

THE SCOOP

November 20, 2018

New director welcomed

Richland Newhope has a new member of its Leadership Team.

Rodney Willis started Nov. 1 as the director of Medicaid Services. His responsibilities include oversight and implementation of the Medicaid waiver programs and ensuring that the agency is maximizing all possible Medicaid revenue opportunities.



"I'm very excited," says Rodney. "It's very much down my alley; a lot to learn, but I love the large structure of it. Everybody that I've met has the individuals in the forefront."

Rodney was born in Ironton and grew up in South Point, Ohio. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Marshall University and a master's degree in science administration with an emphasis in public administration from Central Michigan University.

He has been in the developmental disabilities field for about 22 years, starting right out of

high school working for an intermediate care facility and later for programs that provided adult day services and supported living.

For the past 17 years, Rodney has worked in the county board system in Ohio. Most recently, Rodney served as the Community First director in Darke County. Prior to that, he held Service and Support Administration positions in Clark and Logan Counties.

“I love the people-person aspect behind it and seeing people who have been held back in life, by life, accomplish things with a little bit of support,” says Rodney.

“Medicaid funding and the funding tied to services that we provide are not a crutch,” he points out. “They’re supposed to be there to help nudge an individual along so that they can continue growing their independence. Medicaid funding is not supposed to be a permanent thing for everybody.”

Rodney’s wife, Amy, is currently the Early Childhood supervisor with the Clark County Board of DD where she oversees early intervention and early childhood services and has been in the field 25 years. They have one son, Patrick, who teaches physics at Miami University in Oxford.

Rodney also has two brothers, one of whom has autism.

You can reach Rodney at rwillis@rnewhope.org.

Voluntary registry

A new law that took effect this past August allows Ohio residents with communication disabilities to register with the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) to provide law enforcement officers notice of that disability in the event of a traffic stop.



Registration for the private database is completely voluntary. Individuals may complete the registration form, which must also be signed by a doctor before it's submitted to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). The law allows Ohioans over the age of 18 to enroll in the system as well as minors who are enrolled by their parents or guardians.

It's hoped that the additional information available to officers will lead to more effective communication and prevent misunderstandings with those who may have autism, a hearing impairment, PTSD, or another communication disability – whether that individual is the driver or a passenger in the vehicle.

Individuals interested in voluntarily enrolling in the database connected to LEADS can [click here](#) to get more information and a verification form.

Thanksgiving holiday reminder

Richland Newhope's Administrative offices, Service and Support Administration, and Early Childhood Center will be closed Nov. 22 and



Nov. 23 for the Thanksgiving Day holiday. Our offices will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 26.

Christmas party tickets still available

Tickets remain available for Richland Newhope's annual Christmas party for individuals who receive our services. The party is set for Friday, Dec. 7, from 7-9 p.m. in Fairhaven Hall at the Richland County Fairgrounds.

You can get tickets from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. now through Dec. 6 at the following Mansfield locations:

- Richland Newhope Administration Building, 314 Cleveland Ave.
- Early Childhood Center, 255 Hedges St.
- Raintree, 721 Scholl Rd.

There is no charge but everyone attending must get a ticket prior to the party. Those who receive services from a residential provider should check with that provider to see if a ticket has already been picked up.

This year's party will feature a DJ, dancing, a photo booth, snacks, and a visit from Santa Claus.

For more information, call 419-774-4214 or 419-774-4215.

Kudos to...

Independent Provider Brandi Gregory for supporting an individual while he recovered from a recent hospital stay. The individual wasn't able to return to his day program for several weeks, so a call was put out to providers for assistance. Brandi was the first person to respond. Thanks, Brandi, for your willingness to help during this challenging time! We appreciate your efforts!



Nov. Employee of the Month

Name: Angie Miller

Position: Vocational Rehabilitation
Coordinator

Employed since: Oct. 3, 2016

Nominators Comments: “She is wonderful at what she does. She has worked very hard to build and establish connections in the area schools. She is very close with staff and students of Mansfield Sr. and loves the students she works with genuinely. She will often go out of her way to make sure that the students she serves there feel comfortable and that they feel valued. She is also kind and compassionate with her co-workers. She has been a coordinator the longest and will have many questions and scenarios throughout the day from her co-workers. She takes the time to talk out each situation and help the other staff make the best decision for their individual. She also takes the time to listen to individual's needs, worries, and celebrates them in their accomplishments.

Employee of the Month Comments: Angie says it's nice to know being selected as Employee of the Month that her co-workers feel that she is helpful to them. What she likes best about her job is watching a student with no confidence who is terrified of the idea of a job go into job training and come out with confidence they never had before. “Also, I



enjoy working around high school kids – I learn new things from them every day.”

EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

37 Years – Karen Al-Farsi

20 Years – Mary Blamer, Connie Emery

18 Years – Michelle Deibig

15 Years – Jackie Fry

14 Years – Shauna Bradley

13 Years – Sandra Baum, Eunice Lee

12 Years – Jama Compston

11 Years – Tina Baker, Lori Looney

8 Years – Sarah Helms, Renee Mehl

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