



C U Y A H O G A C O U N T Y  
Board of Developmental Disabilities

# Beating Loneliness and Isolation

Cuyahoga County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

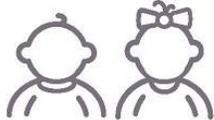
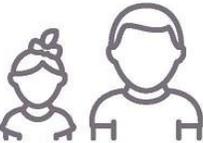
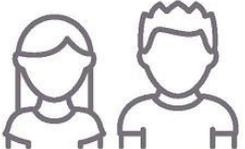
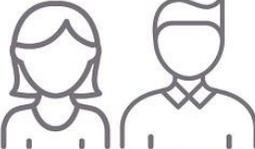


Supporting and empowering people with developmental disabilities  
to live, learn, work and play in the community

Our mission is to  
**support and empower**  
people with developmental  
disabilities  
to **live, learn, work and play**  
in the community.



# Overview of DD Services in Cuyahoga County

			
<b>Early Childhood</b> 	<b>School-age</b> 	<b>Transition</b> 	<b>Adulthood</b> 
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Cuyahoga DD Supports</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">There are many ways Cuyahoga DD can help throughout one's life.</p>			
<p>Early Intervention (EI) services are provided by Cuyahoga DD in partnership with Bright Beginnings.</p> <p>For EI Services, call Bright Beginnings first: 216-698-7500.</p> <p>Cuyahoga DD EI supports can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical therapy</li> <li>• occupational therapy</li> <li>• speech/language therapy</li> <li>• developmental expertise</li> </ul> <p>Other supports to help address your needs</p> <p>Family Supports Program and Lending Libraries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and support to help you address your needs</li> <li>- Communication, assistive technology and behavioral supports</li> <li>- Physical, occupational and speech therapy</li> <li>- Family Supports Program and Lending Libraries</li> </ul> <p>Eligibility for Cuyahoga DD services must be redetermined at age 3 and 6. Call 216-736-2673.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and support to help you address your needs</li> <li>- Transition planning beginning at age 14</li> <li>- Communication, assistive technology and behavioral supports</li> <li>- Physical, occupational and speech therapy</li> <li>- Travel assessment and training</li> <li>- Hiring events for job seekers</li> <li>- Connections to community partners and resources</li> <li>- Family Supports Program and Lending Libraries</li> </ul> <p>Eligibility for Cuyahoga DD services must be redetermined at age 16. Call 216-736-2673.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and support to help you address your needs</li> <li>- Communication, assistive technology and behavioral supports</li> <li>- Physical, occupational and speech therapy</li> <li>- Travel assessment and training</li> <li>- Support to find or maintain employment or day services</li> <li>- Information on residential options</li> <li>- Connections to community partners and resources</li> <li>- Family Supports Program and Lending Libraries</li> </ul>



# More about Cuyahoga DD

- Provide a broad range of expertise:
  - Developmental specialists
  - Assistive technology specialists
  - Occupational and physical therapists
  - Speech language pathologists
  - Behavioral and health professionals
  - Support Administrators (case managers)
- Strive to innovate the DD field
  - Custom Living Environment (CLE ) and Assistive Technology Vehicle (ATV)
  - Employment Collaborative of Cuyahoga County
  - New housing options
  - **More opportunities to participate in community life**



# Behavioral Health and Supports

- 25 clinicians; Ph.D. , LPCC, LPC, LISW, Parenting Educator and Sexuality Educator
- Assist individuals served by Cuyahoga Board of DD and their families/guardians/paid supports with behavioral assessments and interventions, guardianship and funding evaluations, short term counseling



# March 2020 Stay at Home order

- Families/providers were struggling to find ways to keep individuals actively engaged through the day
- Behaviors were increasing
- Individuals were not able to see family in person
- Staff shortages in group homes
- Staff shortages with drop-in supports for individuals who live alone or in with family
- Day programs and places of employment were closed



# Behavioral Health and supports

- Came together to figure out how best to support individuals, parents, caregivers and staff

Daily, weekly check-ins

Supporting fellow CCBDD staff with check-ins

Found most were struggling with staying actively engaged throughout the day and needed things to do.....



# Weekly “Things to Do” list

Gathered information and links to events on-line, on TV, on the radio that individuals could watch or listen to

- Orchestra concerts
- Virtual tours of museums
- Videos on how to do something; learning a new hobby
- Recipes
- Exercise ideas
- Relaxation techniques and stress management suggestions
- Art activities using found or recycled materials with instructions
- Holiday and seasonal information
- Information on Covid, how to stay safe, social distancing, mask wearing and vaccine updates
- List was sent out every Friday from April 2020 to May 2021
- Monthly zoom dance
- Weekly zoom yoga session
- Art Kit porch drop off



# Meet the presenters



**Will**



**Shaye**



# Good Life Ambassadors (GLA)

- We believe people with disabilities should be advocating for themselves and others
- Established July 2016
- GLAs work with Cuyahoga DD
- Presentations are tailored to audience members



# Positive Aspects of the Pandemic

## Will

Longtime friendships have gotten stronger

Youth Challenge family worked hard to be innovative in meeting people's needs

Closer to my sister because she did more caregiving with me

Gave me time to focus on my mental and physical self

## Shaye

Slow down and smell the roses

Welcomed the slow-down

More time with caregivers/parents

Closer to my brother because the pandemic helped him grow up



# Not-So-Positive Aspects of the Pandemic

## Will

Lack of social face-to-face connection with people

Having to social distance when I am a person who likes to hug

Loneliness

## Shaye

Disrupted my schedule

Loneliness

- Couldn't see friends
- Couldn't access my community

Stir-crazy



# Disruptions in Routines

## **Will**

Had to quarantine with my parents after living independently

Lost 4 different caregivers

My sister became my caregiver for a while

## **Shaye**

Stopped going to my day program

Create a schedule for yourself

Sensory items/stress ball/fidget spinner

Journaling



# Relationships stressed

## Will

Tough not seeing my mom at the beginning of the pandemic

Made me appreciate my staff and healthcare workers in the hospitals

Realize/appreciate my family and friends more

Stay in contact with people

- Zoom/facetime with friends
- Talk and play games

Check on my friends

## Shaye

Realize/acknowledge a new relationship with your parents

Take guidance and advice from caregivers

Stay in contact with friends

- Facetime with friends
- Zoom with GLAs

Think/pray and send good thoughts to people you can't speak to



# Technology Issues

## Will

Didn't have access to newer laptop

Purchased my own iPad

## Shaye

Lucky to have equipment already

Had to learn Zoom

## Cuyahoga DD's AT Department

- Assessments for equipment
- Lends equipment and software for trials
- Assists with acquiring/funding equipment
- Provides training and in-services



# Boredom Issues

## Will

Do things outside

Took care of myself

- Yoga and breathing exercise
- Meditate
- Find soothing activities
- My dog

County board website – Shared Virtual Community

Be on more committees and help be part of more organizations

Google search for interests – more virtual opportunities than ever

## Shaye

Find and try new things

- Cooking
- Enjoy nature – go to park
- Exercising
- Take dog for a walk
- Help mom with projects (garden)

Finding things to do

- Fun activities
- Shared Virtual Community



# What **YOU** can do to stay positive

## **Will**

Stay informed and not letting news get to you

- Know yourself and your beliefs/perspectives

Practice gratitude

Mental health supports available – good to hear perspective of a professional

- Normalize experiences

## **Shaye**

Try to stay positive

- Try not to watch the news
- Turn to my mom for advice
- Journaling

Just slow down – take time to relax

Sensory items/stress ball/fidget spinner

Watch Disney movies



# What others can do to help

## Will

Share tools/strategies to help soothe like a stress ball or music

Provide access to mental health providers that have expertise with developmental disabilities

Makes sure there are safe spaces for youth to go when they need alone-time

Add calming strategies to their day/schedule

## Shaye

Help make connections with other family members

Access to resources

Check-in regularly

Remain approachable



# Final tips to stay positive...

Be as independent as you can (remember to ask for help if you need it).

Let other people help and guide you, but you are in charge of you in the end

Don't be afraid to challenge yourself and try new things.





**26%** of people in the U.S. have a disability.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

## Inclusive communities are successful communities

Organizations that are not making strategic investments in inclusion are missing **1 in 4** potential customers.

Consumers with disabilities including their families, friends and associates represent **a trillion-dollar market segment.**

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

## ALL means ALL

Everyone – regardless of ability – should have access to and be equal participants in all aspects of community life. This includes where we live, learn, work and play. Cuyahoga DD helps community organizations and businesses realize the benefits of an inclusive community through its **ALL means ALL** initiative.

**ALL means ALL** outlines steps businesses can take to ensure they are welcoming of all people and able to support inclusion in all activities, programs and events.

In addition to increasing an organization's reach through inclusion, Cuyahoga DD promotes **ALL means ALL** organizations in marketing, social media and its **FREE** online search tool of inclusive places, jobs and events, Shared Virtual Community. Qualifying businesses receive an **ALL means ALL** window/door decal and a digital image to proudly display.



## Building an Inclusive Community, TOGETHER



# Cuyahoga DD's guide to inclusive places and events

[www.cuyahogabdd.org](http://www.cuyahogabdd.org)



**Cuyahoga DD's guide to  
inclusive places, jobs, and  
events.**

All Means All opportunities.

Visit and explore it now!



# Questions



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To learn more about Cuyahoga DD:

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