



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD
OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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For Immediate Release

Transition Team Session on Thursday

STEUBENVILLE-A core group of people representing agencies, organizations and schools throughout Jefferson County will meet this week to further carry on efforts to transition youth into the community.

The Multi-Agency County Youth Transition Team will meet on Thursday, Feb. 22 from 8:30-10 a.m. in the community room on the second floor of the Towers Building in Steubenville. The initial session in January attracted nearly four-dozen representatives from 25 local, county and state agencies, organizations and schools such as the Edison Local School District, Family Recovery Center, Ohio Family and Children First Council, Ohio Means Jobs and Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. Cookie West, employment navigator and community facilitator for the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities, will host the session along with facilitators from the Ohio Center of Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI). She said a smaller number of people will gather this time to focus on specific barriers identified at the previous session and the ultimate goal is to build opportunities for youth so they can smoothly transition out of high school and into the community through work, volunteerism or higher education.

“The facilitators and I decided that we would have at least one representative from the organizations and agencies and give school districts the option of having their special education coordinator along with intervention specialists in the core workgroup,” she explained. “They would work on the identified barriers we discussed and determined were top priorities in Jefferson County. Those eight barriers have already been researched by the state and will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.”

She noted that the top three key issues were transportation, poverty and youth supports. Concerns included a lack of transportation in rural areas of the county; the high rate of local poverty; and youth preparation. West said students needed academic experiences in schools and work experiences in a work-related setting, with the latter occurring either at school or in the community. She added that the initial meeting also expounded upon available services and support systems so officials know what resources were offered.

“We want to provide a snapshot of each one so they can provide meaningful support for the transition of our youth. The core workgroup will meet monthly with quarterly meetings for all 45 participants,” West continued. “We’re just hoping to move in a forward motion...so we can create solutions. I’m very happy to see so many people coming together to really address and try to create meaningful transitions for the students in this area. I think it’s a great start.”

For more information, contact West at (740) 264-7176, Extension 2118.

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