

Spring 2020

**LICKING
COUNTY**
Board of
**DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES**

Momentum

A quarterly publication of the Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities

We are Licking County **STRONG**



**This Momentum special edition is dedicated
to every Direct Support Professional!**

You are our heroes!

SPECIAL EDITION

A message from our Superintendent Jason Umstot



During this pandemic, we have been able to observe, and in many cases experience, the strength of true heroism. These heroes come from many professions, like the medical field, EMS, fire and law enforcement, supply chains like those making cleaning and paper supplies, grocery stores and essential retailers.

In our field, our most important assets are our direct support professionals (DSPs). DSPs are our system's heroes.

DSPs are working every day to make sure that people with developmental disabilities receive the care and support they need. They are the most important component of our DD system. We have seen amazing strength, caring personalities and unselfish dedication from these frontline professionals.

Without fail, many DSPs put the people they support before themselves by coming to work every day and donning a mask for eight hours, or 12, and in some cases even 16 hours a day. Whatever is needed, DSPs rise to the occasion, even in a crisis.

We dedicate this edition of our newsletter to our DSPs and to the many others who are helping us through this pandemic.

To the dedicated provider agencies and county board staff who are coordinating and making sure people's health and safety is a priority; you all have been amazing.

To our county leadership who have praised the efforts of our county DD system and its workers – this empowers us to work harder. Additionally, our county health department has been very informative regarding the prevention of exposure and spread of COVID-19.

Last, but not least, we appreciate our county citizens and businesses who have reached out to help and offer support. We owe all of you a debt of gratitude. Without a strong system and local support, we definitely would be experiencing a greater number of challenges, but we have all pulled together as one and we will get through this. **All of you make us LICKING COUNTY STRONG!**

Contact Superintendent/CEO Jason L. Umstot by calling 740-349-6588 or email: Jason.Umstot@lcountydd.org.

Editor's note: We are living through something that most of us will hopefully never experience again in our lifetime. We believe it is important to capture as many different experiences as possible to tell the story of our community coming together. We hope you enjoy this special edition.

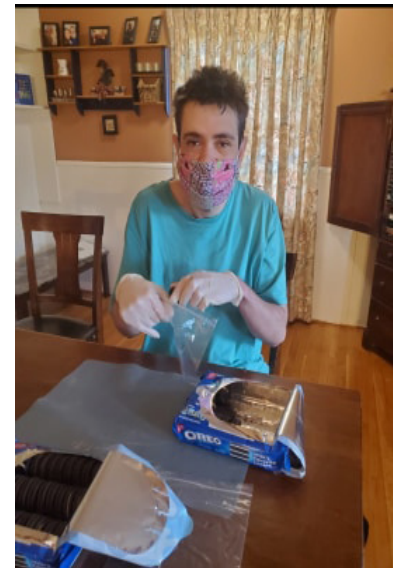


SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you Licking County families!



The people we support and their families have been embracing this “new normal.” They are staying home – and staying safe – while continuing to pursue their interests in new ways. We found out that **Tanner Krupp** has been taking drum lessons via Skype (pictured to the left) while **Eric and Chad** packed more than 100 lunches for those in need (pictured below).



Many families have been using phone conferencing and Zoom to “meet” with LCBDD staff. This is especially true for our Early Childhood team as they provide Early Intervention virtually. **Erica LaFon** and her twins **Michael and Henry Puckett** (pictured left) had a virtual visit with Developmental Specialist **Colleen Tullis** to celebrate their birthdays!

“It’s possible in moments like this that the words ‘patience’ and ‘faith’ are a little comforting. Perhaps instead they’re the most important. Your continued patience throughout this challenge can bring with it the emotional calmness and stability that is needed, not just by your family member, but by our system... – Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Director Jeff Davis, April 2, 2020

SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you DSPs!

With a Stay Home Order in place, it would be easy for many of the people we support to feel isolated. Their routines have been disrupted and they are separated from friends and family.

But almost every day, we receive photos and emails related to people we support – and they are thriving. The credit for many of these positive stories goes to direct support professionals. Whether they work for an agency or are independent providers, they are selflessly taking a tough situation and making it positive.



DSPs have organized drive-by Easter egg hunts and a driveway dance party. They are teaching people how to cook and how to bake. They are helping people use technology so they are able to keep in touch with loved ones.

Transportation providers are making sure that people get to their jobs and doctors appointments safely while homemaker/personal care providers are helping to make sure people have groceries and cleaning supplies.



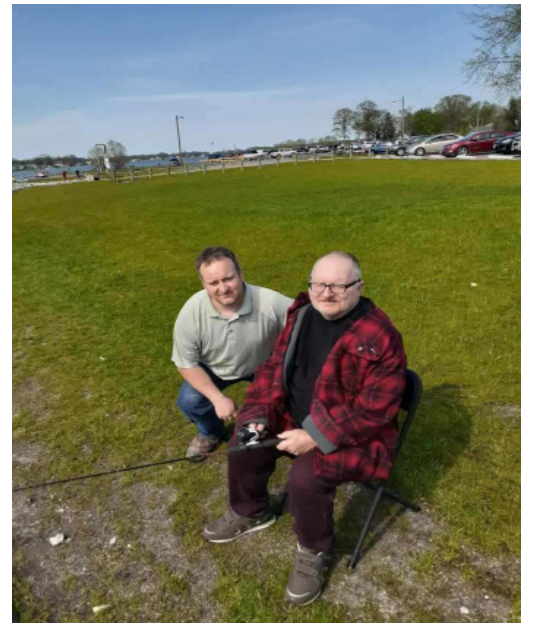
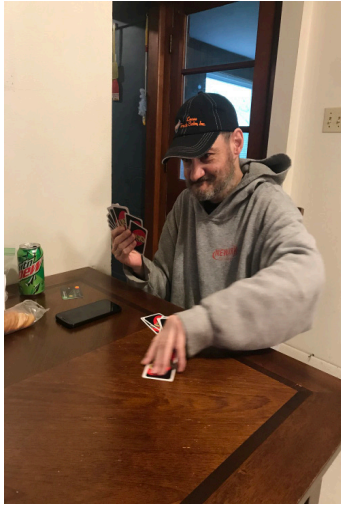
As Crystal and Holly said so perfectly in their signs, DSPs are our heroes too!



SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you DSPs!

For the last eight weeks, our inbox has been filled with photos of people we support having fun. They might be at home, but they are still connecting with things that are important to them and we have DSPs to thank!



“Most often a crisis is when our strength is tested the most. There’s no doubt that direct support professionals are the backbone of our DD system. Please know that we are here for you during this stressful time... Here in Licking County we always say that, ‘Together, we are better,’ and now more than ever that has proven to be correct.” – LCBDD Superintendent/CEO Jason L. Umstot, March 25 video message.

SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you DSPs!

"I want to thank today, our developmental disabilities direct support professionals. They're making life better for our friends in the developmental disability community. They help ensure they stay healthy and safe, and they are on the front lines each and every day."
– Gov. Mike DeWine, April 24 press conference.

We didn't just want to tell DSPs they are our heroes, we wanted to show them! So we launched our #DSPHeroes t-shirt campaign. As you can see, DSPs really got into it and took some great photos. (Thanks CSS, CDS and LICCO!)



"Thank you to each and every DSP! Your dedication and support to Ohioans with disabilities is appreciated more than you can know!"
– Ann Weisent-Page, DODD, April 4, Facebook comment

"You all rock and are totally respected! Thanks for all you do!"
– Shella Colvin Miller, Center for Disability Services, April 4, Facebook comment

"Thank you everyone for all your hard work. What an amazing group of people doing extraordinary things in our community. So grateful. Thank you thank you!!" – Steve Carpenter, CSS, April 4, Facebook comment

SPECIAL EDITION

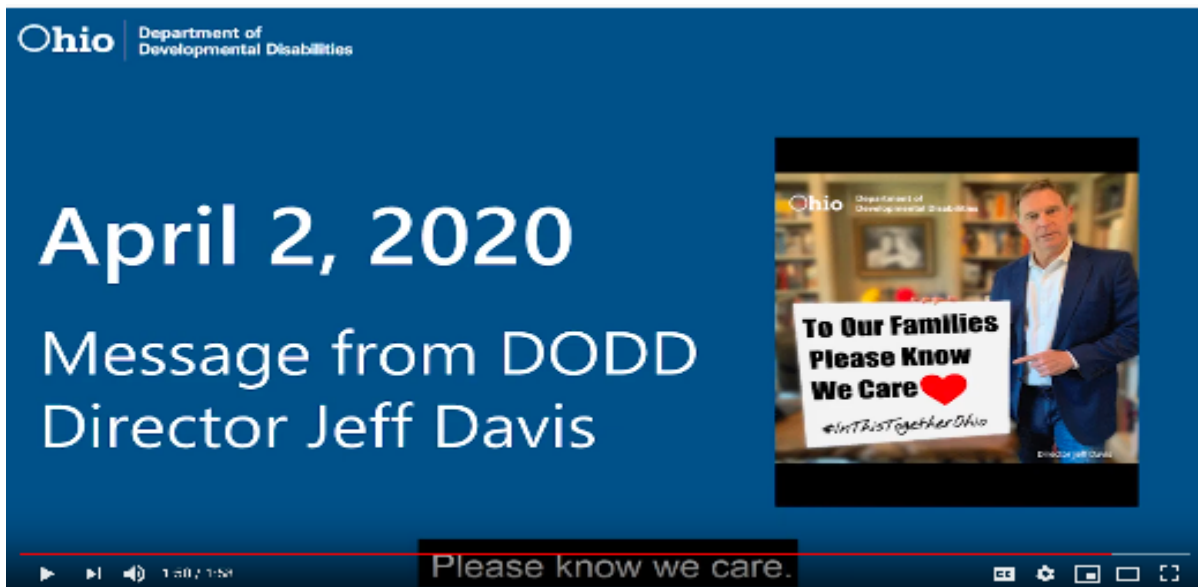
The state of Ohio says, 'Thank you!'

"All of us in the DD support system know this is a strange and stressful time for the people we support and the people who support them. DSPs have been friends and caregivers to so many, and we will never forget or take for granted their long hours, dedication, and heart in the face of this crisis. To Ohio's DSPs: Thank you." – Bridget Gargan, Executive Director, Ohio Association of County Boards

"Direct Support Professionals are working tirelessly to support and encourage the people they serve. We admire not only their dedication and compassion, but also the sacrifices our DSPs are making during this pandemic. We are inspired by them every day! The Ohio Health Care Association is sincerely appreciative and grateful for the work you do on a daily basis. You truly are heroes! Thank you!" – Debbie Jenkins, Policy Director, Ohio Health Care Association

"It is a privilege for us, the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), to honor Ohio's Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). During the COVID-19 crisis, DSPs have made the commitment to provide compassionate and quality services to the people they support. Ohio's DSPs, in the face of fear and worry, have risen to the challenge. They were heroes before and they continue to excel during this crisis. On behalf of the people you serve and a grateful state, we would like to thank you for your commitment and compassion." – Pete Moore, President/CEO, Ohio Provider Resource Association

Thank you Director Jeff Davis and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities for working hard to keep families informed!



#InThisTogetherOhio #DODDMessage
A Message to Families from Director Jeff Davis

SPECIAL EDITION

LCBDD says, 'Thank you!'



"Thank you so much to all our DSP's! The work you do is amazing and truly appreciated. We can't say thank you enough for the important role you play in the lives of those you support. You have an incredible impact on our community." – Luke Pintz, Director of Human Resources



" We are so fortunate to have so many amazing direct support professionals in Licking County. Their dedication has been a stabilizing force amidst the uncertainty and I would like to thank each and every one of them for their continued support during this time." – Angie Finck, Director of Provider and Transition Supports



"Thank you to all Licking County DSPs! Your selflessness, dedication and compassion are so appreciated!" – Brandi Body, DSP Eligibility Specialist



"I am so appreciative of the DSPs who day in and day out share a part of themselves as they help individuals with developmental disabilities. When things may seem impossible, they find way to make it happen. A BIG thank you for all that you do!" – Caley Norton, Director of Early Childhood



"Thank you! You are a caregiver, an aide and a driver, among other things. Most importantly you are a friend to those who you help and assist every day. Be healthy and safe! Remember many things have been cancelled or closed, HOPE is not one of them. #DSPStrong." – Gary Smith, Chief Financial Officer

SPECIAL EDITION

LCBDD says, 'Thank you!'



"I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our agency providers and their staff. They've gone to extraordinary lengths to provide the services people need while navigating the fallout from a global pandemic the likes of which we haven't seen for generations! Tons of unknowns, new challenges, personal risks and often a lack of resources on top of everything else. And yet...they continued to ensure folks they serve have what they needed to stay healthy, safe, and happy. Again, a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of you." – David McManus, Provider Support Coordinator



"I worked at Licco for many years, and observed first-hand the dedication and skill of the DSPs who worked there. Their compassion, friendship and advocacy for the people they worked with was second to none. They helped people achieve goals that were important to them, and they supported and encouraged families. DSPs do amazing work, and they have such a positive impact on people's lives. Thank you, DSPs, for all that you do!" – Beth Tharp, Executive Administrative Manager



"Our providers/DSPs have been the ultimate team players during COVID-19. They continue to be patient, kind and empower people with disabilities living in Licking County! I am so grateful for the positive attitudes they have shown during this crisis! We are lucky to have them on our team!" – Abby Spear, Director of Service Coordination



"It has been such a privilege to witness and celebrate the amazing work DSPs do every day in Licking County. We will never stop talking about the work of our #DSPHeroes and I know I will be sharing stories about the amazing people who stepped up for the people we support for many years to come. Thank you!" – Anna Jeffries, Public Information Officer

SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you Licking County providers!

Licking County is fortunate to have dedicated provider agencies who put the people they support first every day.



The staff of **Midwest Health Services** set up a “movies to go” shelf full of movies, games and snacks for their staff members. Before DSPs leave for a home, they have the opportunity to pick out a movie, a game and a snack to share with the people they support! **Michelle McPherson** has also done an amazing job of sending photos of people staying busy.

CLE didn't let a shortage of cleaning supplies slow them down. They found a recipe for “DIY sanitizing wipes” and got to work. Holly and Terri (pictured right) enjoyed making

them! The agency also launched a “COVID-19 Connection” newsletter to keep staff motivated and informed.



It's not easy to have a birthday during a pandemic, but the staff of **CSS**

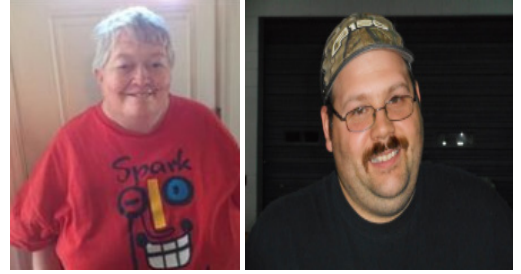
wanted to make sure Chad Kaylor had a special day. They organized a 40th birthday parade full of honking and cheering.

PALS has embraced our new virtual world by offering PALS TV! They've been delivering free video content, from history lessons, crafts and fitness activities to BINGO, video games and self defense classes.

SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you Licking County providers!

LICCO Inc., a division of the **FUSE Network**, has been an outspoken advocate for people they support who are doing essential jobs, like Kati Sheets and Bill Darnell (pictured right).



LICCO also has partnered with **the Gathering Place** to create picture stories for people we support to help them understand social distancing, masks and cleaning procedures.

When the leadership of **Center for Disability Services** found out that one of their direct



support professionals, **Danyelle Stamper**, was missing out on her high school graduation because of the coronavirus, they connected with **DSP Eligibility Specialist Brandi Body** to organize a surprise graduation parade. Featuring almost a half mile of cars, fire engines, silly string, media coverage and lots of happy tears, the parade truly captured the



supportive nature of our local providers.

Aaron Smith was supposed to have his birthday at a local fire station. When the party had to be cancelled, **Bloom's Beth Caldwell** organized a parade of fire trucks and police cars. Aaron (pictured here with Beth) was thrilled!



It's been tough for the staff of **KICKS** not to see the people they support. So agency staff organized a parade to visit all the "Kicks-ters." They were greeted with homemade signs and lots of smiles.

SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you to our caring community!

Kathy Braudich of The Turban Project joined former LCBDD staff members Louise Decker and Angie Theller in generously donating dozens of masks for direct support professionals. Alene Candles of New Albany also stepped up by creating 30 face shields for DSPs!

Cleaning supplies have been tough to track down but Maria Swinehart from Acorn Distributors and Trinity Supply out of Cincinnati have helped LCBDD get needed items for providers and our staff members still working in the office.



SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you to our caring community!



Thank you to all the social service agencies who have stepped up to help the people we support and their families. Jeannette Bush of the FUSE Network shared a story that really drives this home:

"I want to send shoutouts to the Pathways of Central Ohio's 211 Center, the Buckeye Lake food pantry and Food Pantry Network of Licking County. Tom (pictured left) did not have any

food and I called 211 and they helped guide me to the food pantry. The Buckeye Lake pantry was so kind when I called and even waited for me to get Tom there! He was so happy to get the food and thanked them so much for the help! We then went to the Newark food pantry for produce and Tom was so overwhelmed to receive all the food. I'm so thankful I was able to share this experience with Tom today!"



We have strong media partners in **WNKO** and **the Newark Advocate** who have been working hard to keep our community informed during this difficult situation. Reporters Dave Doney, Dave Weidig and photographer Jessica Phelps (pictured left) have been thinking outside the box to capture the positive stories and important information that matters to the DD community. Thank you to **Ashley Greene, Chris Wells, Natalie Brown, Samantha Howard, Dawn Lincicome and Danyelle Stamper** for sharing their stories for a feature about the important role of DSPs in the **Newark Advocate**.

"I would like to thank Gov. Mike DeWine and Dr. Amy Acton for their daily updates and advice, which have been extremely helpful...it's getting us through this challenging time...We will get through this, because we are in this together, Ohio." – LCBDD Superintendent/CEO Jason L. Umstot, March 25 video message

SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you to our caring community!

Our community partners have been invaluable during this challenging time as our staff works to connect people with resources.

Licking Memorial Hospital and the Licking County Health Department have been working tirelessly to keep our community healthy and informed. We appreciate their updates and their hard work. The hospital has also gone above and beyond to provide materials to our Project SEARCH interns so they can stay active while they are at home.

Local mental health professionals have been there for the people we support and many others.

The **Licking County Commissioners** have established an open line of communication and allowed us to use their resources to get the word out about our continued operations. The employees of **Licking County EMA and local first responders** also certainly deserve recognition for all they do.

The need for translators and interpreters has continued and these professionals have been more than willing to adapt. **Us Together** language translators have participated in Zoom calls and **Jill Gillispie and her fellow sign language interpreters, Rhonda and Sarah** have also been there to support people virtually.

The **Indian Mound Mall** was able to connect with the PAWS Pet Club and get members involved with helping to collect pet food for the seniors supported by the Licking County Aging Program. (Pictured: Club advisors Robin Bussey and Renee Echard.)



SPECIAL EDITION

Thank you LCBDD Staff!

"We must work together to do our job, provide the necessary support for the people we serve and their families, and care for ourselves and our loved ones. It is tough to balance all of this, but we can do it. As we continue to partner together with our providers, families and staff, we will overcome this situation." – LCBDD Superintendent/CEO Jason L. Umstot, March 2020 Continuity of Operations Plan

Our **service coordinators** have truly stepped up, regularly calling families to check in. Some have been calling once a day to make sure people have a familiar voice to connect with.

A global pandemic hasn't changed the way our agency shares success stories. From essential



workers to our high school seniors and Project SEARCH interns, our staff has been loud and proud about the people they support.

Our LCBDD board members have truly embraced virtual meetings and their support has been invaluable.

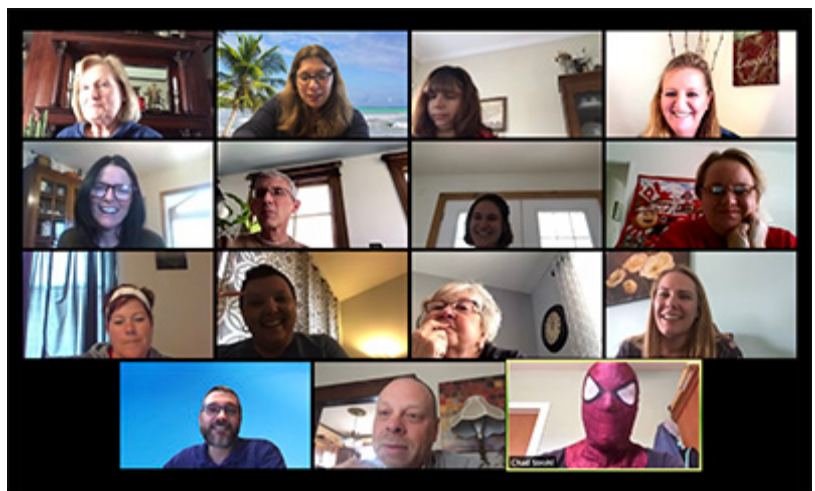
A big shout out to **Melissa Swearingen** for keeping things running at the front desk and helping with mail, printing and faxing and **Shane Smith** for providing us with the technology (including wireless mice) so that people can work from home efficiently and comfortably.

Brandi Body and Gary Smith have been working hard to secure personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and toilet paper for Licking County provider agencies! They have had to get creative, from tracking down car sanitizer and ponchos to baby first aid kits (to get thermometers), but the regular deliveries of supplies have been extremely appreciated by local providers, one of which said, "Who would of thought someone could bring so much happiness by delivering disinfectant, hand sanitizer and toilet paper?"



SPECIAL EDITION Thank you LCBDD Staff!

As we continue through this unprecedented situation, the LCBDD staff has embraced our “new normal” with kindness and humor. We’ve enjoyed seeing each other’s homes, being Zoom bombed by pets (including dogs, cats and a baby turkey) and seeing children of all ages. We even had a special visit from Spiderman (pictured right). Discovering different Zoom backgrounds has also been a big hit! It’s hard to keep track of the number of times a staff member has simply called to check in on a coworker, or help solve a problem with technology. Our LCBDD family certainly is strong.



Momentum is created and edited by LCBDD Public Information Officer Anna Jeffries.

If you have ideas for future publications, or would like to get on our mailing list and receive this electronically, contact Anna at **740-322-6911** or anna.jeffries@lcountydd.org.

The Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities (LCBDD) has been proudly funding services and supporting people with developmental disabilities for more than 50 years.

LCBDD can be reached by calling 740-349-6588 or by visiting our website, lcountydd.org.

Follow us on social media using @LCOUNTYDD. If you are a family member of someone we support, don't hesitate to visit our family support page by searching "LCOUNTYDD Families" on Facebook.