

ALLIES

WINTER 2018

A MAGAZINE FROM THE BHN ALLIANCE

Chuck Spaar Regains the Life He Knew

Animals Benefit
From Students'
Generosity

The Value
of a Volunteer

Noble County
CARES

What's It About?



By Stephen L. Williams
BHN Alliance Superintendent

A new year is the perfect time to set goals. We do that in the BHN Alliance. We also pause to reflect on the past year and what we did in the lives of more than 750 children and adults of varying abilities across Belmont, Harrison and Noble counties. Our mission is to *encourage, support and respect people on their journey through life* and that is what we hope we did.

We are in the business of making sure people have what they need by funding and/or providing supports like early intervention, transition from school to work, employment,

transportation and at-home care, to name a few. If you're unfamiliar with county boards, you may be asking yourself, "What's that all about?" Well, it's about this:

For young parents who have a son with autism, it's knowing that an experienced Early Intervention team is there to coach, support and guide mom and dad as their son learns and grows. It's about using virtual technology to bring speech therapists and other experts into the comfort of the family home.

For families with children with intensive needs due to their disability, it means partnering with other agencies to provide crisis stabilization, treatment and relief as they struggle to help their child. It's a safe, friendly respite home nearby where caring therapists and staff ensure that the family remains part of the child's journey to wellness.

For a teen with Down syndrome, it's about putting an experienced transition team in place to help her grow her abilities in high school so she is ready for the job of her dreams after graduation.

For an elementary school student who doesn't use words, it's about providing, through our school grants, a communication device so he can do his assignments and participate alongside his peers in a regular classroom.

For a middle-aged man with an intellectual disability, it's about providing a job coach and the transportation he needs to get to and from that job he loves in the next town over.

For a senior citizen with cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair, it's about helping her remain connected to the people, places and things that matter the most to her, like church, weeknight bingo games, and an occasional dinner out with friends.

And what's it about for the county boards?

Simply put, it's about us making sure we are doing all we can to help people live happy, safe and fulfilling lives.

We strive for efficiency, effectiveness and excellence in all we do. That's why we do regular check-ups of how we do it. Results from our annual survey and regular contact with the people we support throughout the year are what guide and help us improve so people have what they want out of life.

And *that's* what it's about.

ALLIES

ALLIES is an occasional publication of the BHN Alliance (Belmont-Harrison-Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities), 68421 Hammond Road, St. Clairsville, OH 43950. Its goal is to spotlight the accomplishments of people with disabilities who are living, working, learning, and contributing in communities across the three counties. Comments and suggestions for articles may be sent to the Editor at the above address, or by e-mail to pmccort@bcbdd.org

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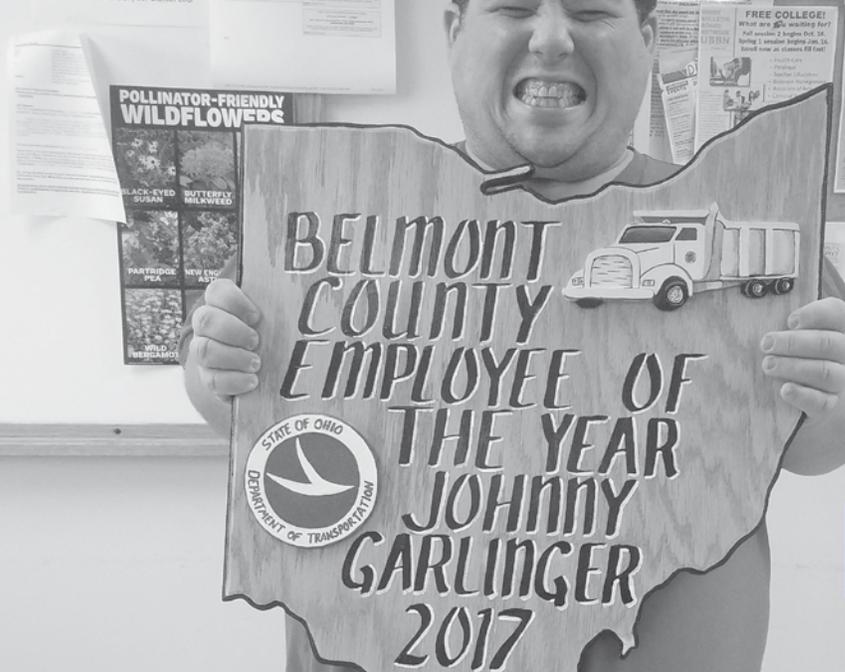
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Meet Johnny Garlinger

Outgoing and kind
Fun to be around
Always has something positive to say



Johnny and his boss, Belmont ODOT Manager Dave Schafer

What others say about Johnny:
“If everyone were like Johnny, our world would be a better place.”

Belmont County ODOT Employee of the Year
WWF Wrestling Fan
Awesome action movie collection

BHN Launches Good Life FB Page

The BHN Alliance is harnessing the power of social media to promote a more compassionate and understanding community.

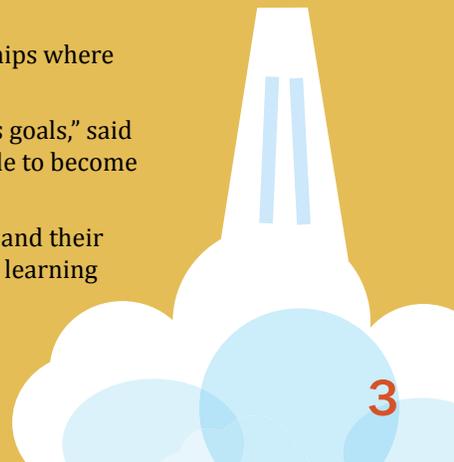
Living the Good Life is a new Facebook page designed to build community around The Good Life principles and practices.

The Good Life is a philosophy that speaks to the power of encouraging and supportive relationships where respect and compassion always come first.

“Facebook has effectively demonstrated the ability to mobilize people toward socially-conscious goals,” said Good Life Facilitator Adam “Nick” Nicholoff. “We believe the content we post will mobilize people to become more compassionate and create a broader community of support for the people we serve.”

As a Good Life organization, the BHN Alliance coordinates supports in ways that respect people and their lived experiences. All staff and interested community partners have also taken part in Good Life learning experiences, or trainings, around the principles of respect, compassion and trust.

The Good Life initiative was created by Pete Moore and Willie Jones in an effort to shift the DD field in Ohio to a more positive culture.





Exit Waiver **Helps Chuck Regain** The **Life** He Once Knew

Imagine life as you know it now, full of all the people, places and things that matter the most to you. Now imagine becoming seriously ill and having it all taken from you.

That is what happened to Charles "Chuck" Spaar, who spent months recovering from illness only to learn that the life he had lived was gone and he might never get it back.

For most of his adult life, Chuck had his own apartment in Cadiz where he lived, worked and enjoyed living in the community with minimal supports from his family. This changed in 2015 when a serious illness robbed him of his health and something equally important – his independence.

After a long stay in the hospital, Chuck was discharged to continue his recovery, first in a nursing home and several other places before he ended up in an ICF/DD, or “group home.” Chuck continued to receive the extra assistance he needed, but he was used to living by himself, so this move was difficult.

“I can make my own decisions.”

“I didn’t want to be there for the rest of my life,” Chuck said. “I can make my own decisions.”

Beverly Padgett, a Service and Support Administrator with the BHN Alliance, met Chuck in 2015 and followed his recovery. On one visit with her, Chuck was sad. When she asked why, his response was heartbreaking.

“He told me that he didn’t belong there,” Beverly said.

With that conversation and his health much improved, Beverly knew it was time for Chuck to get back to what he knew.

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities had developed “exit waivers” for people who wanted to leave ICF/DDs and return to community living. With Beverly’s help, Chuck wrote a letter to the Department requesting that waiver. In the letter, Chuck described his life before he got sick and how much he wanted to have his own place again.

When Beverly delivered the good news that his request had been granted, Chuck enthusiastically replied, “All right! I’m outta here!”

The two immediately contacted the Harrison County Housing Authority and put Chuck’s name on the waiting list. Two weeks later, an immaculate, one-bedroom apartment became available in Hopedale. Chuck’s first choice was where he used to live in Cadiz, but the wait list was long for that apartment complex. After two years of living with others, Chuck said he had waited long enough. He accepted the Hopedale apartment and moved in May of 2017.

Beverly coordinated the move and the supports Chuck needed to regain his independence. It was a big task, but it’s the little things that mean so much to him now.

“I can go to bed anytime I want to,” Chuck said. “I can even fall asleep on my couch.”

Chuck continues to receive minimal, but important supports from ResCare, Cambridge Home Health in Steubenville and Mom’s Meals. A MedReady Connect medication dispenser provided through VRI, his waiver provider, means Chuck doesn’t need anyone to give him his daily medicine.

Chuck’s life looks a lot like it did before he got sick. He does his own housework and enjoys community activities, like bowling and playing basketball. His job at Harrison Industries keeps him busy five days a week and he spends time with his girlfriend whenever he can.

“This is a happy situation,” Beverly said. “Chuck is appreciative of everything and he was great through the process.”

Chuck could hear the train whistle when he lived in Cadiz and he hears it in Hopedale, too. It’s a sound that reminds him of a time when illness derailed his independence.



Chuck is shown with SSA Beverly Padgett, who coordinated the supports he needed to return to community living.

“I was used to getting out, but I couldn’t. I stayed in my room at the group home. That was no life,” Chuck said.

And how does Chuck describe his life now?

“It’s great!”

The Value of a Volunteer



Courtney Riddle drops a document into a large shredder where it is reduced to ribbons of unrecognizable symbols. Courtney does this work and more as a volunteer at the Noble County Health Center in Caldwell.

Courtney is, in fact, one of nearly 63 million Americans volunteering about eight billion hours of their time and talent around the country. Volunteering enhances skills and develops new ones for people of varying abilities like Courtney, yet there is another, perhaps more important thing volunteering has done - it changes a perception. As Courtney contributes to the work done at the health center, she is also turning around the notion that people of varying abilities can only receive and not give back.

Health Commissioner Shawn Ray understands Courtney's value from experience. When he and his

staff said farewell to a long-time volunteer, they recognized what they had lost. When Melanie Archer, Courtney's provider, asked Shawn if he would be willing to give Courtney an opportunity to volunteer, he quickly said yes.

Courtney was soon contributing to the important work done by the agency by making copies and shredding documents generated by the various offices. She also cleans and disinfects the toys that Help Me Grow staffers take on home visits.

Nursing Director Shari Rayner says Courtney brings a smile with her every day and she "helps us tremendously."

Shredding documents on a regular business day is an important service that becomes vital when files are purged once a year and there is "tons of shredding" to be done, Shari said. Through it all, Courtney's presence and engaging smile lighten the workload and brighten the workplace.

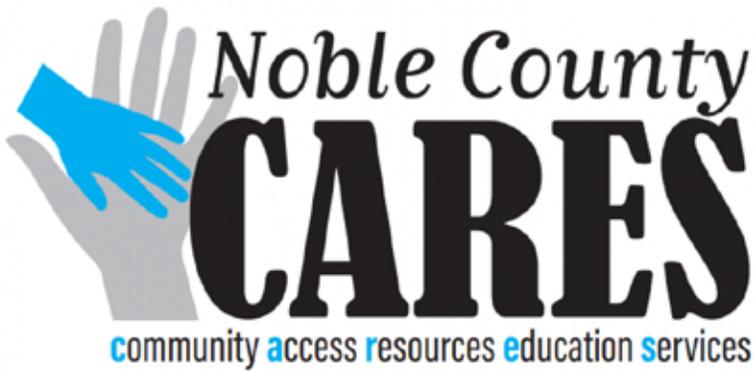
"I like it here," Courtney said, as she returned to the shredder, smiling at the documents that accumulated from the last time she was there.



Courtney Riddle is flanked by Health Commissioner Shawn Ray and Director of Nursing Shari Rayner, at the Noble County Health Center where she volunteers.



Independent provider Melanie Archer provides just the right amount of support for Courtney in her volunteer work.



Agencies across Noble County have come together to combat drug abuse.

Noble County CARES (Community Access Resources Education Service) is a volunteer drug coalition at work to advance recovery and achieve health and wellness for those battling addiction and the people who support them. The Noble County CARES website, www.noblecountycares.org, contains information to help people get started on their way to wellness. It includes crisis hotline phone numbers and a Crisis Text Line.

“Addiction impacts the entire family, and this coalition makes us more effective at meeting the needs of everyone in the family who is affected,” said BHN Alliance Superintendent Stephen Williams.

When a mother uses drugs during pregnancy, she places her baby at high risk for neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), which can include low birth weight, breathing problems and other medical issues and developmental delays. That’s where Early Intervention Developmental Specialist Peggy Malcomb comes in. She works with the family and connects them to supports that give the infant the vital help he or she needs to grow.

If you or someone you know has a child who may benefit from early intervention, call 740-732-7144, ext. 103. You can learn more by logging on to www.ncbdd.org

EI supports through the Noble County Board of DD are available to children from birth up to age three when developmental delays or disabilities are suspected due to any cause.

Animals Benefit from Students’ Generosity

Students in Katie Fischerkeller’s class at the School of Hope were looking to fill a need in the community this Christmas and chose the homeless animals at the Belmont County Animal Shelter to benefit.

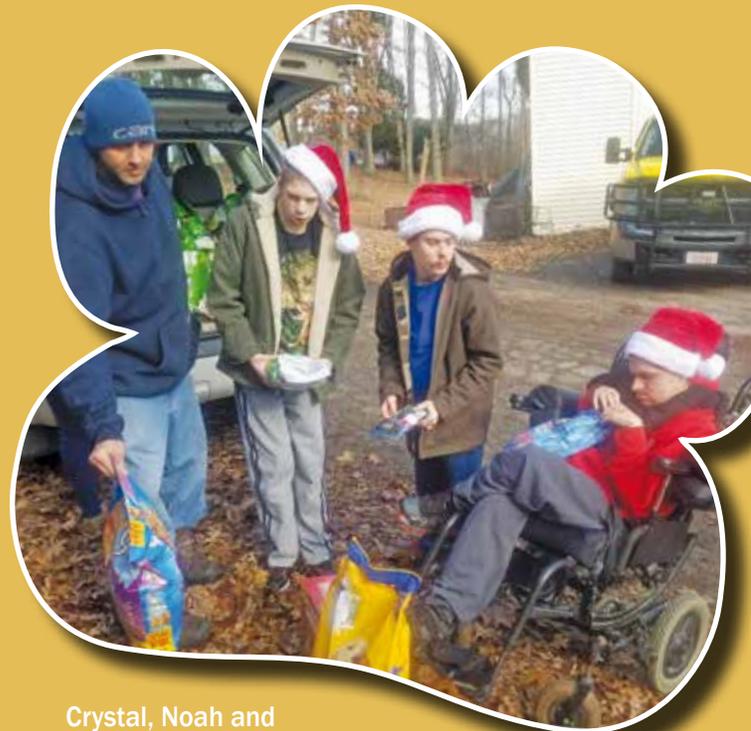
The students organized a supply drive for dog and cat food, treats, toys, blankets, towels and other items on the shelter’s wish list. A huge box was placed outside the classroom for the donated items.

“The students checked the box each day and watched it fill up,” Fischerkeller said. “They were all excited on delivery day because they had collected so many items.”

In fact, the students packed an SUV to the roof with items for the animals and delivered them to the shelter on December 19th.

This is one of several community service projects the class intends to do this year.

The School of Hope is a small school-age program operated by the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities.



Crystal, Noah and Mark help a Belmont County Animal Shelter employee unload their donations for the animals.

St. Clairsville Area
2017
*** DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER ***
AWARD
Chamber of Commerce



Seated: Housekeeper Richard Wilson and Houseman Michelle Smith. Standing, from left: Laundry staff Angela Dunn and Tonya Soltesz; Assistant GM Travis J. Church; GM Adam D. Hill; Front Desk staff Zachary Cunard, and Front Desk Supervisor Aaron Badia.

The BHN Alliance Salutes

**Residence
Inn[®]
Marriott**

St. Clairsville Area Chamber of Commerce
2017 DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER AWARD

Thank you, General Manager Adam Hill and the entire Residence Inn Team, for valuing a diversified workforce. The opportunities you provide help people of all abilities discover their talents and put them to good use on the job.