

Pipeline Quarterly

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'Swimming to Safety'
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Futures Committee Work Well Underway

by John L. Martin, Director



The MRDD Futures Committee and its subcommittees have worked hard during the last few months to accomplish several tasks.

This stakeholder-driven process, as set forth in statute (H.B. 119), is charged with recommending changes to Ohio's MRDD system that address ways to improve the programs and systems serving individuals with MRDD and their families, while balancing available resources relative to the needs of individuals, families, and communities.

We have reached the half-way mark in the project, and are preparing to

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The Changing Face of Supported Employment

(L to R., back) Terry Marovich and Linda McElroy, Diagnostic Hybrids Inc. (DHI) management, with Pam Paulk, Alan Robinson, William Peacock, and Jeanne Maxwell, Accessory Manufacturing Dept. Crew Leader.

People with Disabilities in Athens County are redefining the workforce

Once associated only with assembly work, janitorial services, and similar repetitive functions, workers with disabilities in Athens County now are benefiting from innovative approaches, and are trading buckets and mops for lab coats and computers.

"You have to see yourself as a professional organization," said David Barba, director of operations at ATCO, Inc., the adult services arm of the Athens County Board of MRDD. "We've worked hard to change our business model and create an identity centered on the skills of people with disabilities."

Barba points to a simple but powerful example of how language and perception influence action. "We decided to change the name of our community employment program to *PersonnelPlus* about seven years ago, and it has paid huge dividends," he said. "We get calls from businesses wondering if we are a temporary employment agency, and we explain that while that is not our focus, we are -- very definitely -- in the human resource business."

Through training, coaching, and job sampling, *PersonnelPlus* has

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Changing Face/Athens MRDD

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employed more than 70 individuals with 50 different employers throughout the community. While the more commercial name gives PersonnelPlus a unique identity among traditional 'supported employment' programs, the real key to success is the innovative approaches taken by the organization and its partners in the local business community.

"Unemployable is a term that is overused, and one that too often is applied to individuals with disabilities," says PersonnelPlus Director, Doug Mitchell. He adds that PersonnelPlus, which recently moved into a building separate from ATCO, has matched many clients with positions that benefit both the employer and employee. He explains, for example, that during a casual discussion over dinner with an employer, a job opportunity was realized as ideal for a man looking for a job through PersonnelPlus.

"It was over lasagna that we saw this opportunity!" said Mitchell. "It's the relationships and partnerships that are developed that really make the difference. Once employers give us a chance, we work hard to ensure it's the right fit."

Illustrating this further, when Diagnostic Hybrids—the world's largest processor of human cell cultures (culture-based diagnostic kits)—needs to fill a critical position, people with disabilities are considered as an integral part of the overall potential employment pool. The Athens-based medical products innovator values the skills people with disabilities bring to the workforce.

Hybrid's management dismisses the notion that the interest is simply for humanitarian purposes. "Businesses must be concerned with the bottom line or they're doomed to fail," said Terry Marovich, Director of Human Resources.

"That's why it is not about doing something that feels good, or because it forwards a social agenda," she said. "It just makes good business sense to tap into a large and capable employment pool."



(Back Row) Dr. David Scholl, President and CEO, Diagnostic Hybrids, with Tammy Love, Supervisor, and Pre-Production Team members, Tracy Davidson and Paul Coe.



Josh Boyer, receptionist/administrative assistant at the Ohio University Innovation Center, earned a Trailblazer Award this year from PersonnelPlus. He was recommended by Linda Clark, his supervisor (shown).

Mitchell and Marovich have worked successfully to bring people with disabilities into Hybrid's hi-tech world. The company (190 employees) currently employs seven people from PersonnelPlus in the areas of production, manufacturing, human resources, and environmental. According to Marovich, Hybrid's success stems from a corporate belief that there are no failures -- only better person-

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nel matches. She cites an example of an employee who was having difficulty meeting expectations in her assigned group. Instead of giving up on her, Hybrid staff moved the employee to a new team, where she is now thriving.

“An organization must have a champion,” said Marovich, who credits the commitment of Hybrid’s founder and CEO, Dr. David Scholl, for the company’s progress in integrating people with disabilities into successful work teams.

“ Dr. Scholl embraces the differences people bring to their jobs, and constantly reminds us that it makes good business sense, too. ”

And, as a fellow member of the PersonnelPlus Business Advisory Council, Linda Clark took notice of Hybrid’s success. The Director of Ohio

University’s Innovation Center, a business development facility for emerging technology companies, Clark has worked to bring similar success to various jobs at her location. She notes, “We saw what Diagnostic Hybrids was doing, and we were interested -- we wanted to get involved.”

Clark opened the door to Josh Boyer from PersonnelPlus and has never regretted her decision. Josh was hired to perform clerical duties at the Center and has blossomed in the position. “I can count on him to be here every day,” explains Clark. “But what impresses me most about Josh is his desire to improve his knowledge about what is going on in the world. He truly is a success story.”

In October, Josh was recognized with a Trailblazer Award at the annual PersonnelPlus awards ceremony for dedication to his Innovation Center role, and for his community service. *finishes on p. 14*

PassionWorks Studio is a part of the Athens County Board of MRDD and home to many talented artists with disabilities and hundreds (maybe thousands!) of works of art. Artists obviously flourish in this creative atmosphere, along with the encouragement of staff.

- Visit www.passionworks.org -

See p. 14 for more about PersonnelPlus and PassionWorks



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Martin v. Strickland Settlement

Was the 18-year court case worth it?

Ask Jamie and Brandon ... and 1498 other people with disabilities



The first two Individual Options (IO)Waivers funded by the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement were awarded to James (Jamie) Pettit in Miami County, and Brandon Kasales in Morrow County. Both gentlemen were selected based on their individual circumstances and aided by the timely submission of paperwork.

For Jamie, it meant receiving additional support services in his family home at a time when his mom's health is declining, and for Brandon, it meant a move related to family circumstances and the viability of the family home as a permanent residence.

For Jamie and Brandon the settlement was a timely blessing. But before we get a glimpse of these waivers in action, here's a brief background on the *Martin vs. Strickland* case and resulting settle-

ment. In 1989, Ohio Legal Rights Service filed the case on behalf of citizens with disabilities seeking to expand community residential services. An agreement to settle the long-standing suit was finally reached in 2006 and accepted by the court in March 2007. The settlement was conditional upon funding approval in Ohio's 2008-2009 biennial budget and was then received in the form of a budget allocation to the ODMRDD.

Basically, the lawsuit was about increasing community placements, so that more people could leave institutions if they wished, or enroll in a waiver, thereby reducing the likelihood of institutional care in the future. The suit was



Jamie (above and center) who knows no strangers, with Lannie King (left) and Ronda Smith. What does Jamie enjoy about living at home? He answers, "For one thing, eating beef stew, potato soup, and biscuits."

Q: How are we doing as of early December 2007?

> As of early December 2007, there are 230 people in process (being 'processed' to get on the waiver) compared to a budget of 240 for the time period. Of these individuals, 26% are coming from institutional settings; ICFsMR and Nursing Facilities.

> Projections from County Boards of MRDD indicate that, for the next quarter, nearly the exact number of folks that are 'budgeted' are being processed to begin receiving the waiver services.

> In total, through the end of next quarter (March 2008), the actual utilization of *Martin v. Strickland* funded slots will be 99+% in line with the budgeted amount.

This progress indicates that County Boards are meeting the challenge with nearly 100% precision, and, the ODMRDD is doing exactly what we said we would do with the additional slots and funding.

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Martin v. Strickland Settlement (cont. from p. 4) settled with the ODMRDD agreeing to provide residential and 'day program' home and community based services for 1500 individuals over the next two years, including state-funded IO waiver services to 600 individuals between September 2007 and June 2008, and to an additional 900 individuals between July 2008 and June 2009. Implementation of the settlement requires County Boards of MRDD to follow existing rules and protocols to identify and enroll individuals on the IO waiver.

Now, back to Jamie and Brandon! As recipients of the first two waivers funded by this settlement, how do they feel about their lives changing? Jamie, in Miami County, has an interesting way of articulating where he stands on matters. If he likes you, you immediately have a nickname, and

if he doesn't, you'll immediately know that, too. His enthusiastic answer to

several questions regarding things he might be looking forward to was, "You're damn right I do!" This included the answer to, "Do you plan to see more of your girlfriend and other friends this year?" ... and, the answer to whether or not he was happy with his service provider, Lindsey Cambridge (replace, "... I do", with "... I am.")

Brandon, in Morrow County, is more reserved, but no less happy about living in the community. Terri Smith, with Brandon's service provider, Belle Manor, and Daniel McNulty, Service and Support Administrator with Morrow County MRDD, help him to communicate, "I am ready to do new things."

"Like what, Brandon?" He responds, "Go to WalMart. Buy video games. Shovel snow."

Shovel snow? "Yes, and play basketball in the driveway." Once he gets going, Brandon needs no more help communicating. He'll also tell you that, although he'll try, he *won't* be happy using mouthwash no matter where he lives!

Both Jamie and Brandon have strong circles of support, and now they have something else to help them succeed -- an IO waiver funded by the Martin Settlement.



Brandon (above) at the Morrow County workshop, and with roommates, Jason (center of picnic bench) and Glenn. The three men moved into the home above in October, after a few accommodations were completed.



What was Brandon looking forward to most about his new home?
"Playing basketball in the driveway."

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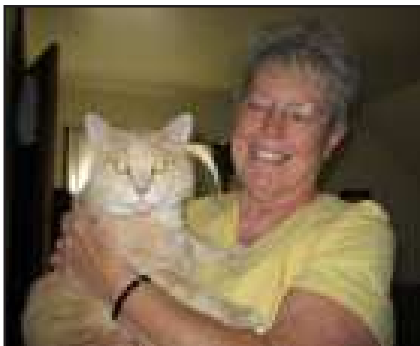
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"We're home from work!
What's for dinner?"



Billy Cohen (left) and Sean Deegan at home in Cuyahoga County. Billy and Sean are best friends. Sean enjoys sports, especially the Browns. Sean works at the Beachwood Adult Activity Center, and Billy attends a senior program at Menorah Park. Billy loves "The Wizard of Oz" and likes to do puzzles.



Pat Wehner is the founding director of L'Arche Cleveland, which was founded in 1975. She likes cats. This is a picture of her and her cat Buf-fur. Pat is the Program Director for two of the L'Arche Cleveland's four homes.

Vanier came to believe that the fundamental challenge for humanity is to figure out how to welcome people who are different and how to embrace the differences as a gift that can enrich us all.

L'Arche Community Homes The place at which they all come together

It's five o'clock in Northeast Ohio and the afternoon silence of a typical day is suddenly broken. "Hi everybody, we're home," shout Billy and Sean, as they eagerly head toward the kitchen to scope out what's for dinner and share their workday experiences. "Make sure to put your coats away," echoes a voice from another room, "and come help set the table."

This simple scenario took place when *Pipeline Quarterly* (PQ) recently visited a L'Arche community residential setting in the suburbs of Cleveland. By accepting an invitation to visit this seemingly typical home, PQ gained a broader understanding of how the needs of individuals with disabilities can be served in ways that significantly benefit both those who need, and those who provide, support and care.

So what is L'Arche? It is an international federation of communities in which people with developmental disabilities and those who choose to join them, live, work, and share their lives together.

L

"L'Arche" is French, meaning "the ark" or the refuge place, and has come to symbolize the bridging role a community plays in building natural relationships.

The community was founded in northern France in 1964 out of a vision by Jean Vanier and Father Thomas Philippe. Father Philippe encouraged Vanier to live a philosophy of understanding, and, in doing so, take three men out of an institution and live with them. Through this experience, Vanier came to believe that the fundamental challenge for humanity is to figure out how to welcome people who are different and how to embrace the differences as a gift that can enrich us all.

Today there are 135 L'Arche communities in 30 countries, with 16 communities in the U.S. (One in Ohio). While its roots are in the Catholic tradition, L'Arche has developed affiliations with various cultures and religions throughout the world, and is considered a significant lay ministry of the 20th Century.

Now back to our visit. As PQ prepared for interviews with several staff who met at one of the four homes that comprises

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Providers Credit PATHS and learn to share their passion for work well done



A group more passionate about their work would be difficult to gather! Rose-Mary Center staff shown here are: Front Row L-R: Rondalia Simon, Patricia Colombo, Odella Brown, Cheryl Duckworth. Back Row L-R: Asiyah Pelzer (red sweater), Felicia Jones, LaTrisha Vaughn, Shelly Orlovski, Nancy Geiger, Marionette White and Kevin Metz.

The Rose-Mary Center in Euclid, Ohio, is faith-based and mission-driven -- and so is its staff. Their mission is *to assist and empower individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities to achieve a life of increasing abilities and personal fulfillment, thereby becoming more independent and integrated members of the community.*

The dedicated direct-service staff serve participants at several facilities operated through (and at) the Rose-Mary Center. Staff range from those new to the direct care field, to veterans with 20+ years of experience -- but everyone shown in the photo above share the hard-earned PATHS (*Professional Advancement through Training and Education in Human Services*) professionalism.

Exactly what is it? PATHS grads tell it something like this -- The professionalism one feels from participating in the training is an intangible feeling ... and the credentialing system, a concrete way of attesting to the training that's behind the feeling.

A program of the Ohio Association of Direct Support Professionals, PATHS is an award-winning voluntary credentialing program for direct support professionals who work with individuals with MRDD in Ohio. According to PATHS project manager, Amy Gerowitz, statewide there have been more than 300 graduates earning the PATHS Certificate of Initial Proficiency (CIP).

Gerowitz explains that PATHS, " ... provides an opportunity for direct support professionals to participate in a credentialing program

PATHS graduates are very enthusiastic about the training, as the quotes below illustrate.

" I want all our residents to feel joy and dignity. I have a renewed passion for working with my people and seeing them grow. " - Marionette White

" What's so great about PATHS in my eyes is that it's getting people to mentor each other. Our direct care staff take this training and it gives them information on things like conflict resolution. This stuff works! " - Nancy Geiger

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L'Arche Community Homes

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the L'Arche Cleveland community, we were struck by the deliberate hierarchy that places people with disabilities at its center. We were hosted by the Executive Director of the L'Arche Cleveland Community, Rebecca (Becky) Brady, who has been its leader for more than eight years. Becky's general background is in nursing.

PQ: How is the L'Arche community structured?

Becky: Each of us plays a role, beginning with individuals with disabilities who are considered our 'core members'. Direct care professionals in a traditional service setting are referred to as 'Assistants' in a L'Arche community, and the leader of each home is the 'Head of the House'.

PQ: Why are people drawn to L'Arche communities?

Becky: People come to L'Arche because they believe in the philosophy. This is who we are, and this is part of our spiritual journey. It may be surprising to some that 90% of our assistants have a college degree and see this as a vocation.

PQ: How do you provide services to individuals with disabilities in a structure that is set up for more traditional care?

Becky: We do receive referrals from the local County Board of MRDD, so in that sense it is traditional, but the difference is we don't see ourselves as 'providing services', but instead as developing relationships with individuals, and becoming the people we need and want to be.

PQ: Pat, can you tell us about yourself and your role in the community?

Pat: I live in one of the homes as a Program Director, and have had two other professions, one as an elementary school teacher, and the other as a nun. As my background might suggest, I have experienced much in my life, and yet it's amazing how the L'Arche experience changes a person.

PQ: Nathan, we understand you've had an interest-



John Boland is an Assistant and has a Masters degree in Early Intervention. Brenda Turnbow works at L'Oreal. She loves to go shopping and is very fashionable. Purple is her favorite color, and she loves the entertainer, Prince -- just ask her!

David Scott enjoys all of Cleveland's professional sports teams and loves to play his guitar. He works at the Beachwood Adult Activity Center and lives in a L'Arche Community home.



ing journey getting to this place in your life...

Nathan: Yes I have -- I started out climbing the corporate ladder with a health food chain. I didn't like where my life was headed. When I began working with people with disabilities, I found my calling. I am now Head of the House and I've been in the L'Arche community for four years. People often ask me why I do so much for people with disabilities and I always respond with, "What's really amazing is how much they do for me."

We ended the visit with a tour of two homes in this L'Arche community. Escorting us room to room by the core members, it was clear that their world ... "respected the gifts of each person and created a community of hope where true autonomy can exist and interdependency can be encouraged."

-- teachings of Jean Vanier, Founder of L'Arche

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National Focus Goes Regional Preparedness Message Hits the Road

Thanks to the dauntless coordination efforts of Ann Weisent, ODMRDD Review Manager and member of the agency's Safety Committee, and, thanks to the marvelous synergy of a random conversation, Ohio's National Emergency Preparedness Month (October) campaign developed into a unique opportunity for improving the safety of individuals with disabilities, statewide.

Following an introduction to the state's plans for National Preparedness Month via the Ohio Dept. of Public Safety (ODPS), representatives from ODMRDD Constituent Services shared the wealth of information with Weisent, who promptly suggested that it would be an excellent project for the Safety Committee and the regional representatives of the six ODMRDD regions.

A random conversation on the subject between Patrick Lanahan, ODMRDD Deputy Director, Special Projects, and Sherry Steinman, Public



Representatives of People First of Ohio attended the Emergency Preparedness training at Mount Vernon Developmental Center. They tested the contents of a sample preparedness kit, and found that, for one thing, the whistle worked just fine!

Information Officer, prompted Lanahan to contact Jackie Bowling, Superintendent at Vinton County MRDD, to see if they were interested in making some Preparedness Kits. "They needed a project for their workshop and it sounded like a good fit to me," said Patrick, as he instantly thought of ten other good ideas to go along with it.

Vinton County staff, being the resourceful souls they are, pulled together an amazing array of donated and nearly-donated items in quantity for the Kits, and it wasn't long before a few dozen kits were prepared and shipped to Ann Weisent for distribution.

By then, Ann and her group of Safety Committee staff and regional trainers, had arranged for free trainings, to be held in each of the six ODMRDD Regions throughout the state, for people receiving MRDD services, their provid-

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They're Getting Prepared in Vinton County -- Kit Makers (L-R): Tammy Stapleton, Habilitation Specialist; Alva Mount, Stacker; Amber Radune, Quality Assurance; Tonya Brickles, Assembly; Jenessa Meadows, Assembly.

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Preparedness *cont. from p. 10*

ers, and related staff. In addition to instructional videos and printed presentation materials, a few Emergency Preparedness Kits were brought to each meeting for participants to review contents and discuss how they might personalize their kit to include specific items that they may need in an emergency.

The 'Ready' campaign promoted activities that encouraged individuals to have an *emergency supply kit*, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different threats that may affect them, as well as take steps to get trained and engaged in community preparedness and response efforts.

"We saw a great deal of interest this first time around, and I especially liked the idea of discussing a Preparedness Plan within a person's annual overall Individual Service Plan activity. I heard one gentleman say to a staff person on the way out of the training, 'I want a Preparedness Plan!' I hope to build on this foundation next year, for improved Emergency Preparedness geared to the people we serve," notes Ann.

ODMRDD's overall efforts in reaching people with disabilities with preparedness information targeted to their needs has been highlighted on the National Department of Homeland Security (DHS) weblog at <http://www.ready.gov/america/npm07/index.html>

To request free materials from DHS, visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY.



Janessa Meadows, Assembly, readies one of the well-stocked kits.

During a presentation held in Region 5, at Mount Vernon Developmental Center, ODMRDD Review Manager, Ann Weisent, explained,

" You might even think about making two of these for yourself. One for your basement or safe-area in your home, and the second to keep in a vehicle you would be using in the event of an evacuation. "



ODMRDD National Preparedness Month activities organizer, Ann Weisent, kept good company with Ohio's First Lady, and Henry Guzman, of ODPS.

" We saw a great deal of interest this first time around, and I especially liked the idea of discussing a Preparedness Plan within a person's annual overall Individual Service Plan activity. I heard one gentleman say to a staff person on the way out of the training, 'I want a Preparedness Plan!' "

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Providers Credit PATHS *cont. from page 7*

that offers state of the art, person-focused knowledge to help support people with disabilities wherever they live and work." She continues,

" It also provides a career ladder so that direct support professionals will be more likely to stay in this field, gain professional knowledge and stability, and have a long-lasting career with advancement opportunities, rather than 'just a job.' "

In addition, Rose-Mary Center Director, Kevin Metz, notes, "When you have people participating in PATHS, staff turnover may be reduced, and funds allocated to creating a competent work force, rather than to turnover and recruitment activities."



PATHS began in 2001 as a result of a grant from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council that continued through 2006. It also received financial support from the ODMRDD in 2001, and again in 2006-07, along with support from the Department of Labor in 2004. Significant in-kind support also has been received from agencies and individuals.

LaTrisha Vaughn is a perfect example of how PATHS improves the opportunities open to a person in the direct care field. She relates,

"When I came here to the Center, I was fresh into the field. I needed to learn everything. And, I don't ever just want to go into a job and, you know, just 'be there'. I want to do the best job I can! PATHS training has been great for me."

And, for Marionette White, working at one of the seven residential locations operated by Rose-Mary Center, it was the encouragement of her House Manager that prompted her to take the training. She smiles, saying, "I didn't want to at first. I thought, I don't know. I should

learn to communicate better and do it for our clients. I decided to take the training and learned to think, What do *they* want? I also had to learn, what *don't* they want?!" She laughs,

"That's one I really needed to learn because my house is non-verbal. None of our residents communicate verbally, so I learned by watching and paying attention to other ways that they do communicate. Oh yes, they definitely DO communicate!"

Rose-Mary Center's Nancy Geiger and Pat Columbo have nearly 30 years of experience between them, and have a unique perspective on what they see PATHS training doing for staff. "It's taking direct care from the 'caregiver' mode to the instructional and educational mode. I see

the light bulbs going off for people when things start making sense to staff because they share information and learn together," says Nancy.

Rose-Mary Center's seven homes of various sizes are contracted through the Cuyahoga County Board of MRDD, and offer structured plans that address activities of daily living for approximately 40 children and 50 adults.

Kevin Metz sums up the heart of the PATHS approach for direct care staff. "It puts the work they do into a professional perspective, and they are professional care givers when they complete the training and put the concepts to work."

Cheryl Duckworth tells it like it is, adding,

"I know I'm more professional in my job now. I can feel it. It taught me to be a better person."

For more information about PATHS, please visit, www.ohiopaths.org or contact Amy Gerowitz at agerowitz@ohiopaths.org, phone 513-484-2772.

Special thanks to Maureen Corcoran, at Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) for information pertaining to this article

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Swimming to Safety - A Story of Courage and Caring

The Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) recognized the extraordinary efforts described below, at their October 2007 conference in Columbus. Pipeline thanks Raberta Walthour, Angie Hannahs, Maureen Corcoran, and Patrick Lanahan for the information contained in this article.

Raberta Walthour, service provider ResCare's Operations Manager for two Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) in Ottawa, Ohio (Putnam County) was responsible for leading the ICF's staff team during the flooding crisis in late August 2007. It is through her eyes that we learn the story of the staff and managers at two group homes in Ottawa, whose dedication to residents during a flood affecting the group homes was nothing short of spectacular. She relates ...

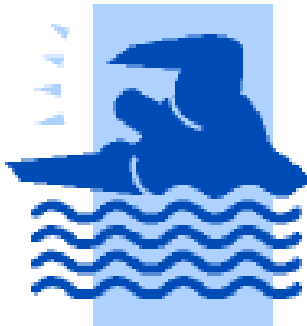
A Federal Disaster

"On August 23rd, flood waters were rising around the homes, and the residents had to be evacuated. The town of Ottawa was undergoing what later turned out to be a federal disaster, due to the flooding of the Blanchard River in northwest Ohio.

Raberta relates, "With the evacuation, we all needed to work together to get everyone out safely and prepare for life (at least for a while) in a shelter. Everyone took action. Phone calls were systematically placed to families and guardians to let them know what was occurring. Arrangements were made to get some residents to their families' homes once we got to a shelter. And, clothing, emergency food, medications, and medical supplies were quickly packaged. (See *Emergency Preparedness* article p. 9, this issue, for related tips.)

Miller City fire fighters arrived with a boat -- actually more like a raft. Fears were calmed as those in

wheelchairs were lifted inside, with water sometimes falling into the raft around our feet. What we thought might be the hardest part -- getting out of the homes, turned out to be the easiest! Living in a Red Cross shelter (Miller City Sportsman Club) for four days soon would be the bigger challenge.



On Aug. 23, flood waters were rising around the homes, and the residents had to be evacuated. The town of Ottawa was undergoing what turned out to be a federal disaster due to the flooding of the Blanchard River in northwestern Ohio.

By Land or by Sea

Staff who were able to work that day did so without hesitation. While the town of Ottawa was impassable due to the water, some staff managed to find their ways to the homes, although this wasn't easy. Many staff members waded through the water earlier the previous day, and had become stranded as the waters rose. Others came in when the water was low enough to walk through it. A few made it in by paddle boat, or, in one staff member's case ... swam in!



One of the ResCare homes, surrounded by water, rising quickly.

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Courage and Caring *continued from p. 12*

Once rescued and at the shelter, we knew that finding one's belongings, bed, and food strangely unfamiliar, could prove to be upsetting to residents newly-housed at the shelter.

But, instead of this unsettling scenario, we had staff who brought in items to help pass the time and make life a little more comfortable. And the local Red Cross volunteers who were with us were unbelievably supportive.

The organization that assured everything was prepared for the shelter helped make the transition easier on everyone. It was their comments that made me realize what an amazing group of staff we have at the Ottawa/Putnam homes. Red Cross representatives watched how ResCare staff interacted with the residents and told me later...

"Your staff know them best! They should be commended for what they do. There's a lot of hands-on work, and they do this day in, day out."



Above: Miller City firefighters help evacuate residents.

Below: Susan Siefker, Nursing Supervisor, with paddle boat.

During an emergency, we've all seen people rise to the occasion. But, the Ottawa and Putnam staff, whose performance always has been exemplary, was highlighted by the event at hand."

Raberta sums it up, "I don't want to forget too soon that every day there is a demonstration of dedication and caring between staff and the people we serve." She adds,

"Teamwork – and bringing people's strengths together – makes a task easier. But teamwork that pulls together to make it through a tough time ... well, that binds us together."

More on Courage and Caring

> "Miller City firefighters -- we need to recognize them," says Terry Leopold, Supt., Putnam County MRDD. "They always go above and beyond to help the people we serve, and they proved that again during the flood."

> Raberta Walthour relates, "One of our guys was *not* going to get on the raft to get him out of the house. He fought us all the way! Then, after we

did manage to get him safely on the raft, he turned to one of our staff and said, "Thank you for saving my life."

> One staff member, who lives about 25 mi. from Ottawa and has six children, managed to see to it they were taken care of during the emergency, and stayed past her work shift at the home to make sure residents were not left alone.

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"You have to be committed to wanting to make it work," said Mitchell, who sees his role as employing people with disabilities *one job at a time*. "PersonnelPlus grows one job at a time. If we build relationships with businesses, we can help people realize their dreams. And fulfilling dreams is something we all want to do, isn't it? "



Tim Crabtree prepares shipping boxes for Diagnostic Hybrids at the Athens County Board of MRDD site.

For more information about PersonnelPlus, contact Doug Mitchell at dougm@athenscmrdd.org or www.personnelplus.org
For more information about PassionWorks Studio, contact Dave Barba at daveb@athenscmrdd.org or www.passionworks.org

PassionWorks ... Works!

PassionWorks Studio is known nationally for the creation of artwork through collaboration between artists with and without disabilities. Part of Athens County MRDD since 1998, the Studio creates one-of-a-kind art, and translates it into items such as jewelry, ornamental flowers, and greeting cards. Production and sale of these items creates employment for people with disabilities and generates a renewable funding stream for arts programming. "The success we have at PassionWorks would be difficult to duplicate in other communities," said David Barba, director of operations. He adds,

" Understanding the dynamics of your community is an important aspect of building a successful program. Each community must identify and embrace its own uniqueness."

"We actively engage our community and have tapped into the resources of Ohio University and area businesses," Barba said. Along with professional artists who collaborate with others at PassionWorks, there are nearly 200 community volunteers who work with its programs annually.

Job Market Issues Affecting People with Disabilities

☞ **In 2006** the national unemployment rate was 5.2 %. Compared to an estimated unemployment rate for people with disabilities at between 75% and 80% of the 'disability population', one can see the employment gulf that exists between those with and without disabilities (includes intellectual, cognitive, and other developmental disabilities such as autism, etc.)

☞ **By 2010**, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows unskilled entry level jobs increasing by 13%, while simultaneously, 10 million workers will be leaving the workforce when the first wave of baby boomers retires in 2014.

☞ Adults with disabilities consistently show a devotion to a job and their employer vs. the paycheck. Their job retention rate is high and they tend to be more loyal and committed.

☞ Companies remain skeptical despite research that shows:

1. *Most workers with developmental disabilities consistently come to work on time.*
2. *Nearly 80% of employers were 'very satisfied' with the dedication shown by workers with developmental disabilities.*
3. *95% of employers reported no increases in worker turnover by employing persons with developmental disabilities.*
4. *More than 93% of employers reported no additional safety risks or increase in worker's compensation rates by employing people with developmental disabilities.*
5. *95% of employers reported no adverse impact on health insurance coverage or rates by employing people with developmental disabilities.*

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Two Superintendents Retire



Paul Young (center) and Don Walker (right) receive commendations from ODMRDD Director, John Martin. Between the two Developmental Center Superintendents (Young/Youngstown, and Walker/ Gallipolis) they have 64 years of service in the MRDD field (Young, 33 years, and Walker, 30). Both men retired in August 2007.

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For more information see <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/contacts/odmrdd.htm>

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What are the ODMRDD Administration's Five Goals?

To strive to provide:

1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
2. Good stewardship of limited resources;
3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by people served, in alliance with community supports;
5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.



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Futures Committee *cont. from cover*

consider recommendations to be included in the final report. By March 30, 2008, the Committee will produce a written report for Governor Strickland and the General Assembly, which will include results of the study, stakeholder involvement, and the Committee's recommendations.

In the four public testimony sessions held in November, each subcommittee heard from people interested in the process and reviewed more than 300 pages of written testimony submitted by more than 100 stakeholders at public sessions, through the MRDD Futures website and mailed directly to ODMRDD. More than 30,000 electronic web-pages have been viewed by interested stakeholders.

We are committed to keeping *Pipeline* readers informed regarding the progress of the MRDD Futures Committee, and providing comprehensive information on our Futures website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov. I want each of you to know how gratified I am by the interest and broad-based participation we have experienced so far in this process. I encourage you to remain involved.

- John Martin

The Futures Committee has received input from several hundred constituents since the group's inception in August 2007. Among those constituents is self-advocate, Chris Clayton, center.



Pipeline Quarterly

Published four times annually, (*Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer*), by the ODMRDD Division of Constituent Services, Public Information Office, *Pipeline Quarterly (PQ)* highlights topics of interest in the MRDD arena, focuses on people served, and reinforces the core concepts and general philosophy of this Administration.

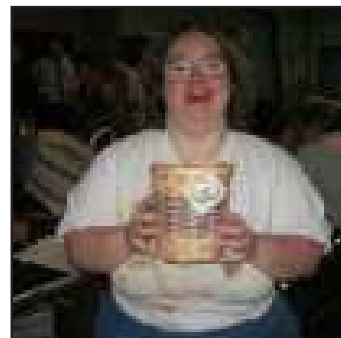
Articles are by Constituent Services staff unless otherwise noted. Thanks to all who contributed, and to all who allowed us to interview them for this issue.

Reader comments, ideas, and feedback welcomed! Please contact:
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Visit us on the web at
www.mrdd.ohio.gov



Decorative wreaths made from donated and used greeting cards are a specialty of the employees at the Miami County Board of MRDD (Riverside of Miami County).



News Briefs

Creativity is No Stranger to These Counties

In addition to several other counties, both Morrow County and Miami County were visited as an information-gathering prelude to articles in this issue of *PQ*.

The ODMRDD Public Information Office was fortunate to be hosted in both of these counties by gracious and helpful staffers who took the time needed to better understand the larger stories and enjoy the smaller ones.

For more information about the crafts and products for sale at these counties, view the Miami County website at <http://www.riversidemrdd.org/> (Miami), and contact the Morrow County Board at (419) 947-7045.

< *Whetstone Weavers (Morrow County) employee, Michelle Thompson, displays one of her works, a teacup basket. Handcrafted items by Whetstone Weavers dot the offices there, and are as original and interesting as those who create them.*