

Early Intervention Leads to Bright Future

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Upcoming Events

A Family Support Group is looking for your involvement! Open to anyone who is a family member, friend, guardian, or natural support, the purpose of the group is to provide support, receive trainings on special topics, provide input and direction to the Board of MRDD, and receive updates on MRDD events. If interested in joining this new group, please attend one of our meetings. The 2008 meetings will take place: May 8, 6:00 pm; July 8, 4:30 pm; September 3, 5:00 pm; Nov 6, 6:00 pm. All meetings take place at the Board of MRDD. For more information, please contact Molly Wobbecke at 740 -397-4621.

I would like to tell you about my daughter, Carly. Carly was found as a newborn at 9am, February 17, 2005 on the steps of the HuazHou Civil Affairs Office in The Peoples Republic of China. She was then taken to HuazHou Social Welfare Institute where she lived for the first two years of her life, until the day I met her.

Carly was 26 months old when I met her April 9th 2007. I have two daughters, and I expected Carly to be similar to how they were at that age. Prior to meeting Carly, I was told she was a quiet little girl that didn't laugh a lot, was afraid of strangers, liked to listen to music alone and held a towel to comfort herself when she cried. I was also told that she ate 3 bottles a day. My expectations for Carly as a typical toddler could not have been further from where she really was developmentally.

At 26 months old Carly could barely walk, had never had solid food, only knew how to drink from a bottle and did not know how to cuddle or be comforted by others when she cried (which was a lot of the time). Carly's life consisted of little more than sitting in the orphanage. Receiving only minimal care for the first part of her life, Carly had multiple delays due to neglect.

After several weeks hoping that Carly only needed love and proper care to blossom, I was overwhelmed with hopelessness. I didn't know how to help my daughter and I found myself, like Carly, crying a lot. Then a

friend told me about the Help Me Grow Program that connected me to the Knox County Board's Early Intervention Program.

This was my light at the end of a dark tunnel. The Early Intervention Specialists saw the potential in Carly and had the knowledge to develop that potential.

With Physical Therapy, Carly is now running, jumping and climbing. With Occupational Therapy, Carly has developed fine motor and oral skills. She now uses her fingers and hands more every day and eats like a champ! With Speech Therapy, Carly is making more sounds every day. She is not talking yet, but I am confident she will soon. The classes have taught Carly how to play with others and the joy of learning. In addition, Early Intervention has been very supportive and has guided me in helping Carly's growth and development. With Early Intervention, we have made great strides towards meeting developmental goals for Carly.

Carly is a little girl that her birth parents did not keep, her birth country did not have the resources to care for her and her adoptive mother was overwhelmed by her. However, thanks to the Early Intervention program, Carly's future is so bright that we all need to wear shades!



Partnering with Individuals

Events Snap-shots



Steve Oster and ESC student, Calli (right) present Mayor Mavis with an awareness poster



Commissioners Alan Stockberger and Bob Wise signing a proclamation for MRDD Awareness Month



Kiwanis president, Jesse Marlow reading to the students of the Educational Service Center



Individual Spotlight: Samantha Bissell, a Shining Star with Spirit

Samantha (right) being awarded the American Miss Spirit Award

“You are special, there is no one exactly like you,” the National American Miss literature states. “You have your own special story to tell through the way you live each day.” Samantha Bissell’s story is one of hard work, persistence, passion and, as she says, “keeping your smile on at all times and being a good role model for everybody.” Through her commitment and positive attitude, she has achieved amazing results.

Samantha, 26 years old, first heard about American Miss from a recruiter in high school. After her first year at the competition, they kept sending her information and saying, “Come on back!” And so, Samantha did! She came back for 7 years, working her way up through the competition and always having fun while she did

it. Last year she was recognized for her outstanding accomplishments at the state pageant and was asked to attend the national competition in California. Among the “brightest and most promising young women to be found anywhere in America,” Samantha competed in several contests including Talent, Acting and Casual Wear Modeling. Samantha had a great time and always kept smiling and received the National American Miss Spirit Award! Samantha credits her family for their support in achieving this long-time goal, but as her mother said, “She did it all herself. She worked at Krogers all summer and worked at AVI all last year to get the entrance fee.” Sponsorship for Samantha also came from 8 local businesses. In addition to her recent American Miss Spirit Award, Samantha is the president of the recently chartered Aktion Club and the Kenyon College Men’s Basketball Teams’ biggest fan. Samantha aspires to be a vet assistant, and one thing is for sure, with Samantha’s positive attitude and persistent hard work, she is destined to go far!

Community Spotlight: Kiwanis Partnership Recognized

The Ohio Public Images Network recently recognized the partnership of The Knox County Board of MRDD with Kiwanis of Mount Vernon to form the Knox County Aktion Club. Kiwanis was given the Merit Award for support and sponsorship of this community service club for adults with a disability. The mission of Aktion Club is to provide members the opportunity to develop leadership skills and to serve their community.

The Knox County Aktion Club has elected their 2007-2008 officers and organized their members into committees and is hard

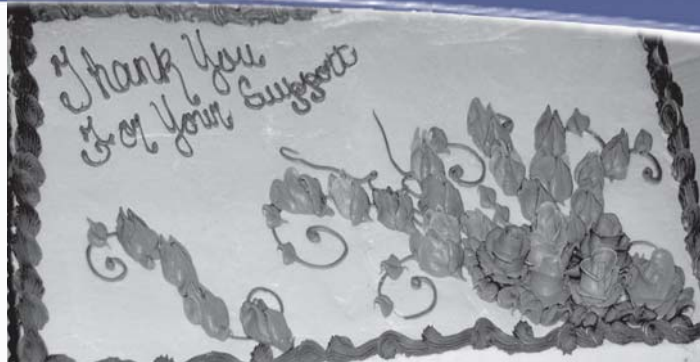
at work. Aktion Club has raised all of their own operating funds with fund raisers like frozen pie sales at Thanksgiving and concessions at the local Junior Miss scholarship program. Those funds have been used to support the local Toys for Tots and Food for the Hungry drives during the past holiday season. Aktion Club is not about just working for the community but fellowship as well. Plans are in the works for partnering with neighboring county Aktion Clubs for dances and bowling parties. For more information about Aktion Club log on to www.aktionclub.org or call 740-397-4475.

and the Community

Thank You For Your Support

The Knox County Board of MRDD wants to thank individuals, families, businesses and community members that helped maintain services for individuals with MRDD in Knox County. It would have been impossible to do so much in so little time without the out-pouring of time, energy, generosity and support during the recent levy campaign. Through our efforts, the community now has an increased awareness of MRDD services and the many lives MRDD touches.

As pictured below, the Chappell family,



the Cobb Family and Kevin McCamment were given special honors for their participation in helping the Knox County Board awareness efforts during their recent levy campaign. MRDD would like to thank all those that participated. We hope that the community will continue to stay informed and involved with MRDD activities.



Service Spotlight: Child Team Collaboration

The Knox County Board of MRDD Child Team has made great strides in collaboration over this first quarter. The Child Team consists of three (3) Service & Support Administrators (Greg Fuqua, Sukhdeep Cheema and Kim Wayne) that specialize in school age children and their special needs. They work closely with schools and various agencies to help individuals and families get the services they need, and to transition from school services to adulthood. The Child Team has been working hard to increase awareness and understanding of the referral process with local school

districts and received a very positive response from Mount Vernon City Schools. Child Team has established quarterly meetings with staff to discuss children with disabilities and their transitions in school and from school to adulthood. Working closely with the school helps prepare children for opportunities in adulthood and to be more successful after they graduate. The Child Team is hoping to continue their work and expand their collaboration with schools in Knox County over the coming months. To learn more about eligibility criteria call: 740-397-4607

New Staff Spotlight



Sherri Simmons
Service & Support Administrator



Jace Cree
Service & Support Administrator



Kristin Miller
Service & Support Administrator



Jean Scott
Custodian

Everyday Hero



At their April 9th meeting, The MRDD Board adopted a special “Beyond the Call of Duty” resolution for employee, Brenda Horton, who went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the safety of fellow employees and citizens of Knox County. Brenda assisted police in catching an individual taking items from parked cars in the New Hope Early Education Center parking lot.

“Name Us” Contest!

We have changed a lot over the years and this year we are eager to find ways to improve. We would like your help! You can help us choose a new name for this newsletter. We have been the “Ambassador” for many years, and we think it’s time for a change!

This newsletter is for the community, the families and the individuals that we serve. It is our opportunity to highlight the many great accomplishments and share the stories about what is happening in the lives of individuals with disabilities every day. As mentioned in our *Community Branch*, we have a new logo. It is on the front of this newsletter. Maybe it can help inspire you!

If you have a new name that you feel fits this newsletter, send it to us

E-mail: aperry@knoxmrdd.com

Phone: 740-397-4656

Mail: 11700 Upper Gilchrist Rd., Mt. Vernon, OH 43050.

You can also tell your SSA or provider.

May 15th we will choose the winning name and award them a prize!

Have a great story idea or an event you want to tell about? Have ideas about what you would like to see in this newsletter? Want to share your story, your artwork, or your poems? Please contact us!