



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD
OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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JCBDD Announces New Adult Day Service

STEUBENVILLE—More changes are coming to the landscape of the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities with the addition of new adult day services in the community.

Superintendent Michael Zinno announced that JCBDD will be transitioning their adult program services as the program continues privatization efforts under federal mandates. PALS, which stands for “physical activity and life skills,” is a Chrysalis Health company based in Gahanna, Ohio, which will begin supporting dozens of adult individuals long under the board’s umbrella. PALS was formed by Mingo Junction native Aaron Bracone in 2012 and has locations in Heath and Columbus, where it offers an array of person-centered programs from residential services and community respite programs to vocational training and employment services. The goal is to help special needs adults become acclimated with mainstream society and all of the opportunities it brings.

“I am excited to announce the addition of a new adult day service provider for our county. PALS will be working with the county board and Jeffco to assure a smooth transition of the JCBDD adult day service program,” Zinno said. “The addition of PALS will create opportunities and choices for those we serve. They are an established provider in several other counties throughout Ohio and the individuals we assist will continue to see quality services while ensuring health and safety.”

A series of information sessions will be held, with one set for Dec. 19 at 10 a.m. at the JCBDD office near John Scott Highway to gather input for the three-year action plan.

PALS will utilize the Jeffco Training Center on Cherry Avenue in Steubenville in the interim but is seeking another location for operations, one that will be more suitable and ensure health, safety and community integration. Zinno said officials were studying what to do with the training center building and remodeling was underway at the workshop site behind the JCBDD office to centralize services on one campus. Many changes will occur behind the scenes around March 1 and PALS will become the provider of record with many of the same faces providing the service. Jeffco, which has been in operations for more than four decades, will remain in operation and continue to support developmentally disabled individuals. He noted that JCBDD will ensure a free choice of providers and will meet with each individual to provide options.

“Jeffco will be transforming their services as they assess the needs of the DD community. The Jeffco board is committed to assessing the needs of the individuals we serve; however, the services will change over time and we will work to meet unmet needs,” he continued. “PALS is a day service provider in a number of different counties and they are going to do business in a different way and will ensure health and safety first and foremost.”

Meanwhile, Bracone was excited to return to his old stomping grounds and help people in the community. Among its current services are employment, life skills, education and health and wellness. Another is Art Outside the Lines, a program that partners with local galleries and community members to showcase special needs adults’ artwork in public buildings while some pieces were sold to help the individuals generate income.

“One of our core philosophies is to try to give as many options as possible,” he commented, saying PALS focuses on five basic programs such as employment, life skills, health and wellness, education and “We came from a sheltered workshop mindset that didn’t help people feel like they had control over their lives. This program makes sure they have control and choices. We’re trying to look at PALS as a steppingstone and the goal of getting people to realize their dreams in life.”

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Bracone said he began in the field of direct care after attending college and later became a program director, but he wanted to make an impact and drafted the business plan for PALS. He got involved with Florida-based Chrysalis Health and continued to grow services in the Columbus area. However, he was grateful to have the opportunity to bring his concept back home to Jefferson County.

“There’s a clear need and you want to do what’s best for the people you serve,” he noted. “I am thrilled and very excited. Just knowing the area, we are very proud to be from Jefferson County. We want to make it a smooth transition for everyone. It can only benefit the people Jeffco serves. We want to improve the quality of life, options and opportunities. Providing people with endless possibilities, that’s what we do.”

For more information about PALS, go online to www.palschrysalishealth.com.

I am excited to announce the addition of a new day service provider for our county. PALS will be working with the county board and Jeffco to assure a smooth transition of the JCBDD's day service program. The addition of PALS will create another opportunity and choice for those we serve. Please visit www.palschrysalishealth.com to learn more about their program. They are an established quality provider in several other counties throughout Ohio and the individuals we assist will continue to see quality services while ensuring health and safety. I will be establishing multiple dates and times for informational meetings so keep watching for more details. Here are some answers to questions you may have:

Q. What does this mean to the individuals currently receiving day services with Jeffco?

In the short term, it may not look different. PALS will continue to use our training center to deliver services and current employees will continue to work. Much of the change will occur with little or no disruption. PALS will become the provider of record with many of the same faces of the program providing the service. Since they are an established organization, they can hit the ground running and provide the quality services that we all are accustomed to. Again, visit their website to learn more. In the long term, it will mean a change of location to a more suitable home, one that ensures health and safety and is community integrated.

Q. Jeffco has been around for more than 40 years. Are they closing?

No, Jeffco's non-profit board will remain intact. In the short term, they will be an advisory board to PALS during the transition. In the long term, they will assess the needs of those we serve to improve services in Jefferson County.

Q. When will the change take place?

It should happen on or around March 1, 2019.

Q. When will a move take place to a new location?

PALS is seeking a new location and will be working with the county board and Jeffco for input once an appropriate place or two is located. No timeframe has been established, but it will occur after March 1, 2019.

Q. Do I have to go with PALS?

No, the county board will ensure a free choice of provider and will meet with each individual to give options. I will be also contacting each day service provider to inform them of what's happening.

Q. I have additional questions, so who do I call?

More information will be forthcoming and I will be holding multiple meetings to answer additional questions. This is an exciting time for the individuals we serve and I look forward to working with PALS and Jeffco during this transition period to bring forth the future of developmental disabilities services in Jefferson County.

Michael J. Zinno



Superintendent