



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



Photos from the 2025 Spring Musical "Oceans of Fun"



Thank you to Preferred Pathways staff and adults for helping paint the set pieces

SCOC Calendar

Sept 1	Labor Day (SCOC closed)
Oct 13	Columbus Day (SCOC closed)
Oct 14	Teacher In-Service (school closed)
Nov 11	Veterans' Day (program closed)
Nov 25	PM-Parent Conferences
Nov 26	AM- Parent Conferences

Board Members

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

Contact Us

Opportunity Center
780 E.Co. Rd. 20, Tiffin, OH
419-447-7521

Early Intervention
419-447-7674

Early Childhood Center of Fostoria
419-436-0797

Service and Support Administration
567-938-2381

Letter from Lew *by Lew Hurst, Superintendent*

As the 2025- 2026 school year begins, we have been busy getting ready for the students' return on August 14th. Since the adults have moved out of the SCOC main building due to state and federal requirements, we are renovating the old adult service area by adding three additional classrooms. This will address the increased demand for special education within the community. We continue to see increased growth in the need for special education as a result of an increase in autism and other disabilities.

We have operated within the same funds while seeing a large growth in eligible children over the last five years. We have grown by approximately 24% in the number of individuals needing services. The biggest challenge that we are facing is the statewide movement to eliminate property taxes in Ohio. Property tax accounts for approximately 74% of our budget. We continue to act as wise stewards of taxpayer dollars. It has been ten years since we have asked Seneca County taxpayers for any additional funds. We chose to let go of a half-million dollar levy for three years again to help reduce county taxes. We hope to hold off on any additional levy for another three to five years. However, continued state and federal rules are making that more challenging. **We continue to closely monitor proposed legislation that would change our funding and will need individuals and families' support to challenge any legislative changes that would cut funding to individuals with disabilities and their families.**

Find us on Facebook and
instagram!



Lew Hurst

New Project STIR Graduate

Congratulations to Erin for completing the three day Project STIR training in Ashtabula County.

Project STIR—Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility—empowers people with developmental disabilities to build confidence, grow as leaders, and speak up for themselves and others.



Spring Fling Dance



Huge thank you to everyone who came to the Spring Fling Unity Dance and voting on our upcoming Unity Conference theme “Saddle Up for Success Unity.”

Keep an eye out for the 2025 Unity Conference registration. This year's conference will be held November 1st and 2nd.



Aktion Club Induction

SCOC Aktion Club, the largest in-person Aktion Club in Ohio, is a proud division of the Tiffin Kiwanis Club. Throughout the year, Aktion Club members host fundraisers and undertake service projects to make a positive impact in our community. If you receive services and are interested in becoming a member, please get in touch with your SSA or Joan in the CAS Department at 419-447-7521 extension 1134.

Mark your calendar! The induction of new members and officers will take place in October. During this time, new members will be inducted, along with new officers who were elected during the August meeting. The current Vice President will automatically move into the role of President.

Interested in learning more? Prospective members are welcome to attend meetings before October to get a feel for the club. Official inductions will occur at the October meeting.

We look forward to welcoming new members and continuing our service to the community!

Police Academy Graduates



Ruben, Ralph, and Joe, the CAS Activities Specialist, graduated from the Tiffin Police Department Citizens' Academy in May! For 10 weeks, they gained a behind-the-scenes look at law enforcement, their training, and values. The final class was taught by Judge Best, who discussed the Municipal Court process! Thanks to the Tiffin Police Department for making this possible!

SCOC Fair Booth and 4-H&Me

Everyone had so much fun at the Seneca County Fair this year. SCOC is grateful for those who volunteered and stopped by to take pictures at the fair booth.

The 7th Annual Jodi Depinet Rainey 4-H and Me Livestock show left everyone with a smile on their face. Thank you again to Emily Gilliland, The Depinet & Rainey families, and the Seneca County Jr Fair for continuing to include us in the special event.



2025 School of Opportunity Graduates



Congratulations to Sierra Staib, Sarah Wolf, Gabriel Macbeth, and Logan Stark for graduating from the School of Opportunity! During the ceremony, each of the students' teachers and aides shared fond memories of their time at SCOC, watched a slideshow and listened to the school choir sing "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" before the graduates received their diplomas from Director of Educational Services, Kaleb Kuhlman, and Board President, Erin Simmons.

Touch-a-Truck



A huge thank you to Ryan Caudill from AG-Pro, Hoffbauer Disposal Service, John's Towing, Crystal Clear Water Hauling Inc., Fitch's Auto Repair, Ohio Department of Transportation, Clouse Electric Inc., Bucyrus State Highway Patrol, Seneca County Dog Warden, Keller Brothers Enterprise, Sentinel Public Safety Class, and the Mohawk Fire Department for joining us during the Touch-a-Truck event at the Opportunity Center!

We would also like to show appreciation to Misti Vaughn and other members of the Activities Committee for making this event such a success.

End of School Carnival



The School of Opportunity hosted a fun-filled Carnival where students got to play the claw machine, toss cornhole, test their luck on the slot machine, and even got awesome temporary tattoos.

It was a great way to end the school year and we can't wait for future events!

Letters Sent Overseas

Students from the School of Opportunity handcrafted heartfelt cards for brave U.S. Navy soldiers stationed overseas.



Last Day of School

The School of Opportunity had their annual Summer send-off on the last day of school, May 22nd. We hope everyone had a great summer!



DSP of the Month: April-August

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.

April: Cathie Combs



"Cathie is great with open communication and is always quick to respond. She goes above and beyond and always has a positive approach. Cathie genuinely cares and prioritizes goals for the individuals while encouraging them to be their best."

May: Leanne Keckler



"Leanne and Ava have developed an amazing relationship! You can see when they are together that Ava is so comfortable with Leanne. They have grown to really love each other. Leanne treats Ava like she is her own family member. Leanne goes above and beyond to make sure that Ava is having the best day while also making sure that all her care needs are met."

June: Melody Reinhart



"Melody is such a loving and caring person. She has built positive relationships with the individuals she works with. They feel loved and supported every day while at day programming. She encourages them to do their best each day and do what they enjoy. She helps to advocate on their behalf when needed."

August: Monica Gundrum



"Monica is an extremely reliable and dependable person. She has a lot of compassion not only for the people we serve, but for her coworkers. On days the Day Program is closed for weather or holidays, she offers to help out at one of our residential homes. She offers to take one of our individuals to visit his mom. Monica has also taken the time to learn ASL so she can better communicate with this individual. She has been a great asset to REM, and I am more than appreciative of her and having her by my side at the Day Program."

Special Olympic Ohio Summer Games

The Seneca Arrows traveled to Columbus for the Special Olympic Ohio Summer Games on June 13th-15th.

There were a total of 14 athletes who competed in bocce ball, track and field, and bowling. Everyone had a great time and showed their skills after practicing all season. Here are the 2025 Seneca Arrows results from that weekend



Bowling:

Steve Scifers-Silver
Ashley Fahle-Silver
Emily Kleinfelter-Silver
Ruben Villarreal-Silver

Bocce:

Andrew Pool and Joey Napier-Gold
Cierra Meddles and Nedra Coats-Gold

Track:

Sam Barrick-gold in softball throw
Timothy Culver - gold in mini javelin
Kaleb Jakcsy - silver in the 100-meter dash
Arrin Allen - 4th in mini javelin
Matt Spencer - 5th in mini javelin
Thomas Hammer - 4th in the standing long jump
Kaleb Jakcsy - 4th in running long jump

100-meter dash:
Thomas Hammer-gold
Matt Spencer-gold
Arrin Allen-bronze
Timothy Culver- 7th

100-meter walk:
Sam Barrick-4th place

4x100 relay team:
Arrin Allen, Matt Spencer, Thomas Hammer, and Kaleb Jakcsy-5th place

SCOC Welcomes New Employee



Bonnie Fitzpatrick
Early Intervention Specialist
Favorite place to visit: Kelley's Island
Favorite color: pink



Hope Kreais
Service and Support Administrator
Favorite season: Summer
Favorite beverage: coffee

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)

www.senecadd.org