their participation in the month of March, which is Developmental Disability Awareness Month.

The County Board wanted to be able to showcase the talent of our Athletes and promote inclusion and awareness for our community; therefore, they will be having our first annual DD Awareness Celebrity Basketball Game. The game will be held at the Chillicothe High School Hatton Gymnasium on Wednesday, March 29th and doors will open at 6pm.

The event will have free admission, but donations for the Special Olympics program are encouraged.

Every \$5 donation will receive an entry into the Knights of Columbus Annual



(Photos: SCBDD, PCBDD)

Cash Bonanza, which draws in May and gives away over \$109,000 in cash prizes. Our Special Olympics Athletes will be playing individuals that have been nominated as “celebrities” in our community. Some of our athletes include past professional athlete, past and current collegiate athletes, elected officials, first responders, and business employees.

The event will be officiated by three prominent referees in our area, and one is now a Ross County Commissioner. Emcee and commentator for the event was inducted into the CHS Hall of Fame for his being the voice of the Chillicothe Cavaliers for 35 seasons.

Lastly, the celebrity team will be coached by a legendary coach in Ross county, and assisted by an individual that has Down

Syndrome who is very-well known as one of our high school assistant boys’ basketball coaches.

The County Board and Special Olympics program is very excited about the support and participation that the community has provided this event. Concessions will be available and there will be family friendly games throughout the evening with chances to win prizes.

Our hope is that, along with the celebration of our athletes, attendees will leave the event with better understanding and awareness of the developmental disability community and our Special Olympics program.

For any questions contact Local Coordinator, Courtney Davis, at cdavis@rossdd.org or 740-773-8044 ext.287.

Mobile Smart Home on the Move

SOCOG's Mobile Smart Home team has a busy spring planned and is now scheduling visits for this summer.

Events on the schedule are:

March 29 - Darke Co.

March 31 - Ross Co. Food Truck Friday

June 28 - Butler Co. Tech Fair

To schedule an event for the Mobile Smart Home, email George Myers at gmyers@rossdd.org.

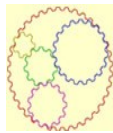
Tech Ambassadors bring tech to Athens



The Ohio Tech Ambassadors Chris Cooley and Tanner Huff visited The Athens Community Center on February 23 to inspire people to learn more about technology.

The pair, accompanied by Grant Director George Myers, shared a wide variety of high- and low-tech items with a audience that included individuals with disabilities, their family members, and staff from the Athens County Board of DD.

The Tech Ambassador's next event will take place March 28 at the Haines Children's Center



Southern Ohio Council
A Council of Governments

167 W Main St
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

Phone: 740-775-5030

Fax: 740-775-5023

Office hours - M-F
8:00AM-4:00PM

The Southern Ohio Council of Governments was formed in March 1996 and began services in March 1997. The Council was created by Superintendents of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities in southern Ohio. The Council is a government entity created under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code, representing 14 County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. The Council provides administrative supports for County Boards in Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties.

We're on the web at
www.socog.org

SOCOG Mission Statement

- Do things together we can't do effectively and efficiently alone
- Offer members a trusted source of external expertise and feedback

March 2023