

WEEKLY FOCUS

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.

Making a Difference - Eliminating the SD Waiting List

Imagine you were an individual with a significant disability (SD) that had applied for vocational rehabilitation services in December 2009. An Order of Selection had been imposed and you were on a Waiting List to receive services. Flash forward to April 2011. OOD has begun a process of releasing individuals from the Waiting List. You find you are now able to get the help you need.

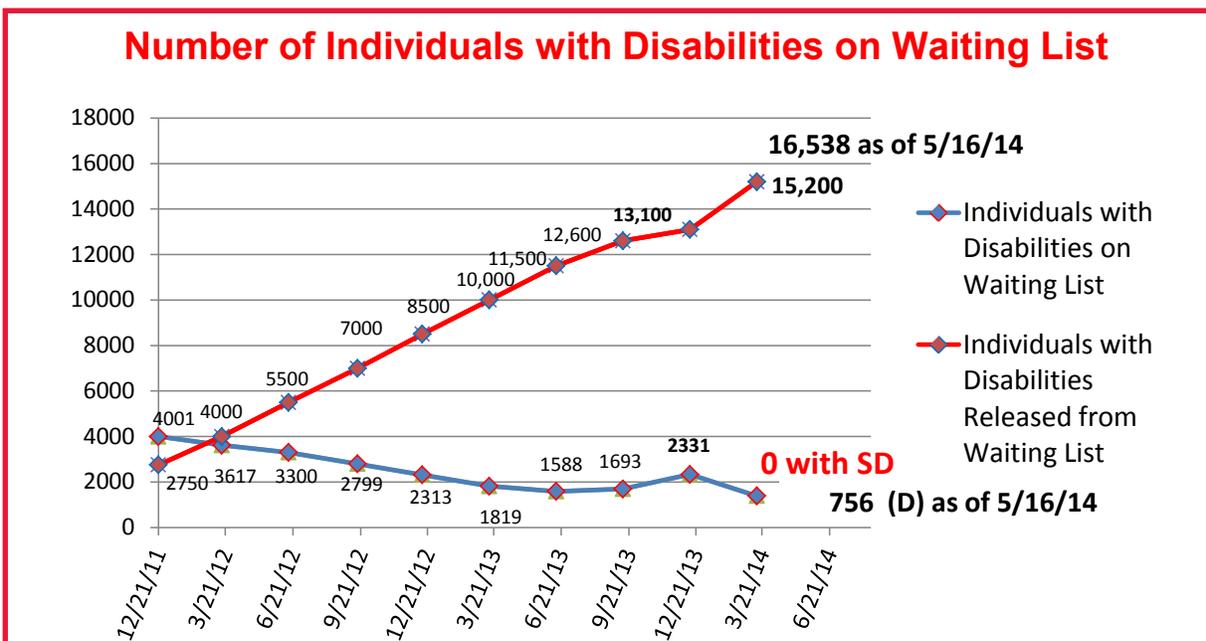
The average wait time was eighteen months. A year and a half of waiting!

Fast forward again, to Monday, May 12, 2014. Six hundred thirty-eight individuals were released from the Waiting List. At that moment there were no individuals with SD remaining on the list - none. Think about that for a moment. Three years and 16,538 individual releases later, the Waiting List for individuals with significant disabilities has been eliminated!

The average wait time for those included in Monday's release was 2.2 months. Individuals with significant disabilities went from waiting a year and a half, to waiting two months, to soon being immediately moved forward for service.

This is a significant milestone and achievement. Eliminating the Waiting List was a charge I was given by Governor Kasich when I became director in 2011 and it has been a priority goal of the agency the last three years. We have more work to do, and I know we can do even better, but I am proud of the counselors, field staff and everyone at OOD as well as our partners and service providers, who also played a part in this achievement.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication, for being open to change and new ways of doing business, and for staying focused on better serving individuals with disabilities through it all. All of the goals, measurements, procedures and policies, are about helping people gain employment and independence. At the end of the day, it is about improving the quality of life for Ohioans.



In the coming weeks we will begin changing policies and workflows and implementing procedures that will allow us to provide immediate service for SD individuals. We will soon be able to begin services for individuals with disabilities (D) for the first time since 1991! We will be working on making sure the elimination of the SD Waiting List is sustainable while developing processes to serve more individuals overall and do so effectively.

It is possible sometimes to forget that the work we do has a real impact on real people across Ohio. Reaching this goal should remind us of the impact we can have if we focus on getting better every day.

Take a moment today to reflect on this success, and the hard work and commitment that went into it; but then let us redouble our efforts to continue to improve and set our goals even higher. Working together I know we can achieve even more.

Project SEARCH Graduation at COSI

The Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB) held their Project SEARCH graduation at the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) on Thursday May 15, 2014. This was the first year for Project SEARCH to be held at COSI with OSSB. OSSB has created a unique program designed to meet the needs of individuals with Visual Impairments.

This year there were 7 participants: Julian Brooks, Dale Ellis, Sarah Hawke, Aaron Lynch, Dustin McKinney, Curtis Prelipp, and James Wilson. The participants completed various job functions at COSI including working at the customer service desk and demonstrating science experiments to visitors of COSI.

The Project SEARCH program is in collaboration with OSSB; COSI; Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities; Functional Training Services; and Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.



OSSB Project SEARCH graduates include (from left) James Wilson, Curtis Prelipp, Dustin McKinney, Aaron Lynch, Sarah Hawke, Dale Ellis and Julian Brooks.

Steve Tribbie: Certified Ohio Fiscal Professional

On Monday, Steven Tribbie was recognized as a Certified Ohio Fiscal Professional by the Ohio Fiscal Academy and The Office of Budget and Management. The Ohio Fiscal Academy, a professional certification program open to state agency fiscal officers, fiscal specialists, budget analysts and budget/management analysts, seeks to develop greater financial literacy within state government. The academy's nine-month curriculum provides participants with professional skills and high-level learning on topics vital to fiscal office leadership and administration, laying the groundwork for consistent application of fiscal theory and practice across state government.

Steve was sponsored by Therese Dyer, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Division of Fiscal Management, and mentored by Brenda Cronin, Manager, Systems Transformation, with whom he met monthly to discuss management strategies and expand his knowledge beyond fiscal operations, supervision and OOD operations. He also spent a day with OOD Legislative Liaison Stephen Wilson to get a better sense of Ohio's legislative and political realities. He met with, and interviewed, two CFOs from the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Youth Services and scheduled time with a Legislative Service Commission analyst to understand budget proposals and agency expenditures from their perspective.

Congratulations, Steve, and thanks for your hard work and dedication in pursuing this recognition.



Steve Tribbie, Fiscal Monitoring and Compliance Manager

Operation Feed Update

Thank you OOD! Here are the totals for this week's events:

- Corn hole raised \$100.
- The Silent Auction raised \$678.
- Totaling \$778 and 3,112 meals for those in need.



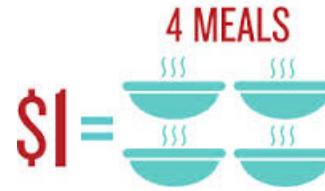
This week (May 12-16) is Every Penny Counts Challenge: Each department/area is collecting monetary donations for Operation Feed. At the end of the week, the department/area with the highest donation total will receive a breakfast of doughnuts on Monday, May 19, 2014 or the department/area can decide to donate the cost of all those doughnuts to Operation Feed.

Upcoming event: BREAKFAST SALE, Tuesday, May 20,
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., 400 Learning Center

Here is how you can help:

- 1) Participate in OOD activities to raise critically needed funds.
- 2) Donate online at: <https://www.midohiofoodbank.org/donate-opfeed>
- 3) Bring in these most needed foods: peanut butter, soup (with vegetables), canned fruit, chili with beans, tuna, canned meat, and canned vegetables

If you have any questions about how to pledge or would like to help out with any event, please contact Ray Rhone, DDD Professional Relations Officer, at 614-438-1904 or email at Raymond.Rhone@ssa.gov.



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

Produced by the Office of Communications, May 16, 2014.

