

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

November 14, 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.



OOD and OhioMeansJobs Partner for Portsmouth Veterans Job Fair

In partnership with OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) Scioto County, we were excited to host our last, in the series of 2014 job fairs, in Portsmouth on Wednesday. There were 56 job seekers in attendance who were able to connect with dozens of businesses at the Scioto County Welcome Center.

A number of job seekers noted the benefit of having a variety of employers at the event as well as the ability to focus on a specific field or career path.

It is gratifying to see the impact and outcomes of these job fairs for employers and job seekers.

Job seekers are making connections with employers, setting up interviews and finding quality employment.

Employers are changing their perceptions and gaining a better understanding of how individuals with disabilities can meet their workforce needs. All this is resulting in a stronger, more diverse workforce that is contributing to the growth of Ohio's economy.

As we bring this year's job fairs to a close, we will continue to collect data on the number and type of interviews and placements that resulted from these events so we can track their impact, and make positive changes for next year's events. My thanks again to all of the individuals who attended the job fairs, to the businesses that participated, and to the agency staff and provider partners, who helped make these events such a success.

"I think the job fair was a great idea. It was great for everyone to come out and see all the job openings that are available. There were a lot of companies that I was interested in, but I'm really interested in customer service." – Otis Jennings

Employer Feedback



Kendra Stice, Community Leader and Ben Young, Operations Trainer at Walgreens connect and network with job seekers at the 2014 Veterans Job Fair in Portsmouth.

"It [Business Engagement and Training] was great because we had a lot of discussion about how to make accommodations and how we make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. It was really interesting to hear people's opinions on what disabilities they would pick if they had to pick one and which ones they wouldn't pick. I actually changed my opinion on the one I picked first just hearing other people's insights so it was really interesting to get those different perspectives. It really shaped my framework and what it means to recruit people with disabilities."

– **Ben Young, Operations Trainer, Walgreens**

The Road to Recovery – A Collaborative Effort

When Robert Hicks accepted the Mental Health America of Licking County's (MHALC) Mental Health Consumer Award for 2014 last night at the Heritage Hall in Newark, it represented a high point in a long road to recovery. It seems fitting after a long journey that Robert's case here at OOD, will be successfully closed today.

The MHALC award seeks to recognize a "recipient of mental health services who has overcome numerous obstacles, while striving to reach their full potential." His OOD counselor, Emilie Coen, can't think of a better description for Robert, who has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, anxiety and social phobia.

When Emilie took on Robert's case, he had been looking for a job for a year, but things seemed stagnant and he struggled to engage. While acknowledging the many roadblocks, Robert and Emilie, along with Behavioral Healthcare Partners, worked to come up with a plan for success. This involved making his mental health a priority and volunteering three days a week at MHALC. The first step in restarting his job search was getting into a routine and stabilizing his situation.

The end result was that this plan paid off! By focusing on his own health, embracing his need for help, and gaining confidence through volunteer work, Robert was able to fully commit to the job search process. He came to his meetings with job leads, followed up on applications, and grew from each experience, good or bad. Most importantly, he did not give up on himself!

It took nearly a year, but after receiving three separate employment offers, he accepted a job at Goodwill. That is why today is so inspiring. It is a new start in Robert's career -- his OOD case is successfully closed.

Robert's story highlights the collaborative nature of vocational rehabilitation and the real impact on people's lives, when everyone works together to help individuals with disabilities achieve their potential. It truly is a partnership between the individual, who must be prepared and committed to the process; service providers, who must provide high quality care, services and be committed to a successful outcome; and employers, who must understand the value of individuals with



Robert Hicks received the 2014 Mental Health America of Licking County's (MHALC) Mental Health Consumer Award.

disabilities and the important role they play in today's workforce.

At OOD we strive every day to build these partnerships and work for successful outcomes for the people we serve. It is rewarding to see the positive results.

Congratulations to Robert on the well-earned award and best wishes for continued success!

2014 OOD CCC Results

The 2014 Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC) is nearing completion and I am proud to report that we have surpassed our goal of 309 payroll deduction pledges and \$93,750.

The generosity of the OOD staff continues to show in many areas and your giving to this year's CCC effort, is further evidence of your commitment to assist people in their time of need. Andrew Meador and Brad Reynolds, Co-Chairs of this year's CCC, report that collectively we have raised \$99,787 and received 392 pledge cards!

To the staff who donated, worked at fundraising events, participated in CCC events, provided baked goods and auction items, and helped reach our lofty goals - I say, "job well done!"

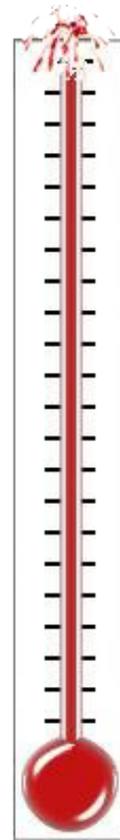
On behalf of myself, the OOD Executive Team, our labor leadership, and Co-Chairs Andrew Meador and Brad Reynolds, we thank each and every OOD staff member, for helping to make this year's campaign one of the most successful.

Holiday Food Basket Drive Continues

Throughout the month of November, the employees of OOD have been participating in the Holiday Food Basket Campaign. This winter season you can help provide meals for those struggling in your community. Every \$1 received can provide four meals. To date over 6,250 meals have been collected to support local charities in every community of Ohio.

\$99,787

\$93,750



This week witnessed the "Souper Hero" soup sale at Central Office. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped raise \$107 for the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. That equals 428 meals for hungry Ohioans! Without your help, this would not have been possible.

On November 19, DDD will host the Nacho Mama's Food Drive Part II, for the Holiday Food Basket Campaign. If you are willing to donate your favorite Nacho Topping or help run the sale, your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

All volunteers will be given release time and are permitted to wear jeans the day of the sale. If interested, complete this survey by 11/17: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NRDRC3S>

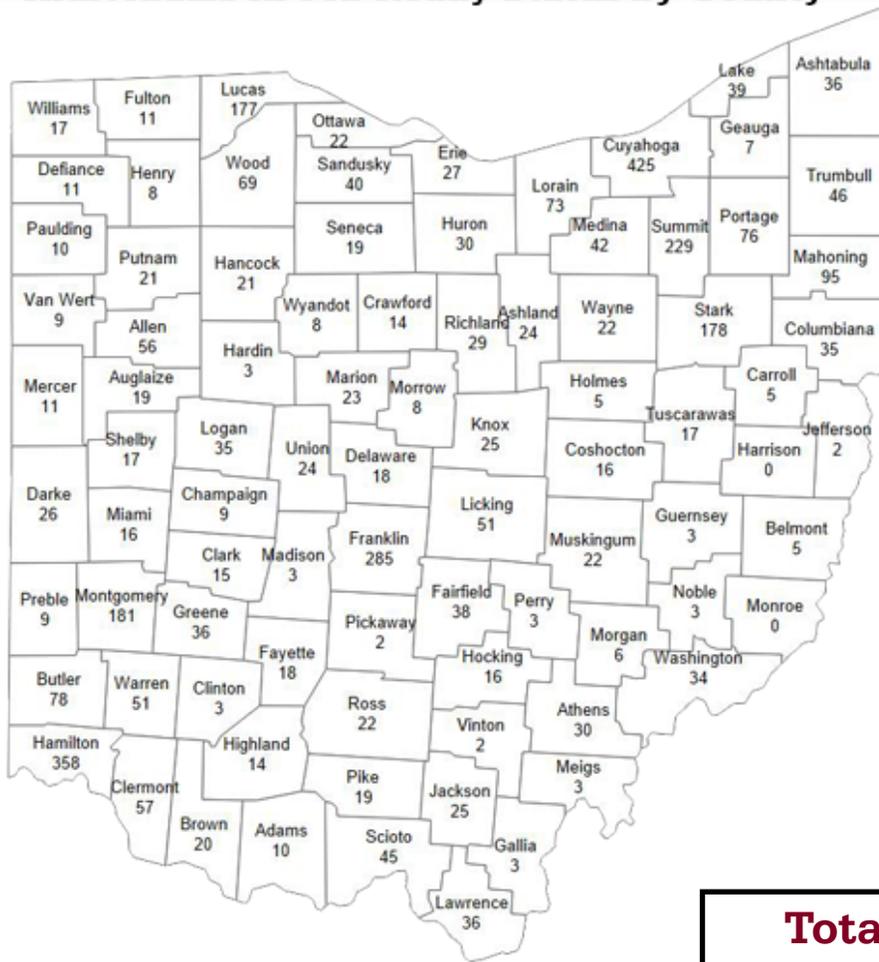
The field offices have many campaign events going on as well, raising food and funds for charities in their local communities. For example the Akron Office is holding an office Pot Luck for \$5 on Tuesday, November 18 and selling Holiday Cards for \$1 to pass out to residents in local nursing homes.

There are several ways to get involved in this campaign in the next few weeks:

1. Bring in food and non-perishable items and drop off in each area to help fill community food pantries. Boxes have been set out for you to donate items.
2. Tax-deductible cash donations are needed to help purchase fresh produce, meat, dairy and bread. Each year, 36% of the food distributed is fresh produce. You can drop off your donations to volunteers in each of the offices or donate online at www.midohiofoodbank.org/holidaybasket
3. With a \$3 donation, you can wear jeans on November 20. Donations can be given to Holiday Food Basket volunteers in each of the offices.

Thank you OOD for your continuous generosity and support in helping fight hunger in Ohio!

Individuals in Job Ready Status by County



Total Statewide:
3,711

* Job Ready Status Individuals have received Vocational Rehabilitation services and are ready and seeking employment.

For more information or questions on stories in this publication, please call the Office of Communications at 614.438.1474.

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