Trevor’s story

“It takes a village to raise a child” is an African proverb that holds true for Trevor Dillon.

This sweet, affectionate 9-year-old boy was born with many health challenges – challenges that would be difficult for any family to handle, but especially for parents who have their own personal struggles to face.

Trevor’s primary diagnosis is chromosome 5p duplication, which has led to heart defects and other health issues. He has a pacemaker and a shunt in his head. He’s fed through a g-tube. He has epilepsy. He has developmental delays.
New role

(Edited Note: The following is part of a series of stories about providers that Richland Newhope partners with to provide services for people with developmental disabilities in Richland County.)

It's not unusual to make a career change after working in one field for a long time. Many of us have done that. It can be reinvigorating.

Michelle Weirich made such a change in 2018. After 21 years working in various capacities with the Madison Local Schools, Michelle decided to leave the education field and become an independent provider of services to people with developmental disabilities.

“A friend of mine is an independent provider, and she knew that I wasn’t loving what I was doing,” she says.

More than a lending center

The Richland Newhope Equipment Lending Center started as a vision by the previous Educational & Therapy Director Carla Rumas, after visiting homes and seeing unused equipment stored away in closets, garages and basements.

According to Occupational Therapist Ben Crouch, Carla would ask families if they would like to donate their equipment to allow others to use it.

The Therapy Department rented storage for the donated equipment for several years. The therapists would have to schedule a day to go out and get equipment or return it. Once a year the therapists would have to spend an entire day in the summer cleaning the equipment since it sat in an environment that did not have controlled temperature or humidity settings.
Field trip at mall
Fourteen Pioneer students and 10 Mansfield Senior High School students toured the Richland Mall and Avita Health System on Dec. 13. The students were divided into three groups and each group had the opportunity to tour Bath & Body Works, Avita, the mall management office, Christopher & Banks, and Chuck E. Cheese's. Many of the businesses had hands on activities, and Avita practiced interviewing skills with the students and talked about what employers are looking for in an employee.

Promoting STABLE accounts
Richland Newhope Director of Medicaid Service Rodney Willis (back row, right) recently participated in a panel discussion regarding Ohio’s STABLE accounts. The panel included representatives of the National Council on Disability who wanted to learn more about how Ohio is successfully promoting the program. Look for more information about STABLE accounts in an upcoming edition of The Scoop newsletter.