

TRANSITION TIMES

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On The Go With Special O

I've had the privilege of coaching Special Olympics basketball and softball in Geauga County for over 20 years. I'm constantly amazed at what I see. The positive attitudes our athletes display is always like a clearing breath of fresh air. We have highly competitive teams in Geauga but also teams that compete at a less-intense level of play. It's just as thrilling to see one of our players clear the 360-foot fence out in Ashtabula with a prodigious blast (no kidding) as it is in seeing another player get their first base hit. Wondering which team (or sport) would be a good fit? Feel free to contact me for the inside scoop. Also: See the flipside of this newsletter to learn about the other sports offered.

George Cervenka
Service and Support
Administrator

OOD: OODLES OF HELP

OOD (Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities) is a crucial link for a majority of students with developmental disabilities. They offer pre-employment transition services that include: job exploration counseling, work-based learning, workplace readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, and counseling on post-secondary opportunities (including college). OOD contracts out with local providers for these services but oversees the process and is the funding source.

Many of you are familiar with OOD's Summer Youth Experience. That's where a student does a five-week, paid work stint at a local business. An assessment of the student's work performance is

done at this time. That assessment leads to a recommendation that the student either needs further vocational training or is ready for community-based employment. Should the latter be the case, the student will then have a choice of approximately five employment agencies to help find a job upon the student's exit from school services. (Note: The state has mandated that an individual must do through the OOD assessment process should he or she wish to pursue employment via one of these agencies.)

Referrals for OOD services are often done at IEP meetings, with the student's vocational training personnel usually taking the lead. The referral is often done within a year or two of the student's expected exit from school services.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT: Metz Fun Run (5K Run & 1 Mile Run/Walk)

WHEN: Saturday, May 21st at 8:00 a.m.

WHERE: Metzenbaum Center (8200 Cedar Rd. In Chesterland)

HOW: Register at www.greaterclevelandxc.com

ALSO: Cost for 5K Run is \$25 by May 2nd (Includes t-shirt) and \$30 afterwards. Cost for 1 Mile Run/Walk is \$10. Proceeds benefit individuals served by the GCBDD.

WHAT: 15th Annual Metzenbaum Center Golf Outing

WHEN: Saturday, June 18th at 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: St. Denis Golf Course (10660 Chardon Rd. In Chardon)

HOW: Contact Kellie at ktvergyako@geaugadd.org for more info.

ALSO: Cost is \$100 per golfer (due by 6/3). Free lunch. Dinner to follow. Proceeds benefit individuals served by the GCBDD.

Q&A With OOD Counselor Emiliano Lebron

Q: “What role do you play in a student’s path to employment?”

A: “My role is to coordinate services between students and certified vocational rehabilitation providers to assist students with preparing, obtaining, and maintaining community employment. For students, we especially put emphasis on preparing for employment as students. Compared to our general population, they tend to have little to no work experience.”

Q “What prompted you to work for OOD? What gives you the greatest satisfaction?”

A: “My goal after graduate school was to enter some form of public service. I found an opportunity through Opportunities for Ohioans With Disabilities and, after

several trips to Cleveland and Columbus for interviews and testing, I was offered my current position. I find the opportunities to help people, especially students, very fulfilling. I truly enjoy my job.”

Q: “Are there any services that OOD offers that may surprise people?”

A: “We offer so many services that it can be difficult to narrow it down. We offer services to assist with vehicle modifications and home modifications for individuals who need those services to become more independent. We also offer training for any assistive technology needed at a workplace.”

Special Olympics

Go Blue Steaks!

Special Olympics in Geauga County offers individuals year-round opportunities for fun, camaraderie, exercise, and a chance to test one’s competitive nature. The Blue Streaks compete against other counties in the following sports: basketball (October-February), bowling (March - May), golf (June – July), soccer (April – May), softball (July – September), swimming

(December – February), track and field (April – May), and volleyball (April – May). Post-season tournaments are available for a majority of these sports. Special Olympics coordinators Bonnie Veleba and Michelle Avram can be contacted at (440) 729-0166 (x1117) for more information. Bonnie can also be reached at bonnie@metzenbaumfoundation.org A person can actually start participating in Special Olympics at age 8.

Sweet, Sweet Music

Carol Columbo, music therapist for the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, hosts “Music with Ms. Carol” on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. on Facebook and Instagram. This program is designed for older students and adults. Sing along as Ms. Carol strums her trusty ukulele. Highly recommended for those who love music. And who doesn’t love music?