

March is DD Awareness Month

Each March, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) partners with Association for University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and National Disabilities Rights Network (NDRN) to create a social media campaign that highlights the many ways in which people with and without disabilities come together to form strong, diverse communities, and to celebrate March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.



The PA Office of Developmental Programs, through the Department of Human Services, will join these national organizations in featuring profiles of individuals who exemplify the *Everyday Lives* mission. Their stories will be shared on the [DHS Success Stories](#) website and on various social media platforms. Please read [Governor Wolf's 2019 proclamation](#) this month's auspicious distinction.

The nation-wide campaign seeks to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life, as well as awareness to the barriers that people with disabilities still sometimes face in connecting to the communities in which they live. DD Awareness Month covers three main areas: education, employment and community living. Throughout the month of March we will use these themes to guide our weekly content.

If you have resources or materials that you think should be included and shared with the national campaign, please send them to jmisilo@nacdd.org and/or c-lymiller@pa.gov. Examples of resources include videos, tool-kits, news articles, photos, personal stories, etc.

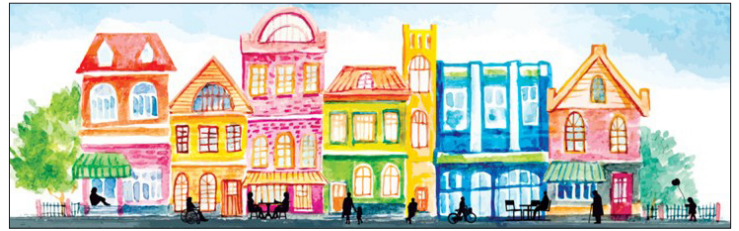
A special element highlighted in this year's DD Awareness Month campaign is the artwork created by people with disabilities. With each artist's permission, the national campaign will spotlight their artwork.



People with and without disabilities form strong, diverse communities.

ODP News

March 2019
continued



Athlete, Self-Advocate, and Speaker

(Story provided by Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health & Developmental Services.)

Ernest “Ernie” Roundtree is the epitome of self-determination. Ernie lives in a small apartment in Stroudsburg. He worked at Walmart for eight years, but finds his passion lies in advocacy and public speaking, so he left his job to pursue advocacy full time, and speaks at many events in front of large audiences.

Ernie is a member of the Athlete Congress, volunteers at the Red Cross, serves on the Kirkridge Retreat Center Board of Trustees, and volunteers at his church. He was a panel member at a large Community of Practice event held Carbon-Monroe-Pike in the summer.

In addition, Ernie is a board member of the Self-Advocates United as 1, and is an intern with the local radio station on the “Gary in the Morning” show on Pocono 96.7. Ernie greets guests and attends to their needs prior to them going on air with the host. He also assists at the IM4Q conference.

Ernie is an 18-year participant in the Special Olympics and ran the final leg of the torch run in Seattle, Washington, during the USA Games in 2018. He is also a regional input council chair for Special Olympics, and on its board of directors.

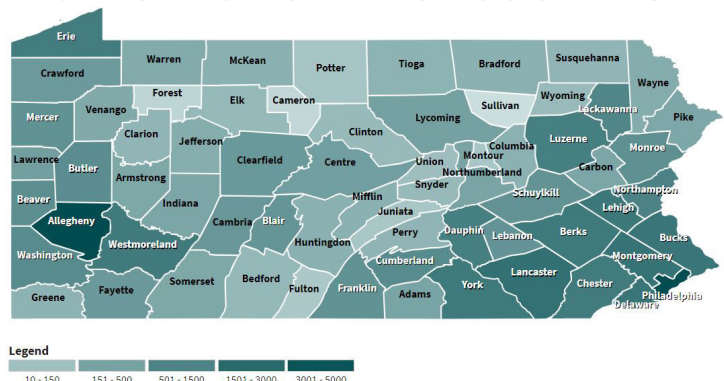


Ernest, an 18-year participant in the Special Olympics, ran the final leg of the USA Games 2018 torch run.

When he is not participating in the Special Olympics as an athlete, he serves as the assistant coach for floor hockey. Eventually, he hopes to return to work. He aspires to take massage therapy courses and launch a career in reflexology or massage therapy. In the meantime, he enjoys making his own essential oils.

Website Features Pennsylvania Autism Census Info

The PA Autism Census, a ODP/ASERT initiative, is an administrative census of the number of individuals with autism receiving services in Pennsylvania. It is featured on the PA Autism [website](#) and offers handy tools, such as reports concerning prevalence of autism by county, with an inter-active map. Take a look to find data relevant to your county.



ODP News

March 2019

continued



Virtual Office Hours: a New Approach to Training

Each month, the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) offers Virtual Office Hours (VOH) via MyODP.org. These interactive online sessions are facilitated by key staff from within ODP and cover topic areas pertinent to provider needs. Recognizing that providers often have similar needs and questions, throughout these sessions ODP has established an approach for providing answers to questions, offering resources, and soliciting feedback.

The response from providers has been positive, as the facilitators always make certain to have relevant resources on hand, present questions and polls relevant to the topic to incite meaningful discussion, and provide topical information and general guidance in a clear and concise manner. Providers also appreciate the informal and often personalized approach to topics that are relevant to their work.



According to one of the facilitators, Dr. Stacy Nonnemacher, “the more relevant and varied we can be in providing information and technical assistance, the more providers are skilled, comfortable, and confident to do the hard work we ask them to do!”

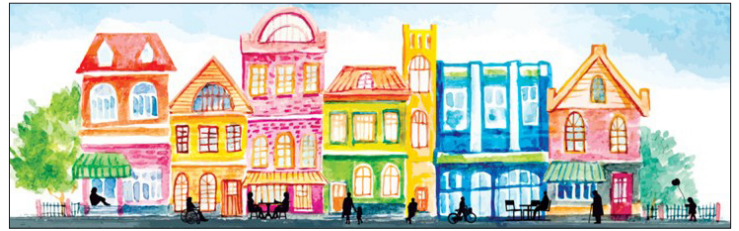
To take part, please attend one of the following VOH sessions:

- April 2: A brief update on [Goal Attainment Scaling](#) (GAS) in Bureau of Autism Services (BAS) programs will be provided. Frequently asked questions and any real time technical assistance will be addressed.
- April 25: [Deaf Services Coordinator Available to Answer Questions](#). Bring your questions about deaf individuals you serve to ODP’s Deaf Services Coordinator. We will be available to answer any questions you may have about deaf culture, deaf sensitivity, and best practices when working with deaf individuals.
- April 30: A [brief update will be provided related to the upcoming 6100 regulation changes to incident management](#). Concerns specific to the BAS programs will be addressed in order to assist providers in improving incident reporting. Opportunity for technical assistance (excluding IT or technology related issues) will also be provided
- May 15: A session to provide an overview of the proposed 6100 regulations on restrictive procedures and an opportunity to ask questions about [allowable restrictive interventions](#) and how to get them approved.

Email ra-pwodptraining@pa.gov for more information.

ODP News

March 2019
continued



State Centers Mark DD Awareness Month

Selinsgrove State Center launched Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month on March 1 by hosting State Representative Fred Keller (85th District), ODP Deputy Secretary Kristin Ahrens, and Director of the Bureau of State Operated Facilities Kevin Dressler, among others. Rep. Keller read the original "March is Developmental Disabilities Month" proclamation issued by former President Ronald Reagan in 1987.

Other festivities onsite the day included music, refreshments, spin art, a balloon artist, and caricature artist on site. Center tours were also available.

White Haven State Center held a similar celebration on March 8.

Polk and Ebensburg state centers celebrate March 12 and 13, respectively.



Pictured left to right: Director of the Bureau of State Operated Facilities Kevin Dressler, ODP Deputy Secretary Kristin Ahrens, and State Representative Fred Keller at Selinsgrove State Center.

Top left: Kara Wilt and Kandi Shires

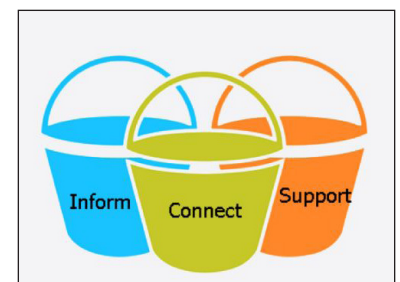
Bottom left: Kathy Schlingmann, Robert Hurley, Matt Duncheski

PA CoP Completes National Survey

PA Community of Practice (CoP) recently completed the National CoP survey, which was sent to all 17 participating states. The CoP initiative works to transform state policies, practices, and systems to better assist and support families that include a member with intellectual disabilities and/or autism.

This national survey is a reporting tool and part of a quality management initiative. The National CoP survey will help inform dialogue for when statewide CoP leadership meets with national representatives in June. The two-day work session will establish strategic plans focused on supporting families throughout the lifespan, employment, supports coordination, and intake innovation.

The National CoP for Supporting Families survey highlights collaboration with other states, among other topics. As a result, our Pennsylvania team is collaborating with Maryland on family leadership initiatives, including PA Family Network approaches to supporting families throughout the lifespan.



ODP News

March 2019

continued



Lifesharing Provider Spotlight: Northeast Region

ODP News highlights winners of the Excellence in Lifesharing Awards, featuring providers from our four regions. Our final spotlight is on Wendy-Jo Honzo Vassa with Resources for Human Development in the northeast region.

Her nomination states, "Wendy-Jo embodies what lifesharing should be. For 10 years overall (five with RHD Lifesharing), she has made it her mission to improve the quality of life of the individuals that life share with her and her very large, tightly knit family in northeast Pennsylvania.

"Wendy-Jo's dedication to the lives of the individuals living in her home is immeasurable. She lives and breathes to give love, kindness, caring, advocacy, structure, safety, and security to anyone that lives under her roof. A true joy to be around...Wendy-Jo is a true example of how lifesharing works."

Unfortunately Sarah Hoover, who shared her life with



Pictured from left, seated: Jan Honzo, Wendy-Jo Honzo-Vassa, the late Sarah Hoover, Jillian Honzo. In front, seated: Carol Ramsey.

the family for 12 years, passed away on October 19, 2018. Carol recently marked 11 years with the family. Jillian is the biological daughter of Jan and Wendy-Jo.

The 2019 Lifesharing Coalition will take place Monday, Oct. 21, and Tuesday, Oct. 22, at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions, Mt. Pocono, PA. Look for more details April or visit [Lifesharing and Everyday Living Options](#).

Information, Upcoming Events, & Training

Autism Insurance in Schools

The landmark Pennsylvania Supreme Court case of *Burke v. Independence Blue Cross* solidified insurance coverage for autism services for students in Pennsylvania schools. On March 21 at Drexel University, a panel will bring together parent plaintiff John Burke, lead attorney David Gates, former Speaker



Nina Wall

of the House Dennis M. O'Brien, and Director of Bureau of Autism Services Nina Wall to explain its importance for students with autism and their families. [Find more details and register online.](#)

Teen Events Calendar

Teens, are you looking for something to do? The #ASDNext website highlights social events around Pennsylvania, such as a mac n' cheese tasting competition in Erie and a meet-and-greet rescue greyhound event in Lancaster. Visit [#ASDNext](#) for more details.

Is Asperger's Syndrome Part of Evolution?

Dr. Atwood is credited with being the first clinical psychologist to present Asperger's syndrome as a gift rather than something that needs to be "fixed". Dr. Atwood's first book serves as a primer for clinicians working to support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This video, ["Is Asperger's syndrome the next stage of human evolution?"](#), offers a unique view on his own journey.

ODP News

March 2019

continued



Summary of ODP Communications Issued February 2019, With Links



1. ODP 19-012: UPDATED [New Documentation Requirements for Individual Support Plans \(ISPs\) Within the Consolidated Waiver](#)
2. ODP 19-013: Now Available-Interim PUNS Guidance and Revised PUNS Form
3. ODP 19-014: [Rate Exception Request Process Re-issue, Consolidated Waiver](#)
4. ODP 19-015: [Registration is Now Open for Certified Investigator Forum in March 2019](#)
5. ODP 19-016 : [Notice to the Increase to the Federal Reimbursement of Transportation Costs for 2019](#)
6. ODP 19-017 : [Transition of Individuals from a Nursing Facility into an ODP Waiver](#)
7. [ODP Newsletter February 2019](#)
8. ODP 056-18: [Process for Updating AE, SCO, & Provider Contact Information For Quality Assessment & Improvement Process](#)
9. ODP 19-018: [Chapter 6100 Quality Management Planning Requirements for Adult Autism Waiver Supports Coordination Organizations and Providers](#)
10. ODP 19-019 : [ACRE Basic Certification Training for Providers of Employment Services](#)
11. [SAVE THE DATE: 7th Annual Lifesharing Conference October 21st & 22nd 2019](#)
12. [Money Follows the Person \(MFP\) Initiative Dual Diagnosis Professional Conference Series-- Cultural & Linguistic Competence: Essential Components of Quality Service](#)

We'd love to hear from you.
Email us at RA-PWODP_OUTREACH@pa.gov with news or suggestions!