Increasing awareness in our community

Twenty-two people representing businesses, schools, and agencies in Richland County on March 14 participated in the 18th Annual Community Awareness Day sponsored by Richland Newhope/Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The event is one of several activities marking Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

The purpose of Community Awareness Day is to increase knowledge and understanding of how people with developmental disabilities are supported in Richland County. More importantly, it serves as an opportunity to highlight a person’s abilities and to show that people with disabilities can be valuable members of the community when given the opportunity.

During Community Awareness Day, participants first had an opportunity to learn how adaptive equipment can assist people with disabilities in the challenges they face.
daily. Then they were paired with hosts and taken to several Richland Newhope facilities, provider agencies, and into the community where individuals who receive county board supports are working or attend school.

Some comments afterwards included:

Keith Thomas/Gorman-Rupp: “It opened my eyes a little bit about people in the workplace who have disabilities.”
Kimberly Lybarger/North Central State College: “It was a life lesson. I'll carry forth information I learned today to others, too.”
Stephen Rizzo/Mansfield City Schools: “The work we still have to do as a community to embrace all of our members, to fully address equity and inclusion issues.”
Shannon Sprang/Pioneer Career & Technology Center: “I did not know so many valuable resources and facilities existed within Richland County.”
Pete Them/Village of Lexington: “They’re just like us. We’re all the same.”

This year’s participants are members of the Mansfield-Richland Area Educational Foundation’s 2018-2019 Leadership Unlimited class.

Check out more photos from the day on our Facebook page!

**Coloring contest winners saluted**

Seventeen Richland County students have been honored as winners of the 26th Annual
Richland County Third Grade Coloring Contest sponsored by Richland Newhope as part of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March.

Richland County schools with third grade classes were invited to participate in the contest. Students were asked to color a picture featuring two children, one of whom uses a walker, playing outside. The message on the picture simply said ‘Together we have no limits.’

Newhope received 504 entries from 17 schools. One winner was chosen from each school. Anne Wrobleski, an artist at Element of Art Studio/Gallery, assisted with the selection of this year’s winners.

The students were honored at a luncheon March 8 at Richland Newhope's Early Childhood Center. Special guests were Miss Ohio’s Outstanding Teen Juliana Heichel and Miss Ohio Teen USA Isabelle Jedra, both Lexington High School students.

This year’s coloring contest winners are: Audrey Haring, Butler Elementary; Jacob Thompson, Central Elementary; Gracie Gallaway, Crestview Elementary; Lilly McFadden, Discovery School; Adam Edwards, Dowds Elementary; Emma Myers, Eastview Elementary; Shy’Nia Taylor, Foundation Academy; Izrayel Scott, Madison South Elementary; Lydia Roggio, Mansfield Christian School; Rachel Porter, Mifflin Elementary; Alau’la Collins, Prospect Elementary; Sara Holt, Sacred Heart School;
Elise LeHew, Spanish Immersion School; Yvette Carrizal, Stingel Elementary; Za’Mya Thomas, St. Peter’s Elementary; Mariana Molton, Western Elementary; and Oliver Hawes, Woodland Elementary.

You can find more photos from the awards luncheon on our Facebook page.

**Kudos to...**

- Papa John’s Pizza for donating 10 pizzas for our annual Richland County 3rd Grade Coloring Contest Awards Luncheon.

- Culligan Water of North Central Ohio for donating 15 cases of water for our March awareness activities.

**Mall walk is next week**

Don’t forget to join us for ‘Step Into Spring’ – a free fun walk at the Richland Mall on Friday, March 29.

The first 100 people to sign in starting at 10 a.m. will receive a goodie bag. The walk will start in the food court area about 10:30 a.m. following a short program. There’s no set distance but we are encouraging people to try to do two laps inside the mall. That’s equivalent to one mile.

In addition to the walk, several of our provider partners and sponsors will have information tables so you can learn more about the services and supports available in Richland County.

**March Employee of the Month**
**Name:** John Bradley  

**Position:** Occupational Therapist  

**Employed since:** August 24, 2012  

**Nominators Comments:** John’s peers say that he is a positive co-worker who inspires others to want to better themselves and do more for the children we work with. “He is a big kid at heart, and it’s easy to see the fun and happy environment he creates in the classroom. He recently has helped research strategies and ideas for handling challenging behaviors and has worked with preschool staff to brainstorm ideas implementing new plans and supports. He volunteers extra time in the preschool classrooms when extra help is needed. He makes himself available on special event days in the preschool classroom. He often is looking for ways he can support the family at home.”  

**Employee of the Month Comments:** John says he loves working with kids, families, and staff at Newhope. “It’s great to be surrounded with people who go the extra mile for the individuals we serve. Newhope has allowed me to become a certified PLAY Project consultant. This certification allows me to support kids in their homes and at school. It has breathed new life into my career.”  

**EMPLOYEE MILESTONES**  

- 26 Years – Virginia Peyton  
- 23 Years – Melissa Nedelkos  
- 22 Years – Patti Reece
21 Years – Amy Eaton
20 Years – Nikki Kepple
17 Years – Daniel Eaton
16 Years – Jeri Zeigler
12 Years – Renee Putman
9 Years – Melinda Warren, Julie Mlakar
5 Years – Christina Laird, Troy Wildman

Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities
314 Cleveland Avenue
Mansfield, Ohio 44902

P: 419-774-4200
F: 419-774-4207
TOD: 1-800-750-0750