

HOPE HAPPENINGS

NEWS FROM HOPE SERVICES

Seeing Potential ~ Inspiring Opportunities

Happy
Easter



April 2025

Welcome to Spring and the Month of April!

Spring is in the air, and at HOPE Services, we are embracing the new season with excitement and renewed energy! As the days grow longer and the temperatures rise, we look forward to fresh opportunities, community engagement, and continued advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities.

April is a time of growth and new beginnings, and it is also a month filled with important awareness initiatives. This month, we recognize Autism Awareness Month, a time to celebrate neurodiversity and promote inclusion and understanding. We encourage everyone to take part in learning more about autism and supporting individuals in our community.

In addition, we take this time to express our gratitude to the incredible individuals and families we serve, as well as our dedicated staff and community partners. Your commitment and support make a difference every day, helping us create an inclusive and empowering environment for all.

Stay tuned for upcoming events and initiatives this spring. Whether it's participating in community activities, joining Voices of HOPE in advocacy efforts, or simply enjoying the beauty of the season, we are excited to share this journey with you.

Let's make April a month of growth, awareness, and connection! Happy Spring from all of us at HOPE Services!



2024 Annual Report

Scan the code

or visit

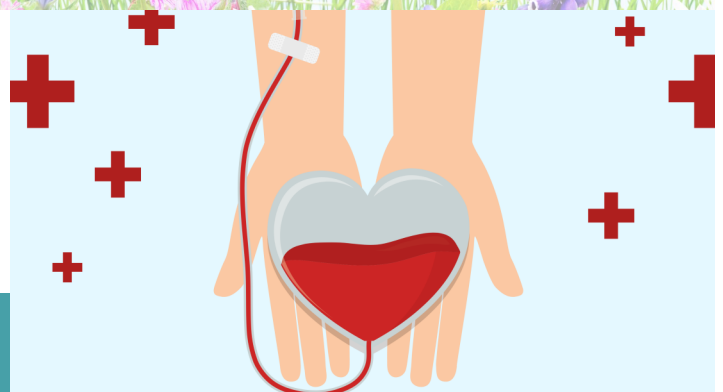
www.henrydd.org



Scan Code To View
2024 Annual Report

The next Board Meeting will be on
Wednesday, April 16th, 2025 at 4:00 PM
HOPE Services Activity Center.

HOPE Services office will close at
12:00pm on Friday, April 18th, 2025



BLOOD DRIVE

WHEN: May 29, 2025 11am-5pm

WHERE: HOPE Services Activity Center
135 E Maumee Ave, Napoleon, OH 43545

Anyone can save someone else's life, give others HOPE.

Young Children and Developing Literacy

Books are an important part of every child's development. Books are a way to encourage many skills. Developing small muscles in turning pages, increasing attention to an object, identifying pictures, and having a social experience are all learning opportunities that can occur as a book is being shared with a young child.

If you have not heard about the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, you may want to explore this great resource. Books are provided to children from birth through 5 years of age. It is a program that includes a book each month mailed to the child's home. In Henry County, you can enroll in this program through the United Way Website, through their Facebook Page, or by calling United Way (419-599-8176).

As you explore books with your child you can:

- Buy/use books that are appropriate for your child's skills. If they mouth items, use a fabric or plastic book. If they tear pages, try cardboard books. There will be times when your child tears pages! They are learning how to use books.
- Allow your child to turn the pages and point to the pictures or read the words on the page that they turned to. (We don't have to read a book in order with early learners).
- Point to pictures and label them or ask your child where an object is and let them point to the object.
- Point to the words as you read them.
- Just use your own words to tell the story. Make it up so that your child will be interested.
- Use LOTS of expression in your voice and make faces to express happy, surprise, being frightened, etc. When there is a sound like a car motor, an animal sound, etc., add that to the story with much emphasis.
- Sit face to face with your child while you look at a book so that they can see you read, see your face, and establish eye contact with you.
- Find fun places to look at books such as under the table, in a home made "tent" (a blanket over a table will work), outside, etc.

Make books FUN! Reading to your child while they are young develops an early interest in books and reading.



**Department of
Children & Youth**

Help Me Grow Early Intervention



YOUTH PROVIDER FAIR

On March 20th, HOPE Services held a provider fair for youth experiences with local service providers showcasing a wide array of options to support and empower youth in our area. The event, which brought together various organizations, was designed to help families and young individuals connect with programs that promote growth, education, and well-being.

This fair was buzzing with activity as attendees explored tables filled with information about services ranging from independent living skills, career exploration, employment, and volunteering. It was an invaluable opportunity for both parents and young people to discover the variety of programs available in our community.

A huge thank you goes out to all the participating organizations and attendees who made this event such a success. It's clear that when we work together, we can create a stronger, more supportive environment for the youth in our community.

Let's continue supporting the next generation!



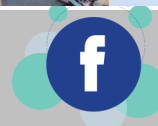
Employment Survey

Your feedback is important to us!
Please take a moment to complete the Employment Satisfaction Survey. If you need assistance with completing the survey, please contact Melinda Camp at 419-599-2892 Ext. 240.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YG3LB3R>

Follow Henry County Board of Developmental Disabilities on Facebook to keep up to date with all the latest updates and information!





Know someone who would make an awesome volunteer?

Share this opportunity with them and help us reach more individuals who are eager to make a difference!

Are you passionate about creating inclusive and empowering experiences for individuals with special needs? Do you want to make a positive impact in your community? If so, we invite you to volunteer with us for our upcoming Special Olympics and HARC recreational events!

Contact Zach Meister for Special Olympics at 419-260-2176 or Randy Barnes for HARC Recreation at 419-591-6798.

CELEBRATING IN APRIL

Employment Anniversaries

- Jennifer Cordes - Celebrating 28 years at Northwest State Community College
- Carrie Fuller - Celebrating 16 years at All God's Children Daycare
- Blake Stambaugh - Celebrating 15 years at HOPE Services
- John Stout - Celebrating 15 years at Walmart
- Zachary Parcher - Celebrating 7 years at Wood County Board of DD
- Juan Delgado - Celebrating 6 years at McDonald's Wauseon

- Cody Steen - Celebrating 4 years at Walmart
- Zachary Wendt - Celebrating 3 years at Pizza Hut Wauseon
- Brandon Smith - Celebrating 1 year at McDonald's Napoleon

April Birthdays

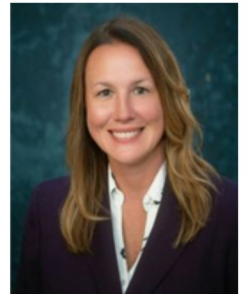
Christopher Hanson
Amanda Fahrer
Samantha Phillips
Christopher Elder
Victoria Michael
Nola Hoskins
Debra Thome
Alesha Ruoff

KELLY'S COLUMN

APRIL 2025

Ohio Counties Serving Over 108,000 Individuals with Disabilities

by Kelly Rieke
Superintendent



Did you know that Ohio counties serve well over 108,000 individuals with developmental disabilities?

Ohio offers a variety of resources for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Here are some key organizations and services:

1. Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD): The state agency provides information, funding, and oversight of services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
2. County Board of Developmental Disabilities: Each county has a local board that offers services, supports, and resources tailored to the community's needs including case management and services coordination.
3. Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council: This organization advocates for individuals with disabilities and promotes policies changes to improve their lives
4. Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) - is the designated protection and advocacy agency for individuals with disabilities in Ohio.
5. Ohio Department of Children and Youth Services: The state agency with a mission to promote positive, lifelong outcomes to Ohio youth through early intervention, quality education and family support programs.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- Nelson Mandela



QUOTE OF THE MONTH FROM JESSICA

"Life is about balance, and we all have to make the effort in areas that we can to enable us to make a difference."

-Orlando Bloom

We look forward to next month's quote!

Remembering those we lost...



Connie Cohrs

Former HOPE School Bus Driver

We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of our former colleague during this difficult time. Our thoughts are with you.

From Your Friends at HOPE Services



March has been nothing short of a whirlwind for us! We kicked off the month with our annual Polar Walk and Pancake Breakfast in celebration of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. A huge thank you to the Defiance College football team for their incredible support—they came out early to help with setup, cooking, and clean-up. This year, Chief Edward Legg and his family had the honor of leading the walk, which began at HOPE Services and circled the block. The windy day and occasional snowflakes certainly added an authentic "polar" touch!

From March 7–9, we traveled to Columbus for the 2025 Special Olympics Ohio Indoor Winter Games. A team of 50 athletes, coaches, and staff competed in cheerleading, basketball, and swimming—and what a weekend it was!

⇒ **Basketball:** Our Men's D5 team proudly returned as State Champions in their division and will advance to a higher division next year. The Lady Cougars claimed Silver in theirs.

⇒ **Cheerleading:** The Cheerleading team shone brightly, bringing home Gold in the Novice Non-Mount division.

⇒ **Swimming:** Our swimmers achieved remarkable results across the board:

Jaeson Donnett: 5th in 25m backstroke, 4th in 25m freestyle
 Tracy Rose: 5th in 50m freestyle, 3rd in 25m freestyle
 Ryan Moore: 3rd in 25m freestyle, 4th in 50m freestyle
 Griffin Tanner: 6th in 25m freestyle
 Savannah Rose: 6th in 25m backstroke, 8th in 25m freestyle
 Phillip Brown: 7th in 25m backstroke, 3rd in 25m freestyle
 David Rose: 4th in 25m backstroke, 7th in 25m freestyle



Congratulations, Cougars, for all your hard work and dedication --- it truly paid off!

Our Henry County Delegation was very well represented at the Winter Games. During the Opening Ceremony, our very own member of the Special Olympics Ohio Board of Directors, Krysta Delgado, played the National Anthem on her flute. Our State Athlete Leader Council member, Lydia Knepper, was able to serve as a judge for the Cheerleading Competition and she also recited the Officials oath. Three of our athlete leaders helped to plan the athlete dance on Friday night and they even created the balloon arch/photo booth area. Way to step up and take the lead on this project.

Our spring sports are now underway, with volleyball and track and field practices in progress. Special thanks to Defiance College for allowing us to use the Smart Center Indoor Track during the colder days. This fantastic resource is helping our athletes train on a track like what they'll compete on soon. Home volleyball games begin in April—check out the attached schedule for dates and cheer on our athletes!

Two of our Men's Team 2 basketball players, Skylar Miller and Zach Parcher, are participating in a Unified Basketball tournament. Each week, they team up with athletes from Lucas County Special Olympics and University of Toledo basketball players. Unified sports create an inclusive environment where athletes with and without intellectual disabilities train and compete together. Skylar and Zach have been enjoying every moment of this exciting experience.

Our esports program is thriving, thanks to generous support from the Napoleon Fraternal Order of Eagles #4428, Henry County Community Foundation, Ridgeville American Legion Post #454, Napoleon American Legion Post #300, and an anonymous donor.

Their contributions enabled us to purchase:

4 Nintendo Switches
 10 gaming laptops
 Several game licenses
 2 Xbox consoles and Additional controllers

With these new resources, our team is ready to take on the upcoming esports season!

On February 27, we proudly hosted the 2025 Four County Career Center – Business Professionals of America (BPA) Special Olympics bowling tournament in Napoleon. The event brought together schools from across the four-county area for a day of friendly competition, with approximately 140 students participating. A special thanks goes to the BPA students for their incredible efforts. They not only fundraised to pay for this event but also volunteered their time to ensure everything ran smoothly. Their dedication and hard work truly made this opportunity possible for the athletes. Looking ahead, the BPA students will host another exciting event, a Special Olympics School Age Track Meet on Thursday, May 1, at Napoleon High School. We're so grateful for their continued support in creating inclusive and empowering experiences for all.

On March 23, Defiance College hosted our first annual Unified Basketball Game, bringing together 31 Special Olympics athletes from Henry and Defiance Counties and 25 Defiance College basketball athletes. Several Defiance College coaches and staff also joined in the fun, supporting the teams as they showcased their skills and teamwork. The event featured four thrilling games filled with impressive basketball action, great moves, and incredible sportsmanship, creating unforgettable moments for everyone involved. It was a true celebration of inclusivity and community spirit!

There's still time to sign up for spring and summer sports! If you're interested in cycling, golf, softball, horseback, summer cheer, flag football, or esports, be sure to contact Zach or Renita for schedules.

Our spring session of Young Athletes will start soon. The spring session will take place on April 5, 12, 26, May 5, and May 17. These sessions will take place at HOPE Services (135 E. Maumee Avenue, Napoleon) from 10 am – 11 am. Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Young Athletes provides children with activities and games that meet their individual skill and ability levels, while allowing them to play together in a fun and inclusive environment. The program shows that all children should be valued for their talents and abilities. Children of all abilities can take part. We offer this program at no charge. You do not need to be at every session to participate. Questions or to sign up, just contact us. Zach 419-260-2176 or Renita 419-601-2372.

Enjoy your spring and take time to smell the flowers!

Coach Zach and Coach Renita





Young Athletes

Sponsored by:
Henry County Special Olympics

Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sports based play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sports skills like running, kicking, and throwing. Young Athletes offers families, teachers, caregivers, and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with children.

Benefits of Young Athletes

- Motor skill Development
- Social, Emotional, and Learning skills
- Fun Learning environment
- Inclusive play builds acceptance
- Weekly Physical activity

When & Where

SATURDAY, APRIL 5
SATURDAY, APRIL 12
SATURDAY, APRIL 26
SATURDAY, MAY 3
SATURDAY, MAY 17

Sessions are from
10 am - 11 am
HOPE SERVICES
135 E. MAUMEE AVE,
NAPOLÉON, OHIO

Questions?? Call or Email:
Zach Meister 419-260-2176
zmeister@henrydd.org
Renita Kuehner 419-601-2372
rkuehner@henrydd.org



HENRY COUNTY SPECIAL OLYMPICS

GOLF

-TOURNAMENT-

22
JUNE
2025



2-6
pm

LOTS OF GAMES & PRIZES



IRON WOOD GOLF CLUB,
WAUSEON, OHIO
REGISTER NOW

Registration also available on Eventbrite.com

ZACH MEISTER 419-260-2176
RENITA KUEHNER 419-601-2372

COUGARS HOME VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

ALL GAMES PLAYED AT THE FILLING HOME GYM
N-160 SR 108, NAPOLÉON

APRIL 15 - HENRY VS. WOOD CTY - MODIFIED & TRADITIONAL - GAME TIME 6 PM

APRIL 16- HENRY VS. FULTON CTY - MODIFIED & TRADITIONAL - GAME TIME 6 PM

APRIL 22- HENRY VS. LUCAS CTY - MODIFIED & TRADITIONAL - GAME TIME 6 PM

APRIL 23- HENRY VS. MARION CTY - MODIFIED & TRADITIONAL - GAME TIME 6 PM

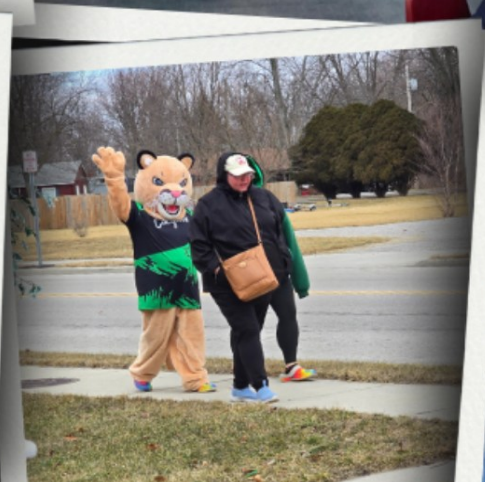
JUNE 3- HENRY VS. SANDUSKY CTY - MODIFIED & TRADITIONAL - GAME TIME 6 PM

ALL GAMES START AT 6 PM
NO ADMISSION CHARGE *** SNACK BAR OPEN**



Henry County
Special
Olympics
Ohio





2025 Henry County Special Olympics Polar Walk
for DD Awareness Month



**ESPORTS LOVING
new EQUIPMENT**



**Mens Team 1
D5 STATE CHAMPIONS**



HENRY COUNTY DELEGATION







WHAT'S NEW
THIS MONTH?

Voices of HOPE

Self-Advocacy Group

Join us for an exciting behind-the-scenes
tour of the Toledo Express Airport!

Date: April 24, 2025

Time: 2:00pm (Leaving from HOPE at 1:15pm)

Location: Toledo Express Airport (11013
Airport Hwy, Swanton, OH)

What to Expect:

- ✓ Explore the airport's accessibility features for individuals with disabilities
- ✓ Learn about services and supports available to travelers
- ✓ Share your feedback and advocate for improvements
- ✓ Go behind the scenes to see how the airport operates
- ✓ Connect with airport staff and fellow self-advocates

Your voice matters! Help make travel more inclusive for everyone.

Attendees will receive a special gift!

RSVP to Keri Bunke by April 18th to
kbunke@henrydd.org or call 419-599-2892



Voices of HOPE

April Meeting

Attention Self-Advocates ages 14+!

Join us for a night learning about fire safety, using fire extinguishers and things we can do in preparation at home.

WHEN?

WHERE?

TIME

Thursday, April 17th, 2025

HOPE Services Activity Center

5:00pm Presentation

Dinner & Pop/Water Provided After

Please RSVP to guarantee enough food and to specify any food sensitivities



First Five that sign up and attend will get a prize!

Every advocate that attends will be entered into a drawing to win a special door prize!

RSVP to Keri Bunke at kbunke@henrydd.org or call 419-599-2892



NINJA WARRIOR—MICHELLE WARNKY BUURMA

What a great night getting inspired by Michelle! Putnam County Self Advocacy group People First invited Voices of HOPE to attend and we had a wonderful time!

Pictured from left to right are Bethany Mathers, Michelle Warnky Buurma and Sam Dorrington

Escape House

Voices of HOPE and HARC recently took a trip to the Wood County Tech House and conquered the Escape House challenge, with time to spare!

Huge thanks to Wood County for welcoming us and giving us the opportunity to explore and learn. Everyone left feeling inspired, finding something they can advocate for themselves or others.

To top it off, we wrapped up the evening with a delicious dinner at Culver's! it was a night full of





HARC Recreation Adult Calendar

April-June 2025

Contact Randy Barnes at 419-591-6798 or 419-599-2892 to sign up and pay ONE WEEK prior to the event

DATE	EVENT	TIME	COST	LOCATION
Wednesday, April 9, 2025	Cook Night	5:00-7:00pm	\$5.00	HOPE Activity Center
Saturday, April 12, 2025	Pro Football Hall of Fame	8:00am-6:00pm	\$45+ \$ to eat	Canton
Monday, April 21, 2025	Who's Line is It Show	5:00pm-11:00pm	\$55.00	Embassy in Fort Wayne
Wednesday, April 23, 2025	Dragons & Mythical Beasts	4:00pm-10:30pm	\$35.00	Findlay
Wednesday, April 30, 2025	BINGO	6:00-8:00pm	\$5.00	HOPE Activity Center
Friday, May 9, 2025	CopperMoon glass art	4:30pm-9:00pm	\$22.00	Toledo
Sunday, May 11, 2025	Toledo Air Show	11:00am-4:30pm	\$35+ \$ to eat	Toledo Airport
Wednesday, May 14, 2025	Cook Night	5:00pm-7:00pm	\$5.00	HOPE Activity Center
Saturday, May 17, 2025	Out to Eat and Movie	11:00am-6:30pm	\$35+	TBA
Tuesday, May 20, 2025	Cedar Point day	8:00am-10:00pm		Cedar Point
Sunday, May 25, 2025	Mud Hens	4:00pm-9:30pm	\$20+ money to eat	Fifth Third Field
Saturday, June 7, 2025	NASCAR Truck Race	9:30am-8:00pm	\$40+ \$ to eat	MIS
Wednesday, June 11, 2025	Cook Night	5:00pm-7:00pm	\$5.00	HOPE Activity Center
Friday, June 20, 2025	Movie at HOPE	5:00pm-8:00pm	\$5.00	HOPE Activity Center
Wednesday, June 25, 2025	BINGO	6:00pm-8:00pm	\$5.00	HOPE Activity Center
Saturday, June 28, 2025	Wright Patterson Air Base	7:30am-8:30pm	\$ to eat	Dayton

HARC Recreation Events –Kids Calendar Ages 6-15

April-June 2025

Contact Randy Barnes at 419-591-6798 or 419-599-2892 to sign up (required) Pay ONE WEEK prior to the event

DATE	EVENT	TIME	COST		LOCATION
Saturday, April 26,	Legoland	8am-5pm	\$20+ \$ to eat	yes	Auburn Hills or
Saturday, May 03,	Skyzone	8:30am-4:00pm	\$27+ \$ to eat	yes	Toledo (leave
Sunday, June 22,	African Safari	8am-5pm	\$25+ \$ to eat	yes	Port Clinton

HARC SUMMER ADULT CAMP



Swimming **NATURE HIKES**
CAMP FIRES Canoeing
 Smores **ANIMAL STUDY**
SUPPER Tall Tales
 Games **ARTS & CRAFTS**



Dates: July 30 - August 2, 2025 (4 days/3 Nights)

Who: Adults 16 & Up

Where: Camp Palmer, Fayette, Ohio

Cost: \$250 per person (scholarships available)

Come for just the day \$60

Sign up by calling: Randy Barnes: 419-591-6798

Sponsored By: HARC, INC.



HARC SUMMER School Age CAMP

Dates: August 3-6, 2025 (4 days/3 Nights)

Who: School Age (ages 6-15)

Where: Camp Palmer, Fayette, Ohio

Cost: \$250 per person (scholarships available)

Come for just the day \$60

Sign up by calling: Randy Barnes: 419-591-6798

Swimming
 Camp Fires
 Singing
 Nature Hikes
 Crafts

Canoeing
 Animal Study
 Tall Tales
 Games



Sponsored By: HARC, INC.



Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term “spectrum” in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity.

Autism spectrum disorder includes conditions that were previously considered separate – autism, Asperger’s syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder and an unspecified form of pervasive developmental disorder. Some people still use the term “Asperger’s syndrome”, which is generally thought to be at the mild end of autism spectrum disorder.

Autism spectrum disorder begins in early childhood...Often children show symptoms of autism within the first year, while some show it in early infancy.

Autism spectrum disorder has no single known cause. According to www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20352928#:~:text=Autism%20spectrum%20disorder, there are probably many causes, due to the complexity of the disorder and the fact that symptoms and severity may vary. The site states that genetics and environmental factors may play a part.

Certain factors increase a child’s risk, such as:

- *your child’s sex
- *family history
- *other disorders
- *extremely preterm babies
- *parents ages

-submitted by Stephanie Jones

SUBMIT

Do you have an article or photos to submit? We are always looking for stories. Submit items of interest to Keri Bunke: kbunke@henrydd.org



The days are getting longer, the temperatures are getting warmer, and nature awakens with blooming flowers and returning of wildlife.

Spending time outside offers numerous benefits for your physical and mental wellbeing! Improving mood, reducing stress, improving sleep, boosting vitamin D levels, and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Enjoy Outdoor Spring Activities:

Go for a walk, enjoy the fresh air and scenery, maybe even catch the sunset

Gardening, planting flowers or vegetables

Go for a bike ride

Enjoy outdoor meals with friends and family

Simply sit outside and enjoy the sunshine

Outdoor sporting events: baseball, softball, track and field

Mark your calendars for some fun upcoming events....

Saturday, April 5 – Saturday, May 31st – Saturday mornings – Young Athletes 10-11 am at HOPE Services

Thursday, May 22 – Henry County Special Olympics Torch Run/Walk and HOPE Services Brats Bash – 10:30 am Downtown Napoleon and HOPE Services

Sunday, June 22 – Henry County Special Olympics Golf Scramble – Iron Wood Country Club, Wauseon 2-6 pm

Saturday, July 19 – Napoleon Cork & Keg Festival 5-9 pm, downtown Napoleon. All proceeds benefit our local athletes.

Contact Us

www.henrydd.org

HOPE Services Office	419-599-2892
Special Olympics	419-260-2176
HARC Recreation	419-591-6798

**Scan Code to sign up
for the newsletter!**



Seeing Potential – Inspiring Opportunities



Our Mission

HOPE Services is committed to creatively working in partnership with eligible individuals and their families to discover, pursue and achieve what is important to them.

HOPE Services does not discriminate in provision of services or employment because of disability, race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age.