

# DARKE DD

## 2022-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

### September 2024 Updates in red

#### **SUSTAINABILITY**

- Renewal levy successfully passed in May 2022
- Continuing to monitor wavier costs and future projected costs – 6.5% provider increase given in July 2022 to increase DSP wages with 97% of Darke County providers opting in
- Partner with WestCON to develop a Direct Support Professional (DSP) recruitment campaign; efforts are ongoing to promote provider partnerships; 15 new independent providers were certified in 2022; 11 new independent providers certified in 2023; **10 new independent providers certified in 2024 (as of July 2024).**
- Adopted Technology First local policy in April 2022 to ensure that technology is the first option when identifying services for all individuals – trained Board members on technology options in May 2022 – SSA Amy Mauricio became in-house technology “expert” for other staff when needed.
- Community outreach efforts have resulted in new employers reaching out to the DD Board when seeking employment candidates – 3 new employers in 2022; 14 new employers in 2023; **4 new employers so far in 2024.**
- Superintendent Clark served as a representative on the DODD Hardship Workgroup in 2022-2023 to quantify a rating scale for determining when a county board may be heading toward financial hardship and preparing new language for a revision to the hardship rule. This workgroup was comprised of 5 county board superintendents, 5 county board business managers, 2 representatives from DODD and 1 representative from OACB
- Created an internal Fun Bunch committee to increase staff morale and improve internal culture – highlighting staff each month so others can share appreciation
- Contracted with Bolton Consulting (with other WestCON counties) to conduct a wage analysis for all DD positions to ensure we remain competitive in our field to attract and maintain a quality team; modified pay ranges for all staff for 2023 and analyzed where each employee should fall in the range based on experience
- Open discussion held with Darke County Commissioners and Darke County Educational Service Center regarding facility costs for the Anthony Wayne building and daily oversight of the facility; provided funds for the ESC to contract for custodial services starting January 2023 as a first step; prepare transition plan for presentation to the DD Board at February 2023 board meeting; agreement reached, first year of funds transferred and transition of facility costs were effective July 1, 2023
- Developed new talent management process allowing employees to create meaningful outcomes related to their employment; developed agency Guiding Principles and implemented process starting with 2023 goals and provided training for all staff and supervisors.
- Darke DD Leadership Team reviewed numerous personnel policies and procedures and identified updates needed to meet the needs of a changing workforce, including flexibility in usage of vacation leave and an option for leave without pay

- Darke DD Administrative Team met with Willie Jones from the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD in September 2023 to discuss successes, new ventures and challenges facing county boards of DD in Ohio. Challenges identified for Darke County included DSP workforce shortages, cost projections, behavior support services and transportation availability. These are similar challenges faced by most counties in Ohio
- Mary Baker, Early Intervention Developmental Specialist, was accepted as one of five people statewide to be trained in PLAY Project through Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and started training in February 2024; training anticipated to be completed in February 2025.
- Business Services Director Bugher participating in the Ohio Association of County Board of DD Executive Development Program for calendar year 2024
- Awarded a 3-year Accreditation Certificate from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities with no citations in February 2024
- **Hosted an Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy (OPOTA) training for 53 members of the Darke County Sheriff's Department and Greenville Police Department in June and July 2024 to train law enforcement about interactions with people with disabilities**

#### ***ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT***

- Continue to use the tools from Charting the Life Course as needed across all sectors of services - Superintendent and Community Connections Coordinator presented at the Ohio Showcase for Charting the Life Course in May 2022 to share successes; ongoing discussion among staff and other counties about the use of the tools for various discussions and planning from Early Intervention to transition services and beyond; Leslie Zimmers is participating in the Early Intervention Statewide workgroup to provide input on how to best utilize Charting the LifeCourse during transition to preschool
- Continue to promote technology and remote supports for all people to promote independence and adopted new Technology First policy and procedure; SSA Amy Mauricio became in-house technology "expert" as resource for other staff and people supported when needed; hosted the Mobile Smart Home from Knox County in March 2023 to allow individuals and families to experience how technology can be used in and around their home
- Supported Mary Trittschuh in a summer internship at Darke DD in 2022; she is a marketing major at Wright State University and developed an agency postcard to summarize our services
- Self-advocates and DD staff met with State Representative Angela King (84<sup>th</sup> district) on March 1, 2023 to advocate for higher wages for direct support professionals and express concerns regarding the financial impact of Ohio's proposed tax reform legislation
- Continue partnership with Darke County Metropolitan Housing Authority for housing, housing assessments and future needs; transitioned property insurance coverage from county plan to DCMHA, effective 5/1/2023; accessibility renovation completed at Hilltop Drive home for an individual moving from an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) to community living (home formerly used as respite home)
- Paula Laney served as the first Board Liaison and attended monthly board meetings for the DD Board of Directors from January – July 2023

- Hosted a statewide Project STIR Leadership Training by and for people with disabilities in Birchwood Training Center in April 2023 where 6 individuals from Darke County participated, along with 15 individuals from 8 other counties in Ohio and 1 county in Indiana, to learn how to be strong leaders in their communities
- Hosted virtual DD Advocacy Day event in Birchwood on March 12, 2024 to allow advocates to view statewide advocacy rally in Columbus
- **Matt Harrison was appointed by the Mayor of Greenville in 2024 to serve on the City of Greenville Tree Commission for a two-year term**
- **Jimmy Meade was appointed to the Board of Directors for Darke DD by the Probate Judge in May 2024, becoming the first person with a disability to serve on the Board**
- **Joseph Badell, Community Services Director, and Jessica Shaffer, Service & Support Administrator, presented at the DODD Innovative Series Conference in Columbus in June 2024 about Charting the Life Course and the use in Darke County with transition-aged youth**

### **COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT**

- Successfully held an Awareness Breakfast in March 2022 and March 2024 to promote the services and successes of Darke DD and the people supported – over 80 people attended each event
- Encouraged all staff to invite their friends to “like” the agency Facebook page to increase awareness – 1,987 followers in 2021 to 3,353 followers in September 2022; increased to over 3,500 followers in March 2023; over 3,800 followers in September 2023; **over 4,200 followers in September 2024**
- Developed Constant Contact plan to send information at least monthly – developed a Darke DD Connect monthly summary of activities to increase awareness
- Develop new/enhance existing transportation partnerships – discussion held with Darke County Economic Development and Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission to analyze infrastructure and develop a transportation plan
- Partnered with Aktion Club to host a Block Party at South Park in June 2022, June 2023 **and July 2024** with over 220 people in attendance each year
- Birchwood Training Center usage continues to grow as word continues to spread about the space - various community groups, provider agencies, schools and county agencies have used the space; the training center is used almost daily by various groups and has expanded to 4-H clubs, gardening groups, political parties, county-wide safety trainings and numerous other events. Due to demand, renovations were completed in former lunchroom space of facility to update and provide an additional functional space for groups to gather
- Hosted Family Fun Night community event at Darke DD facility in July 2022, July 2023 **and June 2024** as an outreach effort for families supported and the community in general
- Participated in the Darke County Fair in August 2022, August 2023 **and August 2024** with an informational booth in the coliseum to promote services and partnerships with employers and providers
- Superintendent Clark presented agency information to the Darke County Republican Women’s Club in September 2022 to promote awareness about services

- Superintendent Clark continues to serve as an Ambassador for the Darke County Chamber of Commerce to encourage inclusion and support for DD services
- Hosted luncheon for all current employers of person with DD in Darke County in October 2022 to provide information about pre-employment training for youth, such as Project LIFE, Project LEAD and the Summer Roundhouse, to prepare for workforce
- Partnered with the Darke County Center for the Arts to host a very successful and entertaining Make Music Day Darke County at YOLO Park in June 2023 **and June 2024** with people with and without disabilities singing throughout the event
- Sponsored the first Annual Hearts of Darke Livestock show at the Darke County Fair in coordination with the Darke County Junior Fair Board, where 29 individuals with disabilities were able to show a goat, lamb or rabbit; **sponsored the second annual inclusive show also where 19 individuals showed in 2024**
- Purchased and provided an Adult Changing Table to be used during the Darke County Fair in 2023. Feedback provided was very positive and patrons were very appreciative. Adult changing table located at Darke DD facility after fair and listed on national map ([www.universalchangingtablemap.com](http://www.universalchangingtablemap.com))
- Darke County featured in the September 6, 2023 issue of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Pipeline newsletter in an article entitled "Community Inclusive to All at the County Fair" for efforts in sensory friendly rides, changing table access and Hearts of Darke Livestock Show. This same article is also posted on the front page of the DODD website and was shared on their Facebook page
- Community Services Director Badell began serving on the Business Advisory Board for Greenville Career Tech Supply Chain Management class in October 2023
- Coordinated Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) presentation by Cynthia Crews at Darke County Chamber Safety Council meeting in October 2023 about Hiring & Working with Individuals with Disabilities
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) article about Jafe Decorating as an employer in Ohio was highlighted on Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) website in October 2023
- Superintendent Clark selected to serve on the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD (OACB) Board of Trustees as the Region 2 Superintendent representative for the period of January 2024 through December 2025
- Community Service Director Badell served on a statewide workgroup with DODD/OACB to design a new support for telehealth services across Ohio in late 2023/early 2024
- Darke DD was awarded a \$550,000 Home and Community Based ARPA Grant to enhance accessibility and community engagement in Darke County. Funds will be used to complete six different projects, including installing universal changing tables, installing a lift, paving walkways, installing inclusive meeting equipment, creating second floor accessibility, and providing a sensory-friendly space. **Paving walkways, inclusive meeting equipment, sensory friendly space and one universal changing table installation complete as of September 2024**
- Darke County Proclamation was highlighted in the DODD Pipeline newsletter in March 2024 as a kick-off to DD Awareness Month statewide

- **Modified our agency website to be accessible for those with seizure disorders, vision impairment, ADHD, cognitive disability or blind users by utilizing the accessiBe app in June 2024**
- **Darke DD was featured in the July Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Pipeline newsletter for fairgrounds accessibility projects and featured 2024 Junior Fair Queen Elizabeth Brewer and the Fair for All Campaign**
- **Hosted a ribbon cutting and Grand Opening of the new Sensory Room and first permanent changing table installed in Darke County on the fairgrounds on August 7, 2024 with a large crowd and State Director Kimberly Hauck in attendance. As a follow-up, the ribbon cutting was featured in the News section of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities website the following day.**
- **Highlighted in the August 30, 2024 edition of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Director's Corner publication for Fair For All room**

### **PROVIDER & PARTNER SUPPORT**

- Darke DD supported the statewide initiative for a 6.5% increase in DSP wages; estimated annual match cost of increase for Darke County providers is \$137,100; initiative changed to be included as part of statewide waiver rate increase with the same cost commitment
- Superintendent Clark has met with agency providers to discuss workforce shortage and develop stronger partnership to support each other; ongoing discussion with provider partners continues
- Partner with ventureLINX in 2022, 2023 & 2024 for LEAD and summer employment programs to develop work skills and paid work experience
- Partner with the Academy to provide training to all providers at no cost; continues in 2023 by offering 6 different classes in Darke County; continues in 2024 by offering 5 classes
- Progress reports from providers received on a regular basis – regular outcomes monitoring; 2 independent providers and 1 agency provider certification revoked in 2022 due to non-compliance but no impact to people served; 1 independent provider certification revoked in 2024 but no impact to people served
- Continued partnership with Greenville City Schools for Project LIFE to support the path to employment for youth
- Provided DSP appreciation gifts to over 180 direct support professionals working in Darke County to show our appreciation for their hard work and dedication in 2022, 2023 & 2024
- Ongoing efforts continue to promote and recruit direct support professionals to work for agencies or become independent providers; ongoing assistance from WestCON to coach providers through the certification process and ensure compliance – 9 new agency providers and 11 new independent providers were added in 2023; **2 new agency providers and 10 new independent providers added in 2024 (as of August)**

**Updated September 2024**