

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

May 23, 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.

Memorial Day



As we head into a weekend likely filled with picnics, parades, sporting events and family gatherings, I hope you will join me in taking time out this Memorial Day to focus on observing the holiday and its significance. Observed on the last Monday of May, Memorial Day commemorates the men and women who have died in military service. A national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time on Monday.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in their service to this country. It is only because of their sacrifice that we are able to pursue our hopes and dreams; to continue to strive to make America great.

As President Harry Truman remarked:

“Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices.”

Yet, in the hustle and bustle of our busy lives - and in the excitement of summer activities from backyard cookouts and parades to sports leagues and events like the Indianapolis 500 - it is all too easy to forget the reason for the holiday and the solemn debt it represents.

On Thursday at the Statehouse, Governor Kasich honored those Ohioans who had given their lives in defense of their country. Each year the State of Ohio honors soldiers who have died in combat since the previous Memorial Day in a wreath laying ceremony.

Just prior to the ceremony a joint session of the Ohio General Assembly distributed the Ohio Military Medal of Distinction to the families of the fallen soldiers. This year's recipients were Spc. Angel Lopez, 27, of Parma, and Staff Sgt. Sonny Zimmerman, 25, of Lima, who were both killed last year in Afghanistan. Their families were on hand for the wreath laying ceremony. (You can watch the wreath laying ceremony online by clicking here: <http://www.ohiochannel.org/MediaLibrary/Media.aspx?fileId=143583>)

This Memorial Day I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the meaning behind this holiday and to honor the brave men and women who have died in service to their country.

Program Planning Committee Meeting

The OOD Commissioners met this week to review and offer feedback on the draft of the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan at the Program Planning Committee meeting. In attendance were Chair of the Committee, Jack Licate, Michelle Dillingham, Jermaine Brown and Jacqueline Romer-Sensky. They also received an update on the Independent Living Audit.

The Commissioners must approve Ohio's VR State Plan before it is submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) no later than July 1, 2014. Approval of the State Plan by the full Commission is currently scheduled for their June 18, 2014 meeting. Approval from RSA is anticipated in early September.

Employment First Continues Success

The Employment First program continues to exceed expectations! Thanks to this success, the program is in a position to hire two additional counselors in the

Central Ohio area. Statewide, fourteen individuals with developmental disabilities have become employed since October. Six hundred individuals have begun the training and evaluation process and five hundred have been made eligible and are receiving services.

It is rewarding to see individuals successfully move into integrated employment settings, start their careers, and contribute to Ohio's growing economy.

Healthy Ohio Fitness Walk

We were set to participate in the 10th annual Healthy Ohio Fitness walk on Wednesday when Mother Nature intervened with wet and stormy weather. The Central Office "Walk with the Directors" had to be postponed and will now take place on June 9, 2014. The Lakewood office, however, was able to participate and enjoyed a nice walk to Lake Erie.



Looks like a great day for the Lakewood office to take a walk!

Operation Feed



This week's events included Every Penny Counts and a Breakfast Sale at the 400 Building. Totals for all events thus far at the 400 Building are:

Corn hole tournament	05/08/14	\$100.00
Book Fair	05/08/14	\$286.36
Silent Auction	05/09/14	\$678.00
Breakfast Sale	05/20/14	\$339.20
Penny Wars	05/20/14	\$682.36

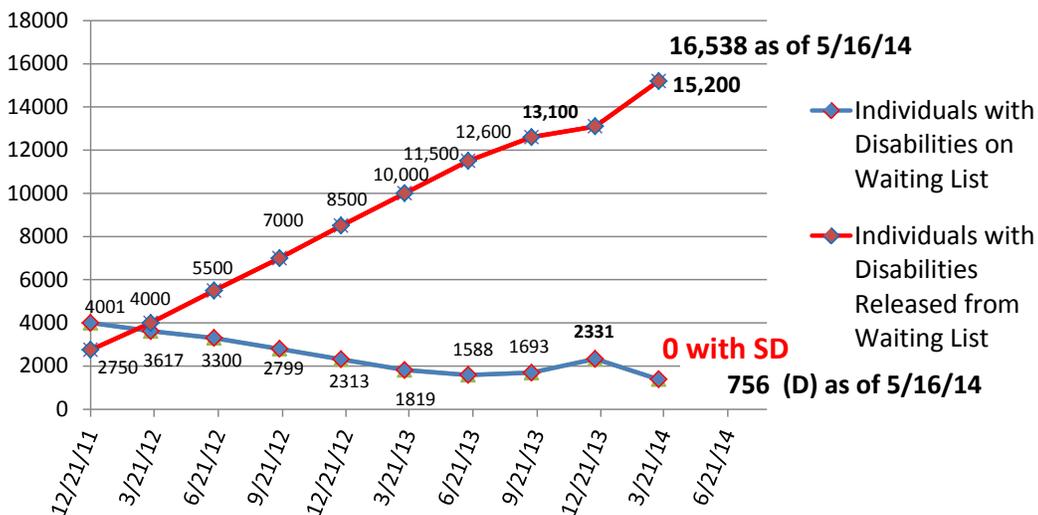
Total donations are \$2,085.92 which is 8,344 meals. Thank you, OOD, for all your participation in these activities to help Operation Feed!

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.

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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