

The last three months have been a whirlwind and rather exciting, simultaneously; in the month of August I've devoted extra time fostering existing relationships and establishing new ones. This is at the core of this position, we must educate and inform our community friends that a strong and vibrant community is where everyone has the opportunity to participate and choose their journey; that's how opportunities will blossom. The doors that are open for the individuals we service will help empower them to create an active social life and rewarding livelihood.

For the month of August I've connected with the following:

On **August 1st & 4th**, Judy Owing, Director of *Prime Time Senior Center*, invited me through a third party suggestion to join their Primetime Advisory Board, the seniors of Jefferson County have a Center where they can congregate, socialize, and take part in productive programs. The Primetime Advisory Board meets once a month to discuss the current and future plans of the center and to solicit any insight that could benefit the center. The Prime Time Center's mission is to keep people Healthy, Independent, and Productive. The Prime Time Center is a gem to this community; they have more than 1,000 members. They offer many services to their members such as health and wellness programs, educational opportunities, arts, crafts, social and community action opportunities, meal and nutritional programs. This center has also opened up its doors to the wonderful individuals we service through the JCBDD program. On the August 4th I returned to the Prime Time Senior Center to receive an intimate tour of the facility.

On **August 4st**, *CAC-Summer Youth Work Program* is a program that offers summer work opportunities to low income eligible youth participants, the director, Mike Cernansky, invited me to come and encourage the young men and woman. This was such a great opportunity to speak with local youth and to explain the importance of making noble choices, because our lives are a sum total of the choices we make, so we must choose wisely. Every opportunity to speak or engage with the community in a positive way is an opportunity to bring awareness to the importance of *community inclusion* and to demonstrate how we all affect each other indirectly or directly. It is our responsibility to help our community by being good citizens; helping our community makes life better for all who live where you live.

On **August 8th**, *Ohio Valley Youth Network*, Pastor Bobbyjon Bauman is a VERY active Youth Pastor in the Ohio Valley, EXTREMELY connected in all areas in the community, and very resourceful. We were able to have a productive conversation and discovered that we have a lot of the similar goals, specifically about finding ways to foster inclusion; we agreed that the best approaches are the top-down and bottom-up strategies. A top-down approach is an approach in which an individual(s) focuses on changing the perception of an individual; in our case individuals with disabilities and demonstrating that they're meaningful members of the community. The bottom-up strategy is targeting our youth, our community's future business

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owners, teachers, political leaders, police officers and etc., by providing opportunities for specific interactions to educate and engage in a variety of events and activities.

On **August 9th**, today I attended an ISP (Individual Support Plan) meeting at *Paramount Support Services*, for an individual we service, her family, and the support team that assist her on living a vibrant and productive life. Steve Smith, Service and Support Administrator for JCBDD, invited me to attend the meeting in order to get a frontline experience of how ISP meetings are conducted. The individuals' plan is collectively constructed with specific "Outcomes" that address the yearly needs and person-centered concerns for the individual; my role as the Employment Navigator will be to assist the team with the Employment Outcome.

On **August 10th**, I met with *Mom's In Prayer International Groups*, Andrea Bolster and Denise Mello the Steubenville Catholic School representatives and Beth Cernansky and Pamela Shea were in attendance as the Steubenville City Schools representatives, I hold a position as the Harding Middle School registered group leader. The mission of Moms in Prayer International (Formerly Moms in Touch) is to impact children and schools worldwide for Christ by gathering mothers to pray. As I stated last month all faucets of the community are essential, when speaking with the interdenominational group leaders, we discussed ways to braid the threads of inclusion and faith. The ladies were very receptive to this new movement and clearly seen how community inclusion offers the opportunity to enjoy new friendships, pursue hobbies, volunteer and work in the local community.

On **August 14th**, Dave Mitchell is a *MEORC*, Mid-East Ohio Regional Council, representative and I met for a follow-up meeting; MEORC is a council of governments created under the authority of Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code. MEORC is known for their expertise in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and problem solving to improve services, creating opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. During this follow-up meeting Dave and I discussed the current trends of the Employment Navigator position so I could gain insight where the position is collectively in the state and region; he also addressed any specific concerns.

On **August 17th**, I attended the *Urban Mission- Back to School Rally* the Rev. Ashley Steele, executive director of Urban Mission Ministries, welcomed a large crowd that turned out Thursday for the four-hour annual back-to-school bash in downtown Steubenville. Steele opened with a prayer acknowledging that each of the more than 1,000 bookbags filled with school supplies for students in grades kindergarten through 12th had been blessed. The event in the past years has helped as many as 1,600 residents of Jefferson, Harrison, Belmont, Carroll, Brooke and Hancock counties.

On **August 24th**, I met with *Toronto City School District*, Cindy Hinerman (Special Education and Gifted Students Coordinator), we discussed my position's responsibilities, the benefits of working together and how it will enhance opportunities in the lives of their students serviced.

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September 5th, I will attend an early morning meet and greet with Toronto City School District Special Educators, they will learn about the services we can assist their students with, as well as ask questions; the Path to Employment is a new concept and it CAN have great success if clear channels of communication are established early.

On **August 24th**, I met with the staff at the *School of Bright Promise* (Rachel Bodo, Principal and Special Educators: Ryan Finney, Richard Foglia, Lori Trikonos), it was a very informative meeting and a great opportunity to have an open dialogue on the benefits of working together to enhance the lives of the students serviced. These educators have identified a wide range of barriers that they face and I explained that this position can help them navigate smoother to community-integrated employment and community inclusion opportunities..

On **August 25th**, I met with the Special Educators at *Buckeye Local Jr and Sr High School*, they were very welcoming and excited to see the “the gap being filled”. The educators experienced uncertainty throughout the years when navigating their student’s into a successful transition into community employment or into the community to establish natural supports. We discussed the important role the Employment Navigator can fill and how there is a clear road now for educators and students to travel on.