

2023

# Highland County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Annual Report

## Mission Statement

Ensuring effective systems are available to assist people in achieving their life goals.

## Vision Statement

Enhancing the quality of life in our community – one person at a time.

## Core Values

- \*Consumer Focused
- \*Fiscally Responsible
- \*Organizational Integrity
- \*Quality Outcomes



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## From the Desk of Superintendent Debra Buccilla



Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report. It seems 2023 was the year helping us to reach a sense of normalcy after the dark times of the previous few years. Back to normal and then some, was evident throughout the year. Our staff and those being served navigated growth and new beginnings. You will see highlights of this throughout our report.

I was recently reading a Childrens' book titled, "What Does It Mean To Be An American?" I especially liked the part which said, "Being an American means having the right to become your best self, and the obligation to help others do so." This is exactly what we do at the Highland County Board of DD.

This report captures our quest to help those we serve learn new skills, be introduced to new opportunities and to become the best versions of themselves. Case in point, read the article about Amy and Travis and you will see this quest in action!

This is my last Annual Report before I retire in a few weeks. I have felt honored to be a part of this great team helping others navigate new beginnings and striving to be the best version of themselves.

With Gratitude,

Deb Buccilla

# Service and Support Administration

The Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department provided eligibility determination and service coordination to 217 people in 2023, with 125 of those supported by home and community-based waivers. We continued our commitment of ensuring people receive services to enhance the quality of their lives while promoting individual choices. This work was accomplished through services provided including assessment, person-centered planning, referrals, payment authorization, linkage, and monitoring.



Amy informed her SSA, Alex Jett, of her desire to have community employment. Her SSA linked Amy to resources with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and Grow Inc. Together they helped Amy find the perfect job in her local community. Through career exploration and job development, Amy was hired at Close to Home Senior Living in Sardinia, Ohio as the Assistant Activities Coordinator. Because of Amy, the residents have found a renewed interest in doing daily activities around the facility. Amy continues to impress the employer with her creativity and attention to the residents who have quickly become her second family. Amy utilizes FRS transportation to and from her work site. Service & Support Administration is truly about connections!



Travis has big goals for himself, and it is very important to him to continue his independence and desire to explore his community and interests outside of his wheelchair. Travis knows the long-term prognosis of his disability and the importance of continued movement while he still has the ability. Travis reached out to his SSA Jacklyn Thacker, to talk about his hopes and dreams of kayaking, going biking and snow tubing. He said biking was at the top of his wish list!

As we often discover, there were barriers that Travis faced in the desire to meet his goal.... how could he propel a bike when he doesn't have use of his legs to peddle, and the bike may be cost prohibitive. The team found a bike that potentially met his need but was still not exactly what he could use and was nearly \$2000.00!

Travis's SSA linked him to May-We-Help. According to their website, May-We-Help is a non-profit consisting of 75 volunteer engineers, industrial designers, inventors, welders, woodworkers, seamstresses, doctors, occupational and physical therapists who come together to design, build and deliver custom devices at no cost. They take an ordinary item and make it extraordinary! Travis travelled to Cincinnati to meet with an engineer from May-We-Help so they could determine Travis' needs and although the SSA linked Travis to May-We-Help, there were still barriers. A bike would still need to be obtained before they could assist. Travis quickly received a call from May-We-Help that a bike had been donated to be used for Travis. The bike has now been modified so that Travis can hand peddle while being attached to another bike to assist in leading or it can independently be peddled with his hands. A huge thank you to May-We-Help. Travis is ready to hit some bike trails!





# Enjoying the Good Life





# Community First

Our Pre-Employment Transition Services partner with local school districts, including Hillsboro, Bright Local, Fairfield, Greenfield, Lynchburg-Clay, Hillsboro Christian Academy, two CTC schools, home schools and specialized schools. In 2023, we expanded to include three Clinton County Schools. We served fifty-four students and look for that number to continue to increase. Through networking done while collaborating with the students, we have several students who have been offered different job opportunities once they graduated. We provide workplace readiness, self-advocacy, job exploration, work-based learning, and counseling on post-secondary education. The important thing about these courses are they are person-centered, meaning they are tailored for each individual student. We let the student tell us what they want and explore that choice until they understand everything involved with the choice. This gives the student autonomy and allows the student to fully understand everything involved with that career. Some students find out they want to continue to pursue that dream and others have realized that the job is not what they thought and decide to explore other avenues.

Another option students have while receiving transition services is working in our Summer Youth Experience. Students work in a local business for five weeks during the summer and receive a stipend of above minimum wage for the work they do. We had seventeen students participate in the program in 2023. We celebrate the success of these students and the skills they developed with this experience.



Job Development services were utilized by twenty-four participants with eighteen achieving full-time permanent work and six in part-time work.

Bridge Support Services (BSS) are intended to enhance participant engagement and to focus directly on employment supports through short-term support to overcome significant barriers to employment. These services are not intended as ongoing services, or to mimic, duplicate, or supplement case management services that may be available from other sources (e.g., mental health and local county board of developmental disabilities services). Some of the ways this service can be utilized are identification (ID) obtainment/replacement, work clothing assistance, community connections, training preparation support, and training exploration. In 2023, nine students utilized this service. These services, including the Pre-Employment Transition Services, are authorized and funded through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and determined on a as needed case by case basis.



# HIGHLAND COUNTY SPECIAL OLYMPICS



## Basketball

In 2023, we were able to have a full season and we had two teams divided into different divisions based on their skill level. There were 8 players on each team, 16 total. As usual, our players had so much fun competing in this sport, they progressed so well and learned new things as they played the game throughout the season. Both teams combined, we finished the season with 15 wins and 6 losses. We've had a lot of supporters and families come out and watch our players compete this year.

After the regular season, we had a fun game at the Hillsboro High School. This included our players, student athletes of Hillsboro High School, and the deputies of Highland Co. Sheriff Dept. The gym was filled with students, faculty members, families, friends, and supporters. This fun filled event will be continued once a year.

## Youth Special Olympics

We hosted the Youth Special Olympics event at the YMCA. We had 61 athletes, representing each school district in the county and they learned different basketball drills. There were 11 volunteers who came out and worked with the youth. Many families and supporters came out and showed support for the athletes.

## Spring Games (Track and Field)

The Spring Games, which was held at Lakota East High School, was a regional qualifier for State Summer Games, included 17 organizations in our region. This year we had 14 athletes compete in this event. Out of 14 of our athletes, 9 of them earned a medal. We are proud of our athletes.

## Summer Games

State Summer Games were held at the Ohio State University. This year, we had 11 athletes that qualified for the Summer Games. Our volunteers did a wonderful job ensuring our athletes were present at the place of competition on time. 8 of our athletes brought home a medal.

## Bocce

We had 30 participate in our annual Wildcats Bocce Tournament held at HCBDD Track. We are getting more interest each year in this new event. Four of our bocce players received gold medals at the State Summer Game Bocce Tournament.

## Unified Slow- Pitch Softball

The Wildcats unified softball team played 2 games and went 1-1 for the season. One tournament and two games were cancelled due to the weather.

## Unified Golf

The Wildcats unified golf team place 5<sup>th</sup> at the regional tournament and 2<sup>nd</sup> at the state tournament.

## Fall Games (Track and Field)

This year our local track and field event was held at the Hillsboro High School track. We had 41 athletes who participated in this event along with 13 volunteers. **Hillsboro Athletic Department loaned equipment to use and White's Bakery provided breakfast for everyone involved. We appreciate our community partners.**

## Flag Football

The football team competed in 5 games and went 4-1 for the season. Our football team has drastically improved since last year! We've had families and supporters come out and watch every game and root for our players.

## Bowling

There were 45 bowlers who participated in the annual bowling league and 20 in the Special Olympics bowling tournaments.





# People First of Highland County

The People First Advocacy Group continued to expand in 2023. The group had a time change for meetings, which allowed more participants to attend. There were 16 members this past year. They held monthly meetings locally at 24 Exchange and attended the Southern Ohio Advocacy Group (SOAG) regional meetings in Chillicothe. The advocates enjoyed a summer picnic with family and friends and used this as a way to recruit new members. The advocates gathered proclamations for DD Awareness month from several communities in the county. Members volunteered throughout the community providing services to others. Several attended the annual Synergy Conference and enjoyed learning new things related to advocacy.



## Up and Beyond Art Studio



There were thirty-nine artists who completed artwork at the Up and Beyond Art Studio in 2023. The group had great sales at local festivals this year as well as offered artwork for sale on Facebook and through appointments at the art studio. They held a Christmas pop-up sale during the month of December for those unique Christmas gift ideas. Artists keep 90% of sales, with 10% going to the supply fund.





## Hills and Dales Preschool

Joey started services in our Early Intervention Program at the Highland County Board of Developmental Disabilities at age two with in home speech therapy. At age three Joey began preschool at Hills and Dales Preschool. Joey's family shared that as soon as he started preschool, along with their efforts at home, they could see positive changes in his communication. He was making friends, learning new words, and overall, thriving.

Joey is one of sixty-two students enrolled in Hills and Dales Preschool for the 2023-2024 school year. Hills and Dales is an Ohio Department of Education (ODE) licensed special needs/inclusion preschool program, which helps both children with and without special needs learn from each other, develop social skills, and create friendships. There are twenty-four students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which may include supports such as occupational, physical, behavioral and speech therapy. The HCBDD nurse participates in IEP development and completes state mandatory hearing and vision screenings on preschoolers. During the 2022-2023 school year, 34 students graduated from Hills and Dales preschool. Transportation was provided to requesting students and family. During the last half of the 2022-2023 school year, forty-six students utilized school transportation. Forty-eight students rode the preschool buses for the first half of the 2023-2024 school year.





# Early Intervention



Joseph, or JoJo, as he prefers to be called, participated in the Highland County Early Intervention program and successfully graduated. It was wonderful to see his growth and development.

Katlynn, JoJo's Mom, said this after being in our Highland County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention program for 3 years, "They helped me watch his development issues. They also reassured me that I was doing things right. They just helped calm my nerves of things happening and me not doing things right." This was a new mom that gained confidence, became an advocate for her children, became a "talker," and now does research on concerns when they arise. Mom even educated us on some of the research that she had found regarding lowering lead levels naturally with the foods you eat. Way to go JoJo. You are on to a bright future!

Early Intervention (EI) is a statewide system that provides coordinated early intervention services to parents of eligible children under the age of three with developmental delays or disabilities. EI is grounded in the philosophy that young children learn best from familiar people in familiar settings. Every family served in EI will have a team that consists of a service coordinator, service providers, and the family. The team works in your home or other places you and your family spend time to develop a coordinated plan called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). You and your team will work through your IFSP plan to use your existing supports and resources—and build upon them—to learn to enhance your child's learning and development. Highland County Early Intervention provided services to 218 families in 2023. This is over 1000 visits to children and families in homes and through virtual visits. Early Intervention graduated 39 kids from the EI program as they turned three. Early Intervention works with children and their families to enhance the child's development through everyday learning opportunities and routines. EI serves and supports infants and toddlers, birth to 3 years of age. The EI team consists of Service Coordinators, Autism Coordinator, Nursing, Developmental Specialists, Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapist. We also celebrated a year and a half of being an autism diagnostic center with our partner ABC Pediatrics. 15 kids completed the entire evaluation protocol with 9 more currently in the process.







## Help Me Grow

Help Me Grow (HMG) continues to provide services in four counties: Adams, Brown, Clinton, and Highland. HMG is funded through the Ohio Department of Health and the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant. HMG served approximately 229 families in 2023 across the four counties and funding streams. Help Me Grow has continued implementing the evidence-based curriculum, Parents as Teachers (PAT). This model allows children and families who are eligible to enroll from prenatal up to age 2, and services can be provided until the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Help Me Grow home visiting program educates and assists in parent child interactions, development centered parenting and overall family well-being. Through home visiting, home visitors help bridge the gaps in services to children and families, connect families to resources as needed, monitors the development of enrolled children, and provides structured and safe opportunities for families and their children to network with other families through playgroups.

During this past year, a Caregiver expressed distress not being able to afford the grocery cost for her 8 children and difficulty making ends meet. Highland County HMG Home Visitor made a referral to food assistance (SNAP), but the family did not have transportation or access to mobile/internet devices due to their cultural restrictions. The Home Visitor coordinated application pickup, assisting in application and proof of income, and coordinating interviews with ODJFS. The family was then approved with a significant amount of money to help feed their family every month. The Home Visitor followed up after acceptance and walked the family through the process of setting up their card, what stores accept SNAP benefits and the plan to follow up with ODJFS on continuing requirements of benefits. The caregiver expressed how much stress this has taken off her and her family. She felt that she is now able to provide healthy meals for all of her children and she is able to pay other bills and basic essentials easier.



# *Operations*

Operations staff made several improvements during 2023.

- New boiler was installed in the Hills and Dales Early Childhood Center.
- Two CDL Bus Drivers were hired.
- The parking Lot was re-sealed.
- New flooring was installed in all bathrooms and the conference room in the Hills and Dales Early Childhood Center.
- Operations Staff provided all transportation for the Summer Youth at the Highland County YMCA

# *Nursing Services*

The Highland County Board Nurse is part of a team who assures Health and Safety of students and adults receiving services from the Highland County Board of Developmental Disabilities. This includes delegation of medications/health related activities, training on various topics, consultation, medication administration quality assurance (MAQA) reviews and emergency care as needed.

The Nursing Department stayed in touch with staff and providers answering questions and giving guidance. The primary responsibility of our Nurse is to assure medication and health related activities are delivered by trained staff and provider partners and if an illness or accident occurs, they can provide appropriate care.

Staff and providers require Medication Administration Certification to administer medications, perform health related activities, administer feeding or medications via a gastrostomy tube and administration of insulin. The Certification 1 Initial Training is a minimum of 14-hours of class. A total of twenty-nine (29) new Certifications were issued (1-Highland Staff and 28-Providers). Staff and Providers are required to attend annually a 2-hour class to recertify their certificate. This year a total of one hundred twenty-one (121) re-certification were issued to staff and providers.

Certification 2 (G-Tube) and Certification 3 (Insulin), both 4-hour classes, can be completed only after Certification 1 has been obtained. Each certification must be renewed annually by taking a 1-hour re-certification class for each certificate. Six (6) Providers complete the Initial Certification 2 (G-tube) and Two (2) Providers completing the Initial Certification 3 (Insulin) course. Re-certifications were issued to 3-Staff and 31-Providers (total of 34) for Certification 2 with twenty-one (21) re-certifications issued to providers for Certification 3.

Medical and emergency care is provided by our nurse as well as by our staff who are trained. The American Heart Association CPR/FA is taught to all staff and available to any provider or community member. Eighty-six individuals completed AHA Heartsaver CPR/FA or Healthcare Provider Certification.

Our Nurse is available as a consultant to parents, teachers, SSA's (Case Mangers) and physicians. Our Nurse may participate in Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individual Service Plans (ISP). State mandatory hearing and vision screens were completed on all Highland County preschoolers. Communicable Disease Training Certification and re-certification to fourteen (14) staff.

All those participating in the care of individuals with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) share a desire for everyone to have the freedom to live, work, and play where he/she wants by receiving safe, person-centered supports as needed. As the RN MAQA reviewer, the Nurse's focus is on the process of medication administration and health related activities administered by their providers. By looking for patterns that indicate areas of concern that need to be addressed, we can ensure the safest environment possible, with person centered positive outcomes, while creating a culture of compassion and caring. This year, 10 homes for a total of 24 individuals with providers living in their own home had a MAQA completed.



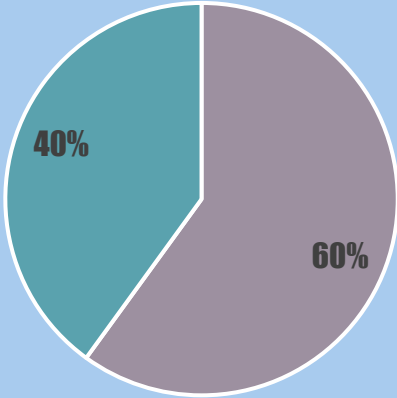
# 2023 Statement of Activities

## Revenues

**\$5,473,610**

### Local and Federal/State

- \*3.35 mill Tax Levy
- \*1.0 mill Tax Levy
- \*Waiver Reconciliation
- \*Grants
- \*Help Me Grow Part C
- \*OOD
- \*Medicaid Administrative Claiming
- \*Title XX
- \*ODE Funding
- \*Targeted Case Management
- \*Help Me Grow Home Visiting
- \*Other

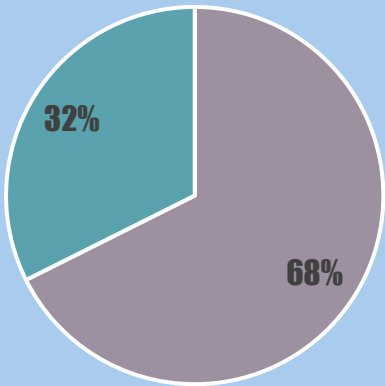


Levy Federal/State

## Expenditures

### Supports and Services

- \*Residential
- \*Employment
- \*Early Intervention
- \*Preschool
- \*Service and Support Administration
- \*Medicaid Coordination
- \*Employment Coordination
- \*Home Purchases
- \* Help Me Grow Home Visiting
- \*Community Outreach
- \*Adult Day
- \*Transportation
- \*Family Support
- \*Nursing Support
- \*Provider Support
- \*Quality Assurance
- \*Community Outreach
- \*Home Repairs
- \*Community First



Supports and Services Administrative Support

### Administrative Support

- \*Facility Maintenance
- \*Supplies
- \*Overhead
- \*Personnel
- \*Utilities
- \*Equipment
- \*General Expenses

**2023 Board Members**

**Elizabeth Fryman, President**

**Michael Richards, Vice President**

**Cheryl Lyle, Secretary**

**Jenny Penn**

**Paul Pence**

**Kim Adams**

**Matthew Roberts**

**2023 Administrative Staff**

**Debra Buccilla, Superintendent**

**Sherry Burns, Executive Administrative Assistant**

**Bret Malone, Assistant Superintendent**

**Lori Moore, Business Director**

**Kelli Williamson, Service and Support Director**

**Elizabeth Brennfleck, Human Resource Director**

**Suzie Janasov, Early Childhood Director**

**Becky Pollard, Nurse**

**Molly Warnock, Community First Director**

**Phil Loudin, Operations Manager**

**Jennifer Goodwin, Investigative Agent**

**Brady Scott, IT Manager**

