

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

July 11, 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.

Commissioner Blake Haxton Qualifies to Compete in Para-Rowing World Championships

Monday brought the exciting news that OOD Commissioner Blake Haxton qualified to represent the United States in para-rowing at the World Championships in Amsterdam next month. Commissioner Haxton's inspiring story prompted a Rob Oller column in The Columbus Dispatch and a story on WBNS-10TV in Columbus this week.



Commissioner
Blake Haxton

A former senior captain of the Upper Arlington high school rowing team, Haxton doubted he would ever return to rowing after losing both legs to Necrotizing Fasciitis, an infection often referred to as flesh eating disease. After posting what he thought was a good time on a rowing machine, Haxton decided to get back in the water this spring.

After only a dozen practice sessions, Haxton won Monday's qualifier with a time of 5:14.41; 20 seconds, faster than the time of someone many consider the top para-rower in the country, Ron Harvey. Commissioner Haxton will now represent the U.S. at the para-rowing world championships August 24-31.

Congratulations to Commissioner Haxton and best of luck in Amsterdam!

To read The Columbus Dispatch story click here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/sports/2014/07/10/para-rower-haxton-is-awinner-in-his-new-reality.html>.

To watch the WBNS-10TV segment click here: http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2014/07/09/Upper_Arlington_Blake_Haxton.html.

OOD Commissioners Seek Award Nominations

The OOD Commissioners are seeking nominations for two awards, that are presented to honor the service of individuals, who significantly contribute to assisting individuals with disabilities.

Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award:

OOD has established the Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award to honor outstanding advocacy accomplishments by non-employees of OOD. Ben Bonanno was a former OOD Commissioner and an unwavering advocate. The Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award, recognizes a person whose advocacy efforts have significantly improved the employment possibilities of Ohioans with disabilities, in a manner that is consistent with OOD's mission. The deadline date for submitting nominations is July 25, 2014.

Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award:

The Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award, honors non-employees of OOD, who provide outstanding services to Ohioans with disabilities to make their participation in society more meaningful. This award has been established in memory of Denise Weisenborn, who served as an OOD Commissioner from 1997 to 2006. The deadline date for submitting nominations is July 25, 2014.

The Nomination Forms can be found on OOD's website at: <http://ood.ohio.gov/ood-home/about-us/ood-commissioners/commissioners-awards>.

Forms can be e-mailed to Shirley Marchi at shirley.marchi@ood.ohio.gov or mailed to Shirley Marchi, Community Relations Liaison, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, 150 E. Campus View Blvd., Columbus, OH 43235. Questions may be directed to Shirley Marchi at 614.438.1477 or e-mail.

DDD Meets with SSA Field Offices

On Thursday, the OOD Division of Disability Determination (DDD) met with their counterparts from the Social Security Field Offices located in Ohio. Jim Jamison, Disability Program Administrator for the Social Security Administration (SSA) in Chicago, facilitated the meeting.

This productive meeting, aimed at addressing potential challenges between DDD and the local offices, allowed both groups an opportunity to discuss the successful partnership of the SSA team, the resulting accomplishments and opportunities for future collaboration.

Demonstrating a commitment to serving individuals who file for Social Security, both the DDD and field offices vowed to work together to overcome future challenges while continuing to serve those who file claims, with a focus on customer service.

Erik Williamson, DDD Deputy Director, was impressed with the openness of both staffs noting that open lines of communication are vital between the DDD and field offices as we continue to work collaboratively.



The SSA Field Office meeting was attended by (left to right) Tom Melfo, DDD Area Manager; Jim Jamison, Disability Program Administrator for SSA in Chicago; Erik Williamson, DDD Deputy Director; Teresa Gray, DDD Assistant Deputy Director; and Heather Graham, DDD Area Manager.

New DDD Area Managers Selected

Please join DDD in congratulating the new Area Managers who will begin their duties July 27. DDD management had a strong list of candidates, and would like to thank each person who applied.

The new managers are:

Brian Baumgartner

Brian joined DDD in 2005 as an Adjudicator and became a Supervisor in 2009. In his role as Supervisor, Brian oversaw the implementation of unit 8Z, the pilot unit that volunteered to take an average of three extra

cases per adjudicator per week, while providing their own unit coverage and still participating in agency back up coverage. The pilot proved successful and has since been expanded. Currently Brian is an interim unit supervisor working with DCA 1's.

Beth Stephens

Beth started as an Adjudicator at DDD in 1990, and became a Supervisor in 1996. She supervised all levels of Adjudicators including numerous interim units of DCA 1's before overseeing the consolidation of the Provider Services and Medical Operations departments. In her current role, the turnaround of medical referrals has improved dramatically, and hiring and training of new Medical Consultants has been streamlined. During Beth's tenure, the department has become efficient enough to handle not only Ohio's medical referrals, but also accept referrals from Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Chicago Region, and the Kansas City Region.

Derek Willer

Derek became an Adjudicator in 2004, and later became a Supervisor in 2009. In addition to supervision of all levels of Adjudicators, Derek became the Supervisor of the Case Control Department, consolidating the operations of claims intake and claims closure. Derek successfully completed cross training of the staff so they can work across the department, and the implementation of auto-receipt of claims. In his role he developed monitoring protocols that analyze the mix of claims assigned to staff to ensure that the Division meets SSA's budgeted workload.

Again, thanks to all who expressed interest in the Area Manager positions, and please join us in congratulating the newest DDD Area Managers as they begin their new roles.

Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Annual Awards



The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) annually recognizes businesses, groups and individuals who have significantly contributed to employment opportunities and community involvement for people with disabilities.

These awards offer inspiration to both the public and private sectors to realize **ability** rather than disability as the most important factor in employment and community inclusion.

GCPD would very much like to hear from you about the leaders in your community. Please take a moment to review the awards on the website (<http://ood.ohio.gov/ood-home/about-us/governor's-council-on-people-with-disabilities>, dropdown Awards) and nominate a community leader, organization or business for the

appropriate recognition. This year the awards will be presented on October 16, 2014 in the Atrium at The Ohio Statehouse. Please contact Donna Foster at donna.foster@ood.ohio.gov if you have any questions.

Nominations are being accepted for the following awards: Accessible Medical Practice, Employer of the Year, Best Practices, Advocacy, Legislator of the Year, Maureen Fitzgerald Leadership, and Karla Lortz Scholarship.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS JULY 31, 2014

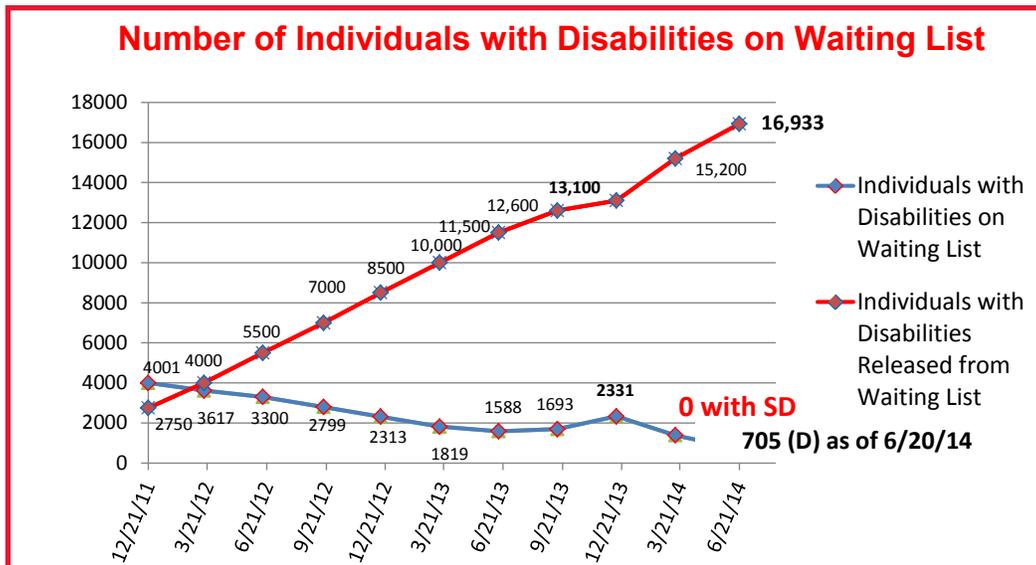
Division of Disability Determination Quarterly Awards

DDD recently announced their Quarterly Award winners. These employees were nominated for their superior performance, ability to be customer focused, innovation and creativity, and teamwork and leadership skills.

Congratulations to each individual for achieving this recognition:

- Kim Bavis (DPS)
- Patricia Bavis (DPS)
- Fred Bormann (DCA2)
- Beth Cohen Tribbie (DCA3)
- Brad Dickson (DCA2)
- Cheryl Faison (DC Supervisor)
- Marisha Hall (DCA2)

- Rachel Held (OA3)
- Moriah Keith (DPS)
- Efrain Perez (DCA3)
- Rebecca Sprang (DCA2)
- Beth Stephens (DC Supervisor)
- Mary Walcutt (DCA3)
- Patrick Wander (DCA2)



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

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