



Metzenbaum Center

Helping People Live, Learn, and Earn

Winter 2022

GeaugaDD.org

Thank You Direct Support Staff!

The past 22 months have been challenging for everyone as we have navigated through the Covid pandemic, which also made the Direct Support Professional (DSP) staffing crisis even more severe. Many DSPs are working double shifts, and some are working 7 days a week to keep the people we serve safe and healthy. DSPs have adapted by being creative, engaging, and very flexible while providing services for people with DD in Geauga County.

To all DSPs, please know that the work you do matters! You are the heart and soul of supports for people with DD. Thank you for your unmatched dedication and for everything you do to help people live, learn, and earn.



Party With Santa

The Early Intervention program held their annual end of the year party and visit with Santa on December 3. All the families and children in attendance enjoyed participating in the festivities, yummy snacks, and of course, meeting Santa! Abundant laughter and smiles helped everyone spread some Christmas cheer.

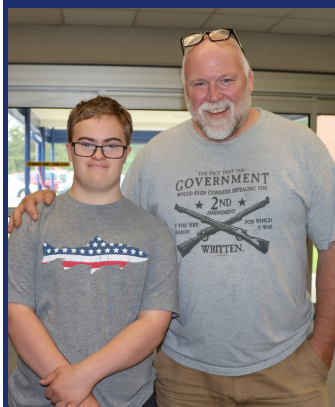


Shared Living

Ohio Shared Living, called OSL for short, provides an option for someone with a developmental disability to get the support they need while living with a paid caregiver.

Caregivers make long-term commitments to sharing a home, helping with daily routines, and inviting someone with a developmental disability to be part of their family, resulting in lifelong relationships. OSL caregivers support people with developmental disabilities in a home setting, either the home of the live-in caregiver or the home of the person accessing services.

As we plan for future services in Geauga County, we are asking for your input on a short survey. Go to geaugadd.org/survey to answer the 3 question survey, or scan this QR code on your smartphone.



Jack's Story

Jack is not your everyday ordinary guy. He is living an extraordinary life by showing his determination in overcoming challenges and working towards the goal of what he wants to do in life. Jack is a leader and an inspiration, but most importantly, he is making something of himself by becoming successful on his own initiative.

Jack loves learning and being around people, so naturally going to college to continue schooling and interacting with fellow students was a no brainer. He is certainly proud to have recently completed an associate degree at Lakeland Community College in Financial Accounting. "It was not easy and there were some really hard and challenging classes on my schedule", said Jack. "Math has always been easy for me. Taking English was definitely a challenge. The amount of writing required I was not used to and at the end of the course I had to give a 10-minute presentation. I still got an A, and that really helped build my confidence."

Getting the associate degree at Lakeland is just one step for Jack who has his sights set on working in the field of Auditing, Analyzing and Investigating. Wanting to be most successful in a future job, Jack has enrolled at Franklin University to further his knowledge in accounting. Franklin U. boasts of being number #1 in online accounting degrees in the state of Ohio, and conveniently has a partnership with Lakeland. Jack currently has a GPA of 3.86, and is working to obtain a double major degree in "Bachelors of Science" in Financial Accounting and Forensic Accounting. He will be attending some in-person classes at Lakeland and some on-line classes at Franklin to achieve his graduation goal in about 3 1/2 years of straight college, attending 3 classes each session.

Lakeland has been a great college for Jack because they offer the Student Accommodation Center. It provides students access to all of Lakeland's programs, classes and activities with tailored accommodations meeting the needs of individual students. It has helped Jack to have the best possible schooling and experience while at college. Jack meets with a counselor at the beginning of each semester to make sure all his needs are met, and any needed accommodations planned out. Fellow students help Jack get throughout the college campus safely, and in class assistance with teachers is organized if needed.

When he graduates, Jack would like to get a job out in the community. "With Auditing, Analyzing and Investigating, I like the creativity of what the possibilities of my future job could be." Jack really enjoys being around people and is looking forward to making a contribution by ensuring the accuracy of financials and being able to help others make good decisions. When he is not in the classroom, he enjoys watching sports and is an avid Cleveland sports fan. One day he hopes to coach football in some capacity.



Assistant Coach Award

Joey Nook received a well-deserved Coach of the Year award recently. The decorated assistant has been a member of the Varsity Coaching Staff at Gilmour HS for two seasons now. "I love hockey! My brother used to play and I really love the sport. I just love coaching hockey," exclaimed Coach Joe. His love of the sport is plain to see and the proud moment when he was recognized for his passion was the highlight of his year. "I was really happy! Really, really happy!" Congratulations Coach Joe.



Classes, Events, and Happenings



Geauga DD and local partner agencies work together to offer in-person and virtual activities, programs, and fun opportunities. For more information on upcoming happenings, contact Geauga DD at: 440-729-9406 or facebook.com/GeaugaDD



CrossFit Craze

There is a new adaptive athletic class being offered! NPower Services has teamed up with Chagrin Falls CrossFit to host a twice a month adaptive athletic FUN workout. December was the first class and the coach, Liz Kentner made sure the workout could be performed by anyone, regardless of their physical limitations. Being taught functional fitness was a blast and the group of 10 is already looking forward to the next class in January. Spots are available, contact Lori Weber at: lorivw16@gmail.com or visit npowerservices.com.



Partner Spotlight: NPower Services



Lori Weber started NPower because she wanted to better understand the challenges that families face as they help their adult children adapt into daily life and routines. Lori said: "I needed to see and interact with different disabilities. I offer companion services and job coaching. Some people have huge challenges as they try to assimilate into work situations and spending time with them is helping me see that everyone's ability to handle physical, mental and emotional daily interactions is different. I'm discovering techniques to help my clients find ways to negotiate daily situations. I've gained a deep appreciation for what these families face every day. There is no cookie-cutter approach or instruction set on how to help these folks adjust to things that neurotypical people don't think twice about. I've gained a lot of empathy over the past several months. Eventually, I would like to focus more on integration programming. However, this experience is extremely rich and rewarding.

I noticed young adults with needs weren't doing much after graduation. After graduation for my daughter who has autism, there were no more teachers who wanted her to succeed. She didn't even know what "success" looked like. So, I felt like I had to keep her motivated to continue pursuing her passions of art and athletics.

An ah-ha moment came when my daughter started working and felt that she was contributing to something important. She became happier. In turn, the rest of our family could go about daily life and make our contributions to our employers or the larger community. That's how I discovered that **when we work to help others feel valued, we improve the lives of the larger community.** I started NPower to help families by providing opportunities for integrated volunteering, employment, athletic, and artistic pursuits."

And now, Jokes from Andy



I went to the doctor because I swallowed a golf ball.
The doctor said "It's a fairway down there."

What is green and not heavy?
Light green

How do you know Santa Claus is coming?
You sense his presents!

**Geauga County Board of
Developmental Disabilities**
8200 Cedar Road
Chesterland, OH 44026

Save The Dates

March is DD Awareness Month!

Virtual Family Forums:

- **February 15:** The Geauga County Board of DD and Transition

Contact Megan Thirion for Zoom invite: mthirion@geaugadd.org

Movie Night: January 26

Night to Shine: March 31

1 Mile Fun Walk: May 21

Annual Golf Outing: June 18

Geauga Fair Band Concert: June 21

Keep a lookout for information on the upcoming Free Carnival, Pioneer Waterland outing, and Captains Game.

For the latest info on upcoming events, visit GeaugaDD.org or [Facebook.com/GeaugaDD](https://www.facebook.com/GeaugaDD)

Spreading Holiday Cheer

The Metzenbaum Aktion Club and the Metzenbaum Foundation Rec Department have been busy the last couple months!

The Giving Tree program helped out families this season who were in need of some extra help to celebrate the holidays. There were over 80 requests for gifts, which was the most to date! Letters were sent to all of the families with children that are eligible for services, asking if they needed the extra assistance. With the generosity of employees, board members from both GCBDD & the Metz. Foundation, and agencies working in the building, all the requests were filled.

Once again the Aktion Club spread kindness and joy this holiday season by working with the West Geauga Kiwanis Group to collect, organize, and deliver their annual food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas. A total of 15 families in need were gifted from this act of goodwill. Continuing with the tradition, the Aktion Club and Metz Rec organized a Christmas Card outreach by making handmade Christmas cards with heartfelt messages that were given to the veterans of Geauga County.

For more information or to get involved, contact Sally Contizano at the Metzenbaum Foundation: sally@metzenbaumfdn.org

