

# WEEKLY FOCUS

**Ohio** | Opportunities for Ohioans  
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

October 17, 2014

*The mission of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.*

## 2014 Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Annual Awards



*The 2014 Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) Annual Awards Recipients.*

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) held its annual awards ceremony this week in the Statehouse atrium, recognizing those who have made significant contributions to the disability community in Ohio. Award winners included:

**Employer of the Year:** The Kroger Company and AMC Theater - West Chester 18

**Advocacy Award:** LC in Aktion and Best Buddies at Miami University

**Accessible Parking Enforcement Award:** Hocking College Police Department

**Accessible Medical Services Award:** Richard Braun, Chief, Cincinnati Fire Department

**Maureen Fitzgerald Leadership Award:** Maradythe Stern

**Karla Lortz Scholarship:** Austin White

**Legislator of the Year:** State Representative Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) and, State Senator Kevin Bacon (R-Minerva Park)

The TAC Enterprises Choir welcomed the crowd with classics like, *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* and *Elvira* along with a closing rendition of *Hang on Sloopy*. Officers from the State Highway Patrol presented the colors and, after the Pledge of Allegiance, the choir sang *America the Beautiful*.

GCPD Chair Matthew Sauer and OOD Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany offered welcoming remarks. They thanked everyone for the support and dedication towards improving lives of individuals with disabilities and providing inclusion within their workplaces and communities.

Rachel Barezinsky gave the keynote for the event discussing her traumatic brain injury, her involvement with GCPD, and her progress from school and into the workforce. In 2006 Barezinsky was the victim of a gunshot wound to the head causing a severe, penetrating traumatic brain injury. She miraculously survived but has undergone years of therapy and rehabilitation to recover from the physical and cognitive complications that resulted from the injury.

GCPD members Victoria Baker-Willford, Sean Bailey, Chuck Beatty, Christine Huggins, Melinda Kale, Marshall Kimmel, and Harry Prestanski announced and introduced the award winners, as did Bruce Mrofka, husband of the late Maureen Fitzgerald (Maureen Fitzgerald Leadership Award). Each recipient received a proclamation from Governor John Kasich and Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor.

Congratulations again to all the well deserving award winners and to the Governor's Council for a wonderful event highlighting their great service to individuals with disabilities.

# **Congratulations to all the GCPD Award Recipients!**



*The TAC Choir performed classic songs like, The Lion Sleeps Tonight, Elvira, and Hang On Sloopy.*



*The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities nominated The Kroger Company for the 2014 Employer of the Year Award for their continuous efforts to employ individuals with disabilities.*



*GCPD Members (from left to right): Matthew Sauer, Chuck Beatty, Sean Bailey, Harry Prestanski, Christine Huggins, Marshall Kimmel, and Melinda Kale.*



*Bruce Mrofka, husband of the late Maureen Fitzgerald presented Maradythe Stern with the Maureen Fitzgerald Leadership Award.*



*Christine Huggins presented recent high school graduate, Austin White with the Karla Lortz Scholarship.*



*Chuck Beatty presents State Senator Kevin Bacon with the Legislator of the Year Award.*

## OOD Commissioners Meeting and Awards



*Commissioners (from left to right): Jermaine Brown; Michelle Dillingham; Award Recipient, Christine Moranda; Former Commissioner, Ben Bonanno; Jacqui Romer-Senski, Chair; and David V. Daugherty.*

The OOD Commissioners met this week and, in addition to regular business obligations, presented their annual awards to honor the service of those who significantly contribute to improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.



*Commissioners (from left to right): Jermaine Brown; Michelle Dillingham; Award Recipient, Pamela McCuistion; Jacqui Romer-Senski, Chair; and David V. Daugherty.*

The Commissioners presented Chris Moranda with the 2014 Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award and Pamela McCuistion with the 2014 Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award. Former Commissioner Ben Bonanno was on hand to present the award named in his honor and praised Ms. Moranda for her tireless efforts in assisting individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment and independence. Moranda is the President of the Ohio Business Leadership Network

(OHBLN) and works as a manager of disability services at OhioHealth. As the founding President, she has grown the OHBLN from five corporate members to over 50 members in just a few years.

Commissioner David Daugherty presented the Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award praising the dedication of former Commissioner Weisenborn. Co-workers from Capabilities as well as OOD counselors praised Pamela McCuistion, Branch Manager at Capabilities in Dayton, for her passion, dedication and skill as a job coach. Consumers, counselors, and employers all agreed that Pam goes "above and beyond" to ensure that the individuals she works with learn their job duties and works diligently with businesses to guarantee that their needs are being met as well.

Congrats again to Chris and Pam!

After the presentation of awards, the Commissioners discussed the OOD Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC), approved new members to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), and heard updates from Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany and other key staff, on agency progress over the past fiscal year.

The Commissioners made a point of expressing their appreciation for the hard work and dedication of OOD staff that has led to significant improvements in service quality and cost effectiveness. They recognize that these improvements mean better and timelier service for individuals with disabilities, but also the ability to serve even more Ohioans in coming years.

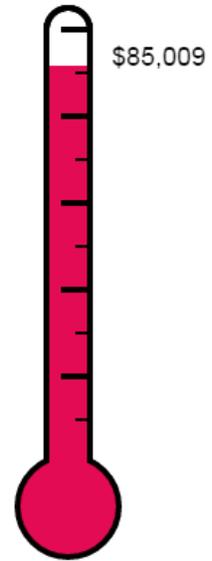


## CCC Update

Today is the official last day of the 2014 Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC). To date, we have raised \$85,009.20 which is 90% of our targeted goal and we have exceeded our 309 donor pledge card goal with a total of 344 donors. Even though the campaign has come to an end, donations can still be made online at [www.ohio.gov/ohioccc](http://www.ohio.gov/ohioccc) through the end of next week. We still have several events coming up and I encourage everyone who has yet to complete an ePledge form or paper pledge form to make the commitment today. We are so close to making our donation goal and I truly believe with the collective effort of OOD staff that we can do it.

Thank you to those who have contributed, volunteered, donated, and organized events. This has been an extraordinary effort made by everyone and your donations truly make a difference.

Target: \$93,750



## Individuals in Job Ready Status by County

