



Board of Commissioners

PRESS RELEASE

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Lake County Commissioners Proclaim March 2024 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, March 7, 2024– Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. About one in six children in the U.S. have one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays. In order to highlight and empower these individuals and their contributions, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, at their March 7, 2024, meeting, has proclaimed March “Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month” in Lake County.

Throughout the years, thousands of people with developmental disabilities have been supported by their families, friends, neighbors, and co-workers and again this year, the Board of Commissioners are encouraging everyone in the Lake County community to enrich and engage, to provide vital support and resources to these incredible people. One of the most effective ways to increase awareness is through active participation in community activities that will enrich their lives by showing how much they are supported.



From the left: Ian Carter's Family, Commission President John T. Plecnik, Ian Carter, Commissioner Richard J. Regovich, Elfie Roman, Ashley Cozzens, Commissioner John R. Hamercheck.

"Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is a time when we make a concerted effort to raise awareness about developmental disabilities and encourage inclusion." Elfie Roman, Superintendent of the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood (LCBDD). "This year, our theme 'Opening Doors in 2024' recognizes the progress that has been made to help individuals live fulfilling lives, such as through assistive technology, expanded employment opportunities, and pathways to independence, just to name a few."

Commission President John Plecnik added, "I am grateful to continue to raise awareness for these amazing individuals who live their life with developmental disabilities. We are so pleased to honor them and celebrate with them by designating March as "Developmental Disabilities Awareness" month. We encourage everyone to join with us in celebrating the successes of all Lake County citizens and acknowledge that through diversity in our community and workforce, our lives are enriched."

“These children and adults simply want what we all aspire to; stay healthy, active, and involved as a vital part of our community,” commented Commissioner John R. Hamercheck. “It’s important we shed light onto any barriers individuals with developmental disabilities might face and help them better connect with others in our Lake County family.”

“Opening one door, providing one opportunity, can change the course of someone’s life,” added Roman. “For example, Ian Carter graduated from the Mentor Schools Cardinal Works program where he worked at many job sites to gain work skills. Ian was then enrolled on a waiver through the LCBDD and we helped Ian and his family navigate Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, access funding for non-medical transportation, and enroll in a day program to help him to socialize and foster friendships. “

“March is National Developmental Disability Awareness Month, which seeks to highlight the importance of inclusive communities where everyone feels welcome, accepted, and loved for who they are. Each of these children has unique abilities and experiences that contribute to the rich fabric of Lake County and I am proud to support them,” said Commissioner Richard J. Regovich.

“A key door was opened when the LCBDD’s Employment Navigation team helped advance Ian’s employment skills by introducing him to the Pathways to Careers program through our partnership with Auburn Career Center. Ian has taken several courses, including manufacturing fundamentals, automotive basics, and he is currently enrolled in the welding program. Through empowerment and Ian’s hard work and dedication, he is now employed at Habco Tools and Development where he does office tasks, such as shredding, rolling change, sorting folders, as well working on the shop floor to complete packaging and cycle counts,” Roman continued.

The Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood is located at 8121 Deepwood Blvd., Mentor, Ohio. For more information or questions about community resources or the services offered, contact them via phone at (440) 350-5100 for assistance.

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