



## Youth Take Part in Summer Work Program

The Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities' *Bridges to Transition* program has organized a summer youth work opportunity for young people ages 14-22 who are interested in exploring career opportunities and vocational skill building.

Belco Works is providing the employment support for eight students, who are working at the Belmont County Habitat for Humanity site in Bellaire and the Lincoln Avenue United Methodist Church in Shadyside. The program includes training and work days and

students are paid a minimum wage for the 80 hours of the program.

*Bridges to Transition* is designed to help students with disabilities discover their career interests and options while still in school so they can have more positive employment outcomes after graduation.

The Summer Youth Program is provided by the Belmont County Board through its partnership with the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and Ohio Association of County Boards. For more information, contact Kara Shutler at 740-695-0407, ext. 353.

### SUMMER WORK PROVIDES YOUTH WITH A CHANCE TO:

- EXPLORE CAREER OPTIONS
- BUILD VOCATIONAL SKILLS
- EARN MINIMUM WAGE

### A 'Star' Graduate

Preschooler Ayzic Murray receives his diploma from BCBDD Board member, Cathy Wilson. Ayzic was one of nine preschool "stars" who walked the red carpet in a Hollywood-themed ceremony on May 21st at the School of Hope.



# Save the Date

## Kathie Snow Coming This Fall

**The Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities is pleased to welcome Kathie Snow and her revolutionary common sense to Belmont County this fall for two presentations on October 21 and 22 at Ohio University Eastern, St. Clairsville.**

Kathie Snow is author of *Disability Is Natural: Revolutionary Common Sense for Raising Successful Children with Disabilities*, a ground-breaking manual full of positive, common sense approaches to ensure children with disabilities live the lives of their dreams. Kathie is enthusiastic, positive and passionate about ensuring children and adults with disabilities live real lives, fully included in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities. She delivers provocative questions, positive solutions and innovative thinking, mixed with humor and real-life experiences in her presentations.

Kathie's interest in disability issues was born in 1987 in Texas, the same year her son, Benjamin, was born prematurely and then diagnosed with cerebral palsy at four months old. Today, he is a college student and she has combined her earlier career in the media and her experiences in the disability arena to ignite positive and long-lasting changes in the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

Kathie challenges conventional wisdom and encourages others to adopt new ways of thinking about disability issues. She has presented hundreds of keynotes and in-depth workshops in over 45 states and Canada, for parents of children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, service providers, educators and other professionals. She has consulted with disability organizations, human service agencies and educators. Several universities are now using Kathie's book to train emerging professionals.

Kathie's appearances in Belmont County are courtesy of the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Her session on Thurs., October 21, from 6 to 8 p.m. will be for parents and families, providers, school teachers, and others. The all-day session on Fri., Oct. 22 will be an in-service training for County Board staff and providers. Both are free of charge.

To learn more, call Holly Weatherson at 740-695-0407, ext. 345, or visit Kathie's website at [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)



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It is published to inform and educate individuals served and their families, staff, providers, and others in the community.

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# Green and Growing... at Tomorrow's Corner



If it's green and growing you can find it at Tomorrow's Corner where a variety of plants like tomatoes, peppers, herbs, cucumbers, melons, other vegetables and flowers are being nurtured in a new greenhouse.

The sale of these items was a success this spring and future plans include adding even more next year, especially flowers. The summer growing season will yield perennials and fall and winter plants for sale soon.

"We sell what we grow in hopes of making enough to pay for seeds and dirt," said Lisa Kazmirski at TC. Customers are asked to return the plastic pots in which they take their plants home.

"This helps us save money, and the planet, by recycling them," Lisa added.

For information about buying what's available, call 695-1110 or stop by between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The greenhouse is available for members of Tomorrow's Corner to visit as they choose. It is not part of the daily schedule. Because of space limits, Brad Stephens is the only consumer/employee who works in the greenhouse with job coaches.



*Bradley Stephens watches over the vegetable plants and flowers that are growing in the greenhouse at Tomorrow's Corner.*

**“We sell  
what We  
grow  
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## POOL PARTY

Wesley and his mom, Sarah, enjoyed a dip in the School of Hope pool during a Summer Swim Day on June 18th. Participants of the Help Me Grow play group, which includes babies and toddlers in the Board's Early Intervention program, their moms, dads, brothers and sisters enjoyed spending time with one another. The HMG play group meets once a month at the School of Hope where kids and their parents participate in physical activities and enjoy craft and snack times. For more information about the play group, contact EI Specialist, Lori Wells, at 425-0460, ext. 302.





# Self-Determination in Action

## A Home to Call Her Own

Anniversaries are celebrated for important occasions like wedding dates and employment, but Tommie recently celebrated an anniversary of a different kind. On June 15, Tommie marked the one-year anniversary of living in the community. Her journey to a cozy, three-room apartment and a self-determined life took time, but as Tommie says, it was worth it.

Tommie has Asperger's Syndrome, a type of autism with a pattern of symptoms marked by difficulties with social interaction, eccentric behavior, and atypical use of language. Because of her disability, Tommie did not believe she had much of a future.

"I always thought I would end up in a group home and live there my entire life," she said.

That is exactly what her future held in the short term. At 21, Tommie was living at home, but things were not going well. When she was 26 years old, the decision was made for her to move. Over the next seven years, Tommie lived in two nursing-home type of settings with people who were much older than she, yet she made the best of her situation.

"I learned from experience that you can be happy anywhere," Tommie remarked. She noted that the older people she lived around

were "happy in who they were" and that helped her look at herself differently.

The idea of a self-determined life started to form when she went to work in 2002 at Belco Works. She joined the self-advocacy group, People First, and began to learn what self-determination was. She honed her advocacy skills and began serving on the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Self-Determination Leadership Team and the Freedom Readers, two other self-advocacy organizations. She even accepted a more challenging job at work. Tommie still just talked about living on her own, because she wasn't sure she could do it. That changed when she visited a friend with a disability who had his own apartment.

"I saw that he could take care of things by himself and it gave me the courage to try," Tommie said.

**"It's great to be on your own."**

According to Loretta Edgell, her SSA at the Belmont County Board, Tommie's involvement with self-determination also helped her make a decision. "It gave her faith in herself and she wanted to practice what she was preaching," Loretta said.

Her circle of support, which includes Loretta, SSA Team Leader Darlene Pempek, friends and others offered encouragement. She chose to live in Barnesville because that is where she grew up and worked with Ellen Carpenter from Southeast, Inc. to get her apartment.

Tommie said she couldn't sleep the first night in her new place, but it wasn't because she was afraid. "I couldn't sleep because I was excited," Tommie said.

Tommie has learned housekeeping skills, like doing the laundry, washing dishes, and even how to cook. Her apartment is a reflection of her and what she likes, particularly professional wrestling and her favorite wrestler, John Cena. She likes the Barnesville community and what it has to offer, especially the annual Pumpkin Festival, where she has participated in Tall Tales and Hog Calling contests, even claiming the Champion Hog Caller trophy one year. Tommie



*Tommie is proud of her apartment and the trophies she has won at the Pumpkin Festival.*

# Class of 2010 at the School of Hope



*Robin Sexton*

The 2010 School of Hope graduating class had only two graduates, but there was an abundance of pride as family, friends, school faculty and staff gathered to celebrate Missy Pitts and Robin Sexton as they received Certificates of Achievement on May 28th.

Guest speaker was Amber DeVenzio, a SSA with the Belmont County Board. In her remarks, Amber talked about the personalities

and achievements of each young lady.

“Missy always has a smile on her face and Robin has a jump in her step,” Amber said, as those who have known each girl throughout their school years nodded in agreement. Amber went

on to say, “Each one has her own way of showing happiness and encouragement to others.”

Amber recalled how each graduate demonstrated many abilities in and out of the classroom, especially this past year as they began transitioning from school to adulthood.

“Whether expressing their opinions through art or verbal communication -- each has accomplished goals and are on the right path to achieving many more,” Amber said. “They are an inspiration to us all.”



*Missy Pitts*

## Lifelong Learners Honored

Staff members at Belco Works who have made a commitment to furthering their educations were honored as “Lifelong Learners” at a luncheon held June 14th. The event was catered by Outback Steakhouse and served by the Belco management team.

Recognized for individual coursework or degree completion were Julie Da Re, Debbie Elliott, Amanda Ferrell, Donna Freeman, Lynn Gilbert, Sherri Marlin, Valerie Moore, Ted Olinski, Susan Robbins, Justin Ann Steadman, and Mary Weekley.

“This was a way to show our appreciation to staff who took the initiative to enhance their knowledge,” said Anne Haning, Executive Director. “Their efforts have made the services we provide to individuals better.”

The Lifelong Learners Luncheon will be an annual event at Belco Works.

## **Tommie...***Continued from Page 4*

attends church and participates in the community as much as she wants. Most days, however, she simply enjoys the comforts of home.

Tommie receives minimal supports from Paramount Support Services, noting that Marcie, her provider, is “a good listener and she guides me when I need it.”

Tommie has done the work to become self-determined and has found independence at the age of 34. As an advocate for herself and others, Tommie understands that disability does not have to put limits on what she, or anyone else, can achieve.

“It’s great to be on your own. Life today is good and I’m okay,” Tommie

said.

*The coordination of services and supports for people with developmental disabilities in Belmont County is guided by the principle of self-determination, which gives them choice and control over their lives. To learn more, log onto the Belmont County Board of DD’s website, [www.bcbdd.org](http://www.bcbdd.org)*



# Across the County Board

## GRADUATES

Congratulations to Sharon Wallace on obtaining her bachelor's degree from Ohio University and to Jamie Bauman for earning a master's degree in school administration from Muskingum University.

## TRANSPORTATION

A shout out to the County Board's Transportation Department for receiving 100 percent on the annual School Bus Inspection conducted by the Ohio Highway Patrol's Motor Vehicle Inspections division. Dave Horne, Joe Shinoski, Dave Curran, Rick Helms and the drivers work hard all year long to ensure the safety of the buses that transport students with disabilities to and from school each day. Congratulations!

## ADA ANNIVERSARY

The 20th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was marked on July 26, 2010. The ADA was the first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. To learn more, log onto the ADA's home page at [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or call toll-free 800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY)

ADA regulations, technical assistance materials and publications are available in standard print as well as in large print, audiotape, Braille, or computer disk for people with disabilities. Call the ADA Information Line 24-hours a day to order through the automated system.



# Noah is an Exceptional Student

Noah Boston, a student at the School of Hope, was among nine students honored at the 2010 Belmont County Exceptional Student Awards Program held May 12th at the Belmont Career Center. Noah, the son of Starling and Deanna Boston, was honored for academic achievement. He is pictured with Superintendent Monty Kerr (kneeling) of the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and guest speaker Robert Willis. The awards program, hosted each year by the Special Education Advisory Council, recognizes students who have demonstrated excellence in various areas of achievement.

## Belco Document Destruction Expands With Grant

The Jefferson-Belmont Solid Waste Authority has awarded a \$5000 Comprehensive Recycling Initiative Grant to Belco Works for expansion of its Document Destruction division.

The grant will make it possible for Belco to purchase an additional box truck to meet the increased customer demand for pick-up, on-site shredding and container rentals. It will also offset the cost of extended hours of operation in the Document Destruction Department.

"We are grateful to the Solid Waste Authority for this grant and thank them for recognizing our expertise and experience in document destruction and recycling," said Anne

Haning, Executive Director at Belco Works.

The grant will also expand job opportunities and additional work for employees with disabilities and increase the community's awareness of what they are capable of achieving.

Belco Works recycles 100 percent of all destroyed materials. It shredded 309,000 pounds of documents and other recyclable material in 2009, saving 2,635 trees, 58,900 gallons of oil and 1,085,000 gallons of water.

**"Belco Works document destruction shredded 309,000 pounds of documents and other recyclable material in 2009."**

For more information on Belco Works Document Destruction, contact Sherri Marlin at 740-312-8173.

# Join the Arc, Save Money Advocacy Group Now Offers Group Purchasing

Membership in the advocacy organization, The Arc, now comes with an added benefit – Empowered Group Purchasing.

The Arc of Ohio advocates for human rights, personal dignity and community participation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 60-year old group has teamed up with the Foundation For the Challenged and Pro-Op to create Empowered Group Purchasing, which provides discounts, ranging from 10 to 50 percent, on medical supplies, insurance products, and other items for people with disabilities, their families and community supporters.

Arc membership, priced at \$25 for

individuals, is open to individuals with disabilities, their families, provider organizations, and community supporters such as businesses and other organizations. Membership fees help sustain statewide Arc advocacy while Empowered Group Purchasing volume sales help fund programs. An added benefit is that a majority of each membership fee is returned to the local chapter of the Arc.

For information on how to join the Belmont County Chapter of The Arc, contact president, Sandy Kutcher, at 695-4181 or Linda Link at 740-695-1996. You may also call 1-800-875-2723 or log onto [www.TheArcofOhio.org](http://www.TheArcofOhio.org)

**“Empowered Group Purchasing functions like a discount club without walls.”**

## Selecting a Provider is Up to You



### - It's Your Choice

People with disabilities have the right to choose from among any qualified provider statewide. There are a number of agency and individual providers in Belmont and surrounding counties who can take care of your needs for Day Services, Community Employment, and Residential, just to name a few. A complete list of providers can be found on the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities' website, [www.bcbdd.org](http://www.bcbdd.org). A frequently-updated booklet of all providers is also available for those who do not have internet access. Call the Office of Provider Development and Support at 740-695-0407, ext. 340, and one will be sent to you.

Your SSA at the Belmont County Board will be happy to explain the provider selection process to you and assist you in choosing a provider for the first time or to change the one you have now. Call 740-695-7433 for more information.

**goodbye for the summer!**



Faculty and staff at the School of Hope wave goodbye to students as they depart for home on the last day of school, which was June 7th. This farewell that takes place in the parking lot is a school tradition.

330 Fox-Shannon Place  
St. Clairsville, OH 43950



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

## Cornhole Games Being Made, Sold by TC Members

Cornhole is great fun, mainly because it can be played anywhere by people of all ages and abilities. This popularity is especially evident at Tomorrow's Corner, where the cornhole games are being made, from start to finish, by people with disabilities.

"We make them, paint them, shell corn from cobs, make and fill the bags, and when the final product is ready, we play," said Lisa Kazmirski. She noted that being able to see and understand the game and how it is made and played was fun for everyone, even staff.

Lisa said she is never sure how the painted cornhole boards will look, remarking "it's sort of outsider art meets graffiti." An exception to the randomness is the puzzle piece design, shown here, a popular symbol with autism support groups.

Special orders are being taken for the cornhole games. To order, call 740-695-1110.

