

# WEEKLY FOCUS

**Ohio** | Opportunities for Ohioans  
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

May 9, 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.*

## Southeast Regional Office Shines in Whitehall

As you may recall, the Southeast (SE) Area Regional office moved to a new location in Whitehall late last year. Since the move, Regional Manager Bob Nicholson and his team in Whitehall have been working hard to get organized and settle in to the new facilities and begin using the new space to more effectively assist the people they serve. They were excited last Friday to host an Open House that offered the community an opportunity to learn more about the work of OOD and how the new offices will help the agency provide better services to individuals with disabilities.

Whitehall has welcomed OOD into the community and it was great to have city leadership celebrate with us. The Mayor of Whitehall, Kim Maggard, participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony. City Auditor Dan Miller, Chief of Police Richard Zitzke, Fire Chief Preston Moore, and Whitehall Economic Development Director Zachary Woodruff were on hand as well.

First Community Bank has been a great partner and landlord throughout the process. Senior Vice President and Director of Operations Jeff Rawlins spoke highly of the Whitehall team and their work and about how excited he was to find a tenant that matched the values of his family and the bank.

The event also highlighted the hard work and dedication of Vicki Friesland, policy coordinator here at central office, who played a critical role in making the move possible and, more importantly, successful.

The staff did a wonderful job of connecting the facility to the work of OOD and the service it provides to the community. There were tours available throughout the afternoon so visitors could better understand the functions and services of OOD and connect that work to the staff at the Whitehall office. I was also pleased



*Whitehall Mayor Kim Maggard (fourth from left), Director Miller (center) and Senior Vice President/Director of Operations of First Community Bank Jeff Rawlins (second from right) are with Southeast Area Manager Bob Nicholson (right) and several staff members at the Whitehall Open House.*

that Commission Chair Jaqueline Romer-Sensky and Commissioner Jermaine Brown could attend the event and see the great work staff is doing in the SE Area.

Located at 4300 East Broad Street, the renovated facility offers many new features for counselors and individuals with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation services. It offers not only ADA compliance but also ample parking, private interview rooms and brings staff together in a location that can house their operations.

The event once again highlighted how a focus on more effective services and efficient operations allows OOD to better serve individuals with disabilities. Thanks to the SE Area team for a great event and for the important work they do every day.

## Ohio Self Determination Association

Earlier this week I was in Whitehall again for a meeting with the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA). It was an opportunity to share with self-advocates and community service providers about the work of OOD. This is an organization whose members are passionate about speaking up on behalf of themselves

and individuals with disabilities in the community. They also help raise awareness and educate their members on important issues. Additionally, it was a pleasure to speak with Executive Director Dana Charlton and Regional Representative and Self Determination Specialist Christine Brown, as well as a number of OSDA members.



*Director Miller with Christine Brown, Self Determination Specialist, Ohio Self Determination Association*

## Public Service Recognition Week



One of the strengths of OOD is the commitment of its staff to public service. We are blessed with a staff that has developed a wealth of

knowledge and experience over years of state service. This week we have been celebrating and recognizing that service as part of Public Service Recognition Week.

Celebrated the first week of May since 1985, Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) is time set aside to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees and ensure that our government is the best in the world.

I have enjoyed spending time with staff throughout the agency as they celebrate with, and recognize the public service of, their colleagues. It is amazing to hear about the long-standing careers of many of our staff. We have staff at every point along the spectrum, from just starting in public service to those with 20, 25 and 30, and even one counselor in Defiance with 40, years of service!

So once again, let me say Thank You for your dedication to service to OOD and to the State of Ohio.

## Operation Feed Update



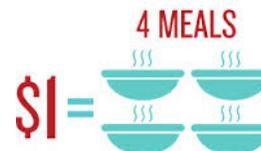
Don't forget the Operation Feed campaign continues as we seek to keep the shelves stocked with food at pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters throughout Central and Eastern Ohio. Recent fundraising events include the corn hole tournament that raised \$100.00

with Darin McCoy and Scott Maietta defeating Mike Johnson and Christie Hall to claim the championship. Also, a Mother's Day themed silent auction raised approximately \$650.00. Keep your eye out for future events, including "Every Penny Counts," a change collecting contest, and a breakfast sale on May 20 at the 400 building.

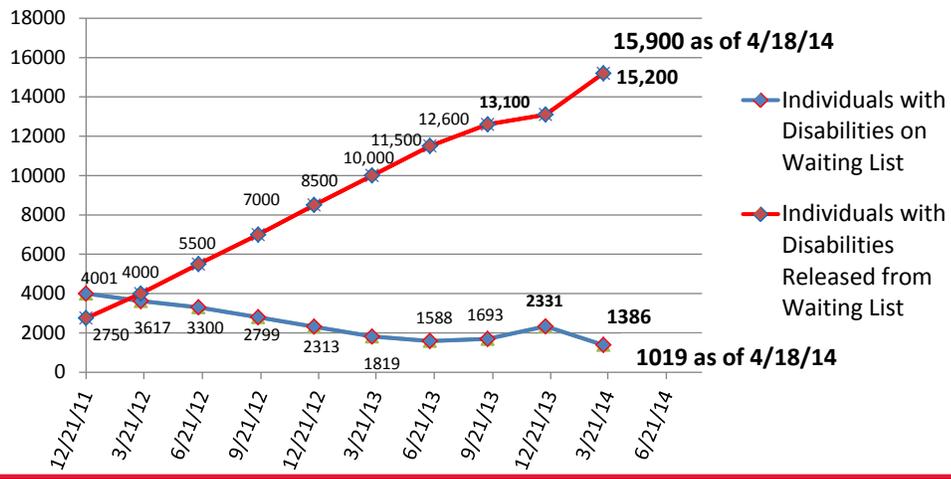
Here is how you can help:

- 1) Participate in OOD activities to raise critically needed funds.
- 2) Donate online at: <https://www.midohiofoodbank.org/donate-opfeed>
- 3) Bring in these most needed foods: peanut butter, soup (with vegetables), canned fruit, chili with beans, tuna, canned meat, and canned vegetables

If you have any questions about how to pledge or would like to help out with any event, please contact Ray Rhone, DDD Professional Relations Officer, at 614-438-1904 or email at [Raymond.Rhone@ssa.gov](mailto:Raymond.Rhone@ssa.gov).



## Number of Individuals with Disabilities on Waiting List



For more information or questions on stories in this publication, please call the Office of Communications at 614.438.1476.

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