

Superintendent Prather announces retirement plans

The Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities (RCBDD) is looking for a new superintendent after Elizabeth 'Liz' Prather announced Aug. 23 she plans to retire at the end of 2017.

Prather has worked in the developmental disabilities field for the past 37 years. She was chosen to lead Richland Newhope in 2007. In 2014 she also began serving as superintendent of the Crawford County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

During her tenure, she has served on several statewide rule-writing and public policy committees while also being very active in community organizations such as United Way, the Kiwanis Club of Mansfield, the Richland County Youth and Family Council, and Special Olympics.



“I think it’s a good time for both boards to have new leadership,” says Prather. “It was my goal to stay until each county completed the transition of adult day and transportation services to private provider partners. We successfully did that in Richland County in 2016 and expect to complete the process in Crawford County by the end of this year.”

“I love my job and will truly miss everyone I work with, especially the individuals and families that we support,” she adds.

The RCBDD has formed a Superintendent Search Committee comprised of three board members. The Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB) will be assisting in the search for Prather’s replacement.

The committee will also be seeking staff input throughout the process. The goal is to have a successor on board by Jan. 1, 2018.

On Sept. 1, the Crawford County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD) announced the hiring of Court Sturts as its next superintendent, effective Oct. 25. Sturts has worked as CCBDD's director of Operations and Transition since last November. He began his career in the DD field with Richland Newhope in 2004.



Another survey

Richland Newhope is in the midst of conducting a second, on-line survey to gather input for our 2018 annual plan.

Unlike the survey we conducted earlier this summer, this one is strictly for individuals we support and their

families or guardians.

It only takes a few minutes to complete. The feedback will help our agency set goals and objectives for the coming year and beyond.

If you're an individual, parent, or guardian, just click [here](#) to do the survey. The deadline is Sept. 22.

Agency holds annual in-service

About 150 employees were on hand for Richland Newhope's annual agency in-service on Sept. 1 at the Masonic Temple.

Superintendent Liz Prather kicked the morning off by reflecting on 50 years of service by the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities as well as her pending retirement at the end of the year.

"It has been a gift to know everybody here," said Prather, who added she plans to stay involved as a volunteer with Newhope and Special Olympics.

Staff also heard from Dan Varn, executive director of United Way of Richland County, on the importance of contributing to this year's fundraising campaign.

"Whatever you can do to support us makes an impact," added Varn.

He was joined by Lorie Daugherty of Parent Aide, one of the 25 United Way agencies, who said her organization never would have existed for 22 years without the support of the community and United Way.



The keynote speaker was Dr. Michael Gillette, president and founder of Bioethical Services of Virginia, Inc., a medical ethics consulting business.

Dr. Gillette spoke about person-centered planning and the ethical limits of individual choice as well as the ethics of social networking and electronic communication with individuals we support.

“Think hard about all of the tough decisions you make,” he advised, noting there are no gray areas in ethics.

Welcome back!

Forty-seven youngsters were excited to start their first day of preschool on Aug. 17 at our Early Childhood Center. Parents were also invited to stay as part of an Open House. Check out the first day of school photos on our [Facebook](#) page!



Element of Art unveils new website

Element of Art Studio/Gallery at 96 N. Main St. in Mansfield has debuted its new website.

It features many photographs, artists' bios, information about classes and events for people of all abilities in the community, and several pieces of artwork that can be purchased online.



Element of Art opened in 2009 and is operated by Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. It showcases artwork created by adults with developmental disabilities, including photography, ceramic pieces, jewelry, wood creations, and much more. There's also a working studio where art classes are held.

Click [here](#) to check out the website!

September Calendar:

Sept. 23 – Walk to End Alzheimer's, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., OhioHealth Wellness Center, 1750 W. 4th St., Mansfield

Sept. 27 – Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities meeting, 11:30 a.m., Administration Building, 314 Cleveland Ave., Mansfield

Sept. 30 – Autism Awareness Walk-A-Thon, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Richland County Fairgrounds, 750 N. Home Rd., Mansfield

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