Local grant award makes it possible for students, staff to answer "Can you hear me now?"

Submitted by Janice Giffin
Speech-Language Pathologist,
Rebecca Stallman Southgate School

The Speech-Language Pathologists at Rebecca Stallman Southgate School were awarded a $26,720 grant through the Austin-Bailey Health and Wellness Foundation. By approving our application, Austin-Bailey has enabled the installation of 20 classroom amplification systems. Subsequently, the lives of staff and students have been forever changed.

The collective sound of human voices is the greatest noise problem in schools, according to Hear-It.Org (a non-profit, international organization that collects, processes and circulates any up-to-date scientific information). The noise from multiple voices is significantly louder than machinery or other equipment. Pupils talk loudly among each other, one-to-one or in group settings. Yelling and

"I tend to be rather soft-spoken, so I feel the amplification system has helped my students to hear me better and in turn, be more attentive during lesson time. It reduces my need to speak over disruptions."

Karen Stanfill, high school teacher at Southgate School

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**Superintendent’s Message:**

**Creating communities where all are respected**

Dignity and respect, together, make up one of our core values. Growing up we were taught that we should treat people with dignity and respect. What do the words actually mean? In this edition, we will explore the depth of these words and how they impact our mission of “supporting people with disabilities and their families.”

**Dignity** is the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed. **Respect** is a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

So the words have slightly different connotations, dignity presumes a worthiness we give people for who they are – just for being. Respect goes beyond dignity and recognizes an attribute, or qualities in people that make them unique. So, to treat someone with dignity one does not need to have any specific qualities or achievements, but to be respected; the person does.

**At the heart of this core value is the person centered plan that says what is important to and for the person. There is Becky, who is in her seventies; what is important to her is sitting outside and feeling the heat of the sun on her face. Kenny goes to the YMCA and run on the treadmill.**

Jenny smiles when her name is spoken. There is Joan, she has significant disabilities and loves to be sung to while her personal care is completed. What matters to them and makes them smile in contentment is what makes them unique. For each one of them, they like when they are spoken to with kindness from those who are there to support them. I guess that goes for all of us.

I have made attempts to provide increased clarity about our core value, but what is clear for all of us – we know when we have not been treated with dignity and respect. The interaction leaves us feeling isolated, diminished, and less than we know we are. For those we serve, we know the attitudinal barriers that people with disabilities sometimes face due to stigmas held about them. This core value extends to our advocacy and education of the public to ensure that people with disabilities are understood for their uniqueness and people do not judge or stereotype them because of how they look, speak, or learn. It is literally instruction on the basics of humanity and us reminding others of the simple message, “we are all just people.”

At the heart of this core value is the person centered plan that says what is important to and for the person. There is Becky, who is in her seventies; what is important to her is sitting outside and feeling the heat of the sun on her face. Jenny goes to the Waffle House and has breakfast with the regulars two times a week. John likes to go to the YMCA and run on the treadmill.
Stark DD welcomes Carmelita Smith to board

The Honorable Dixie Park, Probate Judge, has appointed Carmelita Smith to the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Smith was sworn in at the October 26 board meeting. Smith replaces Richard Hoffman who resigned last March.

Smith is an employee of the Stark County Family Council as the System of Care Family Engagement Coordinator for the Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery. Additionally, she is a parent of two sons; Jeremy, an Art student and Graduate of Cal Arts in Southern California, and Timothy, who has Cerebral Palsy, seizures, narcolepsy and high functioning Asperger’s Syndrome. He is working and living independently.

Her credentials and long career as an Ohio Parent Mentor Program representative for the Canton City School District has prepared her well for her work with the Stark Family Council as well as the Stark DD board.

She holds a Bachelor’s of Art in Operation Management from Malone University and Associate Degree in Applied Science in Human and Social Services Technology from Stark State College of Technology. She is also a Licensed State of Ohio Social Work Assistant; Certified-Education Aide-State of Ohio; Ohio PREP Coalition Trained; Trainer-Parent Cafe- Early Childhood and CCSD; Certified Mentor/ Education/ Conflict Mediation-Canton, Ohio- West Side and South Central, Los Angeles, CA; Coordinator of Cerebral Palsy Family Support Group-Goodwill-Canton, Ohio; Trauma-TLC- Olweus-trained- Canton City Schools District; PBIS- CPI trained Canton City Schools; Certified Glasser’s Reality Therapy/ Choice Theory-Adult/ Adolescent Communication and Mediation.

Carmelita Smith

When weather conditions or other emergency conditions (mechanical, electrical, health) necessitate the Board programs be delayed, dismissed early, or closed, we will make one of the announcements listed below.

Two hour delay. All preschool classes are cancelled; Early Intervention, school and adult facility programs will begin two hours later than regularly scheduled. Transportation routes will operate 2 hours later. Individuals working in Supported Employment enclaves will work and Board van transportation is provided.


Code One means that all schools are closed; Early Intervention services are cancelled; adult programs are open, but there is no yellow bus transportation. Clients may be present if transported to and from the facilities by private individuals. Individuals employed on Supported Employment enclaves will be working and are to report to Higgins.

Code Two means that all program services are closed for the day for all students, adults and staff.

Early Dismissal The superintendent will notify department heads and managers to follow procedures for parent/ provider notification prior to any individual dismissal. Children or adults will only be sent home if staff can confirm an approved caregiver will be at the drop off point.

Parent Mentor program recruiting caregivers who want to give back to other families

As an initiative in the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Stark DD) 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, Stark DD is partnering with the Arc of Ohio-Stark County to start a Parent Mentoring Program. We are looking for parents, guardians, and caregivers of every age group and stage of life, to share their resources, knowledge, and experiences with those families struggling to find services for their loved ones.

We recognize the extreme value of the knowledge and experience our families have to offer and want to expand on that potential.

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Mentor, go to https://arcstarkcounty.wordpress.com/2017/08/14/parent-mentor-program/ to find out more.

Send applications to brittany.kuhn@thearcofohio.org or mail them to: The Arc of Ohio 2717 S. Arlington Road Akron, OH 44319.

“Telling stories that matter”

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the county boards, the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities is documenting local stories in a video series “This is me. This is us.”

With monthly installments, viewers will get to know twelve people through their unique stories, as well as how Stark DD and other community partners work together to provide a lifetime of support. The video series can be accessed through the Stark DD YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/user/StarkCountyDD.

Recently released are “This is me. This is us...Lily Croston;” “This is me. This is us...Tinessa Daniels;” and “This is me. This is us...Nick Doyle;”

Previously released are “This is me. This is us...Amy and Brian Dunnivan;” “This is me. This is us...Aaron Williams;” “This is us...Carlos Elder;” “This is me. This is us...Anna Brady; and “This is me. This is us...Eric Foit.”

This is us...Tinessa Daniels;” and “This is me. This is us...Nick Doyle;”

The Arc of Ohio-Stark County has moved!

Their new address is 2717 S. Arlington Rd. Akron, OH 44319. Their phone number is still 330-492-5225.
“Can you hear me now?”

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Screaming can expose pupils and teachers to dangerous noise levels as high as 130 dB, sometimes resulting in permanent hearing damage. Teachers modulate their voices according to the background noise. The louder the background noise, the louder the teacher must speak, and this, in turn, may result in increased background noise.

“The system took some time to adjust to. I felt as if I was yelling when I first began using it. But now that I’ve adjusted, I feel like I can speak at a much lower level and can still be heard throughout the room.” Sarah Betz, middle school teacher at Southgate School

The amplification system purchased, Roger Dynamic SoundField by Phonak, includes a small microphone that the speaker wears with a clip or lanyard. The microphone communicates with a narrow, lightweight speaker that can be mounted on a wall or placed anywhere in the classroom on a moveable stand. As the teacher presents a lesson while wearing the microphone, the system continuously measures the room’s noise level and automatically adjusts the volume to allow for the teacher’s voice to remain at a constant 10 decibels louder than any competing background noise. This allows students the ability to hear the teacher’s voice regardless of where the student, or the teacher, is located in the classroom. The ability to learn through listening to oral presentations is a fundamental need for all humans. Indeed, between 65% - 90% of our time is spent listening.

During the 2016-17 school year, seven different Southgate School classrooms trialed the Phonak system for 1 week each. A very brief survey was completed by each classroom teacher before and after their trial. The results indicated that the Phonak system increased student focus across all age levels, kindergarten through high school and Transition. Specifically, our survey results indicated that: Students responded immediately when their name was called; Students increased their ability to attend to a single oral direction; Students increased their ability to attend to oral instruction; Students increased their ability to comprehend oral instruction without visual cues.

In a study completed in 1990, children with developmental disabilities in a primary-level class utilizing sound field amplification made significantly fewer errors on a word identification task than they made without amplification. Children were observed to be more relaxed and responded more quickly in the amplified condition.

“I love the amplification system! I feel that the students give me more of their attention as well as more eye contact now. At times, I like to hold it to allow the students to speak into the microphone. Hearing their voices louder than they are used to seems to elicit longer answers and more verbalization in general. It’s great!” Jill Doud, elementary school teacher at Southgate School

Any teacher in any classroom must compete for the attention of the students. A great deal of energy is required when the brain of a student attempts to filter the meaningful sound from extraneous noise. This is illustrated by the fact that it is much easier to listen to the dialogue of a movie in a quiet theater than in a noisy bus station. Competition for the brain’s attention is highly fatiguing.

“Last week, our class visited another classroom, subsequently we needed to introduce ourselves. The room was large and had many students in it, thus it was difficult to hear people speaking. We brought our amplification system with us and had the students use it each time they were speaking. The amplification system has benefited not only the students in my classroom, but other peers as well!” Jill Mehl, elementary teacher at Avondale Elementary School

The students at Rebecca Stallman Southgate School present with profound educational challenges. The Austin-Bailey Foundation has made it possible for our staff and students to dramatically reduce many of those hurdles. We at Rebecca Stallman Southgate School will be forever grateful to the Austin-Bailey Foundation.

What are the benefits of a classroom amplification system?

Classroom amplification systems, specifically Roger Dynamic SoundField by Phonak, have been measured to benefit students and teachers alike.

The benefits for children include:
- Improved sentence recognition ability; Increased attention, interaction and participation; Quicker acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills; Easier deciphering of language in early learning years; Better understanding of teacher for non-native speakers; Expanded seating options for students with attention deficit issues.

Benefits for teachers include:
- Reduced vocal strain and fatigue; Aids class instruction and management; Fewer discipline problems through improved voice-control of students; Less stress; Improved in-class mobility; One easy-to-use system suited to normal hearing and hearing-impaired students.

“I LOVE MY AMPLIFICATION SYSTEM!!! It helps my students focus and pay attention much better in class. I see a tremendous difference in all of my kids! One of my students required between 4-6 prompts to complete simple tasks during group activities before we had the amplification systems. Now, when I have my amplification system on, he requires one prompt THAT’S RIGHT! JUST ONE PROMPT!”

Makayla Hackett, middle school teacher at Southgate School

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About the Austin Bailey Health and Wellness Foundation

http://fdtnweb.org/austinbailey/

2719 Fulton Road NW, Suite D
Canton, OH 44718
Tel: (330) 580-2380
Fax: (330) 580-2381
e-mail: atbfdn@sbcglobal.net

The Austin-Bailey Health and Wellness Foundation is a private grantmaking foundation. Its focus is to support programs that promote the physical and mental well-being of the citizens of Holmes, Stark, Tuscarawas and Wayne Counties in the state of Ohio.

The Foundation emphasizes healthcare affordability concerns of the uninsured and underinsured, the poor, children, single parents and the elderly. It also advocates programs that address the mental health needs of individuals and families.

The Foundation was established in late 1996 with proceeds from the sale of Doctors Hospital, Inc. of Stark County, Ohio.

*Fax: (330) 580-2380 Tel: (330) 580-2381 e-mail: atbfdn@sbcglobal.net*
The Stark DD Red Dawgs Softball team and 10 players from the Skills team participated in the Special Olympics State Softball Tournament on Saturday, September 16 in Oregon, Ohio. In a two game schedule, the Stark DD Red Dawgs clinched the 2017 Division IV SPECIAL OLYMPIC STATE CHAMPS title.

In game one of the tournament, the Red Dawgs faced off against the Darke County Warriors, and defeated them 11 - 1. Moving up in the winner's bracket, Stark DD played tough in the second round, and defeated the Franklin Columbus Comets 15-7 to clinch the win and the State Champion title.

In the Skills division the team of 10 individual athletes also saw success on the ballfield bringing home seven gold, one silver, one bronze, and one 4th place finisher medals. Congratulations to:

- Gold - Katie Hedrick
- Gold - Kate Huber
- Gold - Jen Eaglowski
- Gold - Terry Weekly
- Gold - Steve Howell
- Gold - Sam Stewart
- Gold - Brodie DePietro
- Silver - Brant Porter
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Calendar

Find more events www.starkdd.org/calendar

Social

Toddler Playgroup
Each Friday, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center. Play groups are intended for children, birth through 5 years old. For a complete list of activities go to http://www.starkdd.org/.

Education

Guardianship Training Session
November 30, from 9 a.m. 12:00 p.m. at the Goodwill Campus, 408 Ninth St. SW. Speakers will include representatives from Guardian Support Services and Stark County Board of DD. This free training is hosted by Guardian Support Services. Registrations are required. Call 330-437-3720 or e-mail volunteerguardians@gmail.com

Family Information Series
November 13, 5:30 p.m. in the Cohen Room at Whipple-Dale Centre, 2950 Whipple Ave. NW. Must be 18 years of age and over to attend.

Adult Social Night
October 31 from 7 p.m.- 9 p.m. at the St. George Cultural Center, 364 First St. SE, Massillon. Must be 18 years of age and over to attend.

Adult Social Night
November 16 from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the St. George Serbian Center, 4667 Applegrove St. NW, North Canton. Must be 18 years of age and over to attend.

Adult Social Night
December 14 from 7 p.m.- 9 p.m. at the Massillon Knights of Columbus, 988 Cherry Rd. NW, Massillon. Must be 18 years of age and over to attend.

Recreation

20th Annual Great Pumpkin Race
October 28, 8:30 a.m. at 2950 Whipple Ave. NW, Canton. Benefits Stark DD Special Olympics. Register at http://enmo.tv/greatpumpkinrace

Community

Third Annual Autism Summit
October 12, 13, Akron Civic Theatre and Hilton Akron/Fairlawn. Presented by the Autism Society of Greater Akron. Theme: Effective Advocacy. For more information, visit Autism Akron.org or Facebook.com/GreaterAkron.

Always There 50th Anniversary Celebration
October 24, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Ohio Statehouse Atrium, Columbus. In recognition of the 50th anniversary of Ohio’s county boards, the Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) is hosting a Day of Celebration and Advocacy at the Ohio Statehouse. The celebration will feature special guest speakers, meetings with legislators, and the opportunity to contribute to the 50th Anniversary Time Capsule and Always There Video Project.

Input sought through monthly consumer satisfaction surveys

For people we serve and our families, we are interested in your level of satisfaction during our transformation and have partnered with the Centers for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR) to seek your input on the level of satisfaction with the services you receive. Please do not be surprised if someone calls you, or wants to see you. We are interested in how you are doing and how you think we are doing. This is strictly voluntary and if you do not want to participate, just say so.

Monthly Board Meeting
Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities; December 19, 6 p.m. at 2950 Whipple Ave. NW, Canton.

One Team, One Mission Gala
November 4, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Kent State Stark Conference Center. Pegasus Farm hosts their annual celebration gala. They serve children and adults with disabilities and now offer services to military veterans, first responders and their families with the opening of their new Military Family Center. The evening will include a gourmet dinner, a large variety of live and silent auction items, raffles, and the much-anticipated dessert room. The Seabiscuit and Secretariat Awards will be presented to a deserving Pegasus Farm volunteer and supporter during the Gala dinner program. Event proceeds support the mission of Pegasus Farm www.pegasusfarm.org

NOTIFY ME 101
Families, caregivers, and staff are reminded that there are several ways to receive information when inclement weather may affect services for the day.

Please use one of the following sources for retrieving site closing information:

Stark DD Notification System: All Stakeholders receive alerts by phone, e-mail and text message. Families may update their information by contacting their SSA, or school administrator.

Call our main number at 330-477-5200 to hear the automated message.

On the web at www.starkdd.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/StarkDD

Radio: WHBC AM (1480) 94.1 FM

Television: WEWS Channel 5 Cleveland

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The Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities
• Accredited by CARF, NAECY, DODD
• Equal Opportunity in Employment, Access and Services. M/F/H.
• Ohio Self Determination Association member (OSDA)

EMPLOYMENT FIRST
Mission: Supporting people with disabilities and their families.