



NEWS FROM THE SENECA COUNTY OPPORTUNITY CENTER

A publication of the Seneca County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Our Mission: To improve the lives of persons with disabilities



STIR members at the Statehouse during DD Awareness and Advocacy Day.



STIR members receiving proclamation of DD month at the Seneca County Commissioners meeting.

SCOC Calendar

Apr 17-22	Spring Break (program closed)
May 3rd	Oceans of Fun Music @ Heidelberg
May 22nd	Last day of School for Students
May 23rd	Last day for 9 month staff
May 26th	Memorial Day (program closed)

Board Members

Erin Simmons, President
Arrin Allen, Vice President
Jim Oliver, Secretary
Frank Lengel
Joe Moore
Kim Radison
Michelle Smith

Contact Us

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Early Intervention
419-447-7674

Early Childhood Center of Fostoria
419-436-0797

Service and Support Administration
567-938-2381

Find us on Facebook and
instagram!



Letter from Lew by Lew Hurst, Superintendent

I would like to thank the community for their support of Developmental Disability Awareness Month and all our events. Many SCOC staff and volunteers worked behind the scenes to make sure that everything operated smoothly and I'd like to thank them as well. I truly believe that we have one of the best programs in the state of Ohio for supporting families and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We have a fantastic provider network that supports people and help them live their best lives.

I have received several questions regarding the federal Department of Education changes and impact on those we serve. We are watching closely and working to consult with legislators to prepare for any negative changes that may occur. Legislators have stated that they are not planning on cutting services to disabled individuals. They have asked for time to work through the federal and state budget and also to work through the legislative process. If and when we become aware of any changes, we will inform families as soon as possible. For now, we need to let the legislative process work and intervene as needed to advocate for individuals and their families.

Please remember that a lot of misrepresentation of facts are occurring on both sides of the political spectrum. We will do our best to education families when we know, in fact, that services may be impacted. To ensure you are up to date on all things going on at SCOC, please be sure to tune into our "Letting Lew Know" sessions each month and consider attending our Dinner and Dialogue series.

Finally, we are excited that building renovations will be occurring at the main SCOC campus over the next several months so please be patient with construction.

I hope that everyone enjoys the change of season (sans the storms) and has a nice spring.

Lew Hurst

March Developmental Disabilities Awareness: Creating a Lifetime of Opportunities

DD Awareness Luncheon

The Seneca County Opportunity Center held its annual DD Awareness Month Kickoff Luncheon with a VIP Bus tour of SCOC services! Their tour began at SCOC with coffee from Brew Buddies. They drove to various SCOC locations such as Early Intervention, a Northland Home, the new Service and Support Administration building, and Preferred Pathways.

They drove by Concordance, which is one of the community employment opportunities that partners with SCOC. The tour took them to Corner Delights, where advocate Sean shared insights about his employment there. Finally, they returned to SCOC for a tour of the School of Opportunity before lunch.



Proclamations



Fostoria Mayor, Don Mennel, declared March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month! Advocate Sean Allison, Superintendent Lewis Hurst, and Community, Advocacy, and Supports Director Amy Miller proudly accepted the proclamation



Mayor of New Riegel Larry Bouillon declared March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month! Residents Rudy and Jackie Garcia attended the meeting to accept the proclamation.

Celebrity Basketball Game

The Seneca Arrows joined teams with local celebrities and Heidelberg athletes at Heidelberg University for the Celebrity Basketball Game. The annual game brings the community together and raises money for Special Olympics.



SCOC appreciates everyone for attending the game and showing their support for the Seneca Arrows.

Radio Shows



Advocate Brian Hess and Superintendent Lewis Hurst headed over to Classic Hits WBVI 96.7 radio station to discuss events going on in March. Earlier on in March, CAS Director Amy Miller attended a radio interview with advocate Chris Wagner.



Superintendent Hurst attended a radio interview at Tiffin WTTf to tell the community about March events and DD Awareness. Seneca County Commissioner Bill Frankart was also in attendance.

Aktion Club Reading

Aktion Club members read to Lincoln Pre-K students books about inclusion and reminded kids the importance of embracing their differences, being confident & proud of who you are. Books have a way of sparking empathy and SCOC Aktion Clubbers are helping to bring awareness and promote inclusion in our community.



Bakery Bingo

What a sweet time we had at Bakery Bingo! ! The gym was filled with so much energy, excitement, and support! Thank you to everyone who joined us for a fun-filled night of delicious treats and exciting games! We loved seeing all your smiling faces.

All proceeds from Bakery Bingo benefits the 2025 Unity Conference. Unity Council is a Self-Advocacy Group that plans a yearly conference. Unity Conference is planned BY and FOR adults with developmental disabilities in Seneca County!



Oceans of Fun Musical

Everybody is gearing up for this year's musical "Oceans of Fun!" This musical will feature seven fun sea creatures that dance and sing their way into your hearts. For a third year, SCOC partnered with Heidelberg students to perform on stage. Zaria Keys, a Heidelberg student who has worked with the students for all three performances, has been practicing with the adults and students to put on another fantastic performance. Tickets can be purchased for this musical on May 3rd at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/oceans-of-fun-tickets-1308548998279?aff=oddtcreator>



SCOC Student Leon, who won the drawing poster contest, holding the "Oceans of Fun" musical poster.



Student Council Food Drive

Students from the SCOC Community Class recently had the rewarding opportunity to volunteer at the local non-food pantry located at First Presbyterian Church. This initiative allowed them to actively engage with their community and contribute to a worthy cause. The non-food pantry plays a crucial role in providing essential items to families in need, offering everything from toiletries to household supplies that many take for granted.

By participating in this volunteer effort, SCOC students not only enriched their own understanding of community service but also had a hands-on experience that underscored the importance of compassion and civic responsibility.

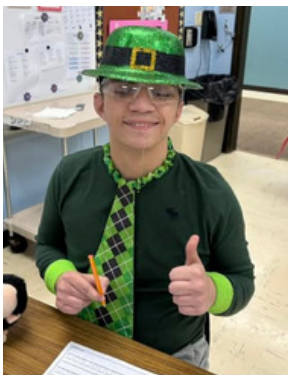
The non-food pantry is every first and third Thursday of the month from 11:30am-1pm.



Community classroom students Heaven and Connor passing out non-food items to the community.

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations

The classrooms joyfully celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a festive mix of activities that included indulging in delicious homemade shamrock shakes and bowls of Lucky Charms cereal. Students dressed up in colorful costumes featuring shamrocks and leprechauns. To spark their creativity, they engaged in drawing and crafting projects, creating vibrant representations of shamrocks, rainbows, and pots of gold. The day was filled with laughter and fun, fostering a sense of community and holiday spirit that everyone enjoyed.

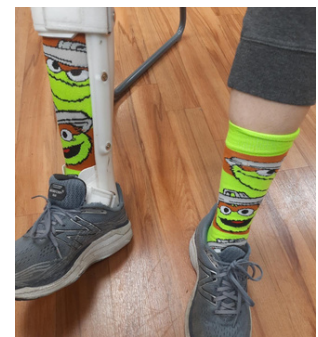


Rock Your Socks



Students and adults were invited to wear fun colorful socks on March 21st for World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day is celebrated on 3/21 to represent the uniqueness of the triplication of the 21st chromosome. People all around the world come together to celebrate that uniqueness by rocking colorful, fun, beautiful socks.



DSP of the Month: Feb-Apr

Every month, ACT Council and SCOC Board Members plan to recognize a DSP. Direct Support Providers support people with disabilities and help them live, learn and work in their community. If you or someone you know would be interested in becoming a DSP contact Karen Frank, Provider Liaison at 567-938-2381 ext 1010 or email kfrank@senecadd.org.

January: Jamee Craddolph (REM)



"I have known Jamee a long time. She has been helping me with my daily needs and wants for years. She knows my moods and what to do when I'm not feeling well. She makes me happy!"

February: Izzy Witt (Angeline Inc.)



"Izzy is a team player who is always flexible, attentive, and kind. She ensures this individual has meaningful experiences when providing services and is always willing to help her out when needed. I appreciate her immensely for the difference she has made and continues to make in her life."

March: Christie Cole (Independent)



"Christie served as a provider for her cousin, Corey, who recently passed away. She stepped in to be his guardian and caregiver after his mother passed away in 2020. She became certified as an Independent Provider and provided Shared Living Services to him. Corey blossomed in her home and in her care. Christie ensured Corey had a great life and took him to many places, including Cedar Point and the waterpark, to Meadowbrook Park as he loved to swim, and to other area parks, parades, and restaurants. Corey went through his first ever car wash, too! Christie had made it her mission to ensure Corey lived his life to the fullest! Thank you to Christie for providing Corey with a fulfilled life and helping to give Corey a voice!"

Provider Appreciation Dinner and 2025 Impact Award

The Provider Appreciation Dinner recognizes adult day and vocational service providers, residential agency providers, and independent providers. Each provider who attended the dinner received a gift from ACT Council. Certificates were presented to providers who were nominated for the Impact Award which is given to the outstanding DSP. The recipient of this year's award is Izzy Witt who works for Angeline Inc.

Here's what one of her nominations said:

"Izzy is an amazing and reliable DSP and is so flexible and adaptive in accommodating those she serves. Her caring goes beyond her work hours as she has developed friendships and has been a natural support in addition to those she serves. Her calm and caring nature leads her clients to develop an instant connection to her. She truly has a servant's heart."



We cherish each DSP in Seneca County for the work they do each day to provide care and services to improve lives of people with developmental disabilities. DSPs are nothing short of AMAZING!

The Impact Award is sponsored by ACT Council. ACT stands for Advocates Coming Together for the Seneca County Opportunity Center and is a non-profit group of parents, siblings, and persons with developmental disabilities. ACT Council supports and enhances the services the Opportunity Center provides to persons with disabilities and their families in Seneca County.

SCOC Welcomes New Employee



Olivia Jacobs (Liv)
Sub Teacher Aide/Bus Aide
Favorite beverage: Dr. Pepper
Favorite snack: Takis



Ashley Stone
Sub Teacher Aide
Favorite healthy snack: strawberries
Favorite color: pink

We Are Hiring!!

If you or someone you know would be interested in a job please check out our website listed below to see open positions or check out our Facebook page:

<https://www.senecadd.org/about/careers/>

Check out our DSP video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhjud9EzSOU>

Instagram page: [@senecacountyopportunitycenter](https://www.instagram.com/senecacountyopportunitycenter)