



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD
OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

256 John Scott Highway
Steubenville, Ohio 43952
www.jcbdd.com

Michael J. Zinno
Superintendent

Early Intervention
School Age Services
(740) 264-7176
(740) 264-0399 Fax

Adult Program
Day Services
(740) 266-6167
(740) 266-3839 Fax

Community
Employment
(740) 266-3840
(740) 266-3839 Fax

Service & Support
Community
Integration
(740) 266-4291
(740) 266-4293 Fax

Shaffer Plaza
(740) 264-7111
(740) 266-2924 Fax

Transportation
(740) 266-2923
(740) 264-5977 Fax

Contact: Superintendent Michael Zinno

For Immediate Release

Celebrating Community with Activities at JCBDD

STEUBENVILLE- The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities is celebrating community as it observes National Developmental Disabilities Month during March.

The month was designated through a proclamation by President Ronald Reagan in 1987 to increase public awareness of the needs and potential of Americans with developmental disabilities. This year's theme is "See Me for Me," which looks beyond a person's disability, while Ohio is observing its own theme of "Celebrating Community." JCBDD will mark the occasion with several events of its own.

On March 16, about 30 high school students from Buckeye Local, Steubenville Catholic Central, Edison, Harrison Central, Indian Creek, Jefferson County Joint Vocational School and Steubenville Big Red are expected to take part in the 10th Annual Simulation Day from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the School of Bright Promise in Steubenville. While there, the teens will work with school staff and learn what it is like have visual, hearing and other impairments by performing activities at a series of stations in the gym. Activities include wearing covered goggles to walk and read without the benefit of sight; maneuvering in a wheelchair or Pedalo bike in a mobility station; painting a picture without the use of their arms; and watching a video describing how an autistic child is sensitive to lights and sounds.

Principal Rachel Bodo said the event has been successful and shows how people live with physical and mental disabilities. Four students per district were invited to attend the event and will also get a chance to interact with special needs kids.

"We'll provide lunch and will have the same stations. They will go into the classrooms and do a craft for an hour," Bodo said. "Then they will return and write about what they've learned."

She said participants have found it to be an eye-opening experience.

"Every year they appreciate the experience, and most students say they saw people with special needs in a different way and would be more willing to offer them assistance," she commented.

Another program making a return is Spread the Word to End the Word, which is part of an online effort to erase the use of the R-word that has long been synonymous with having a mental disability. Hopes are to help others comprehend the negative connotation of the term and to realize that despite their differences, those with special needs are like everyone else. Alex "Cookie" West, JCBDD community integration specialist, is organizing the event and will speak along with Bodo and speech therapist Andi Starkey at Indian Creek Middle School on March 23 at 8:15 a.m. and plans are being made to talk later that day at Harding Middle School. West said the goal is to educate students on the importance of erasing the word from their vocabulary.

"The campaign has reached out to Pugliese West Elementary in the past and we're looking to get it out more," West said. "We don't know if it will fall over into other months, but March is great for awareness month. We want to have a conversation, especially with students, about the importance of not saying the R-word. It demeans a person's value and we want students to know it's not okay to say it. It's not even a word that's used in a professional setting. We want to make students aware of this and be mindful that it hurts a person."

JCBDD officials also plan to have a traveling pledge poster and collect signatures from the students as a promise to stop using the R-word and learn to be kinder to others, especially peers with special needs. They will also be directed to the www.r-word.org website to join an estimated 718,000 pledges, as well as begin a dialogue with their families about the cause.