



Superintendent's Message: Will You Step Outside of Your Comfort Zone?

Singer and songwriter [David Bowie](#) on how to produce our best work:

“If you feel safe in the area that you’re working in, you’re not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you’re capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth, and when you don’t feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you’re just about in the right place to do something.”

Source: YouTube

Bowie’s take on growth is wise. It’s when we step outside of our comfort zones and test our boundaries that we learn the most. Recently, I had the pleasure of being interviewed by Andrew Matheny, a self-advocate who has a passion for learning from others. The interview was arranged by Andrew and his provider, Sandi Evans, in a formal setting. Andrew had prepared questions, written in large letters, to help us stay on track.

It was a delightful experience as Andrew asked questions, and I answered them. At first, Andrew appeared nervous and hesitant, despite his practice and preparation. However, with encouragement from Sandy and me, he gradually grew more relaxed as we talked. The hour flew by, and we got to know each other better. I watched as Andrew pushed through his nerves and occasional memory lapses, ultimately growing more confident by the end of the interview. Though unaware, conducting interviews is one of Andrew's goals, and I believe he has the potential to achieve great things.

Speaking with Andrew made me realize that I've been limiting myself lately. Witnessing him conquer his fears reminded me that to achieve more, I must also be willing to step outside of my comfort zone. Dr. Michael Merzenich, the Father of Neuroplasticity, writes, "And the magic is, once you get into a learning mode, once you're really trying to improve yourself on a regular basis, and acquiring new skills – you actually improve the machinery in your brain that controls learning for everything." What excites me is that, according to Dr. Merzenich, the brain's plasticity enables it to learn new things at any age. This means that 'old dogs' can indeed be taught 'new tricks.'

Today is perfect for Andrew, myself, and everyone else to start pursuing our lifelong dreams and aspirations. Each of us has the potential to improve our skills in any area by simply taking action. Let's push ourselves beyond our comfort zones and become comfortable with discomfort. I am taking it upon myself to learn how to play "Chopsticks" on the piano. What will you take on?

Sincerely,

William Green

Superintendent

In the Canton Repository

Inside Stark County's First Smart Home

PLAIN TWP. – Smart home devices may seem like a convenience, but for individuals with developmental disabilities, they can play a crucial role in their ability to live independently.

The county's first "Smart Home" welcomed its first three residents this summer. This single-level home contains assistive technology designed to make it easier for those with developmental disabilities to live on their own. It comes amid a statewide push for more technology usage in disability care and an ongoing shortage of direct support providers.

The project is a collaboration between the Hope Homes Foundation, Charis Homes, Midwest Health Services and the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

[Read the complete story](#)



Juron Martin, program director at Midwest Health Services, talks about the "smart" fridge in Stark County's first "Smart Home" for people with developmental disabilities. Photo credit Kevin Whitlock/Massillon Independent

"Stark County's Smart Home will serve as both a residence for three individuals with developmental disabilities and a model home for assistive technology."

Step Into Autism Walk is August 12

"When we walk together, we support each other and connect with the human experience"



of living with Autism."

Support the [Autism Society of Greater](#) at the [2nd Annual Step into Autism Walk and Resource Fair](#) in Stark County on August 12 at the McKinley Museum from 10 AM until 12 Noon. Stark DD, Disney princesses and Star Wars characters will be on hand along with 20+ vendors!

[Register](#) to be a part of Stark DD's team!

McKinley Museum
800 McKinley Monument Dr. NW
Canton, OH 44708



Fall training opportunities for self-advocates



Would you like to learn more about advocating for yourself and others? Plan to attend the [2023 Synergy Conference](#) in Sandusky, Ohio.

Dates: October 4th, 5th, and 6th

Location: [Kalahari Resorts & Convention Center](#)

For more information, contact [Lisa Parramore](#).



OSDA, in collaboration with Stark DD, invites advocates and their allies to attend the next [Project STIR Leadership Training](#) taught by People with Disabilities. You will learn to empower yourself and others to speak up and take more control over your lives!

[What is Synergy?](#)

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 1:00 PM
-to-
Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 4:00 PM
at
Double Tree by Hilton-Canton Downtown
320 Market Ave South.
Canton, OH 44702

Stark DD has a limited number of scholarships available. Please contact [Paula Gardner](#) for information or [REGISTER NOW](#)



Great Pumpkin Race celebrates 25th Anniversary on October 28

Join us for the 25th Anniversary of the Great Pumpkin Race on Saturday, October 28th.

- 8:15 AM - The Lil' Pumpkin Dash (ages 7 and under)
- 8:30 AM - 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk
- 9:00 AM - 4 Mile Competitive Run

Awards are given for the competitive race for the top three male and female finishers, as well as the top three men and women finishers in age brackets from the young to the senior runners. Finisher medals for all races.

All proceeds benefit Stark DD Special Olympic programs and athletes.

[Register Now](#)

What's Going On



August 12 / 10 AM - 12 PM / Step into Autism - Stark County Walk and Resource Fair
McKinley Museum, 800 McKinley Monument Dr. NW, Canton; Sign up [here](#)



August 12-13 / All Day / Challenger Baseball State Tournament
 Rolf Park, 2115 Cass Road, Maumee, Ohio
 Challenger Baseball teams from across the state will gather to compete in this annual tournament and jamboree.

Sharing Solutions
 IDD Support Group
 for Families, Caregivers & Professionals



August 15 / 6 PM / Sharing Solutions - IDD Support Group for Families, Caregivers & Professionals

Walthers Twin Tavern, 430 Applegrove St. NW, North Canton
 Topic will be Innovative Housing Solutions. RSVP to [Jodi Broom](#).



August 17 / 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM / Be the Good Self Advocates Monthly Meeting - Community Service Day

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities, 2950 Whipple Ave. NW, Canton

Pick-up a packed lunch and head out in teams to give back to our Stark County community. [RSVP](#) by Friday, August 11.



August 22 / 6:00 PM / Stark DD Monthly Board Meeting

Stark DD Whipple-Dale Centre, 2950 Whipple Ave. NW, Canton
 The monthly meeting of the governance board begins at 6 PM in the Whipple-Dale Centre Cohen Room. Watch the meeting live on our [Stark DD Facebook page](#).



August 26 / All Day / Special Olympics Regional Softball Tournament

Willig Fields, 2300 30th St. NE, Canton

Special Olympics regional teams compete to earn their place in the State Tournament. For more information, contact [Paula Gardner](#).



October 28 / 8 AM - 12 Noon / 25th Annual Great Pumpkin Race

Stark DD, 2950 Whipple Ave. NW, Canton

The annual Halloween tradition benefits Stark County Special Olympics athletes and programs. [Register now](#) for the 1 Mile fun run/walk or the 4 Mile competitive run.

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Stark County Board of
 Developmental Disabilities

Visit Us:
 2950 Whipple Ave NW
 Canton, Ohio 44708
 Call Us: 330-477-5200



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