

HOPE Happenings

November 2025 Edition

News from HOPE Services

Seeing Potential ~ Inspiring Opportunities

HOPE Happenings is Going Digital!

In an effort to better serve our community and keep you more connected than ever, HOPE Services is excited to announce that HOPE Happenings is transitioning to a digital newsletter! We know how much valuable information is shared each month, and we want to make it easier for you to access updates, events, and announcements whenever you need them.

Where to Find Information

Events Calendar

All upcoming activities and events can now be found online at www.henrydd.org. Our new events calendar includes:

- HOPE Services events
- HARC meetings and activities
- Special Olympics events
- Voices of HOPE gatherings

You can view the calendar in list or traditional calendar format, and even filter by category—so you can choose to see just one type of event or all of them at once!

Thank you for embracing this change with us as we continue to grow and improve how we serve our community. We're excited for what's ahead and hope you'll stay connected with us online!

Stay Connected on Facebook

In addition to our website, we will also be posting events and updates on our HOPE Services - Henry County Board of Developmental Disabilities Facebook page. Be sure to like and follow us so you never miss important announcements, reminders, or community happenings.

Why the Change?

Moving to a digital format allows us to:

- Share information more quickly and efficiently
- Keep details updated in real time
- Provide a more user-friendly and environmentally conscious option
- Help you stay connected to everything happening in and around HOPE Services



To sign up for the Newsletter to come directly to your email, scan the code to the left.

www.henrydd.org

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Where did it go?

These items are now posting on our Facebook Page at HOPE Services - Henry County Board of Developmental Disabilities

BIRTHDAYS & WORK ANNIVERSARIES

JESSICA'S MONTHLY QUOTE

These items are now posting on our website www.henrydd.org

HOPE SERVICES EVENTS

HARC EVENTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS GAMES

VOICES OF HOPE GATHERINGS



HOPE Services will be collecting food items and personal toiletry items throughout the month of November. As the government shutdown continues, SNAP benefits may not be issued in November, which puts many people in our community at risk. We will collect pantry staples, as well as personal hygiene items, which will be distributed to local food banks each week throughout November. Donations can be dropped off at the HOPE Services office Monday through Friday from 8am-4pm. If you would like to donate items, but cannot drop off at that time, contact Melissa Beman at 419-906-9749 to make arrangements. If you prefer to donate money to a local food bank, please let us know and we can put you in contact with an area food bank. We appreciate your help in feeding our community!



Welcome Our New Board Member!

HOPE Services is excited to welcome Harmony Downing as the newest member of the Henry County Board of Developmental Disabilities!

We appreciate her dedication to our mission and look forward to the positive impact she will make in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities in our community.

(Pictured are Harmony and Kelly Rieke, Superintendent)

EARLY INTERVENTION NOVEMBER PLAYGROUP

JOIN OUR EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM FOR A FUN FOR ALL FALL PLAYGROUP!

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH, 2025
9:30AM-11AM & 5:30PM-7PM**

**AT CROSSROADS CHURCH
601 BONAPARTE DR. NAPOLEON**

The next Board Meeting will be on Tuesday, November 25th, 2025 at 4:00 PM
HOPE Services Activity Center.

HOPE Services will be closed the following:

November 11th, 2025 for Columbus Day.

November 27th & 28th for Thanksgiving.

Please call 419-599-2892 option 6 to speak to the on call SSA

Remembering those we lost...



Dustin Brown

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

From Your Friends at HOPE Services

Understanding the Role of a "Chosen Representative" in Developmental Disabilities Services

Flexibility Empowers Individuals Without Guardians to Select Decision-Makers

The landscape of support for adults receiving developmental disabilities (DD) services is evolving, with a growing emphasis on autonomy, empowerment, and personal choice. Central to this approach is the concept of the **Chosen Representative**—a formal mechanism that allows individuals without a legal guardian to designate a trusted adult to assist with or make decisions regarding their DD programs and services.

A Safety Net for Self-Direction

The Chosen Representative serves as a vital bridge for individuals who may find it challenging to navigate complex service decisions independently. According to state regulations, a Chosen Representative is an adult authorized to make decisions about developmental disabilities programs and services on behalf of the person receiving them.

Key Requirements and Limitations

- **No Guardian Required:** This option is available only to individuals who do not have a court-appointed legal guardian.
- **Written Authorization is Mandatory:** The designation must be made in writing. While the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) provides an official form, any written document that clearly expresses the individual's intent is valid.
- **Revocable:** The authorization is not permanent and must be revoked if the person receiving services wishes to end the arrangement.

Strict Rules to Prevent Conflict of Interest

To ensure that the individual's best interests remain the top priority, specific rules govern who may serve as a Chosen Representative:

1. **Must Be an Adult:** The representative must be at least 18 years old.
2. **No Financial Conflict:** The representative cannot have a financial interest in the decision being made. For example, a staff member of a service provider agency cannot act as a Chosen Representative to enroll the person in that agency's services.
3. **Exclusions:** A Chosen Representative may not admit the person they represent into a developmental center.

In most cases, the designated representative is a trusted parent, family member, or close friend—someone who already plays a supportive role in the individual's life.

Specific vs. General Authority: The Substitute Decision Maker

The regulations also define a separate, more limited role known as the **Substitute Decision Maker**. This person is authorized to make a single, specific decision within the developmental disabilities system.

The distinction is important: both the Chosen Representative and the Substitute Decision Maker have authority limited strictly to DD services. For decisions involving other areas—such as healthcare, housing, or financial matters—a broader legal document, such as a **Power of Attorney**, is required.

Empowering Choice and Advocacy

By formalizing the Chosen Representative role, the developmental disabilities system provides a structured, legally recognized method for supporting individual choice. This framework ensures that every person receiving DD services has both a voice and a trusted advocate to help guide their care decisions—strengthening self-determination and promoting dignity in every aspect of service planning and delivery.

Mina and the Nutcracker
Abbreviated Performance
December 20th | 1:00



Tickets



\$15.00

This 40-minute sensory-friendly adaptation of the classic Nutcracker story is designed specifically for families with young children and individuals who may benefit from a more flexible theater environment. Meet Mina, The Nutcracker, and the Sugar Plum Fairy following the performance!



Meet "The Best" – A Teammate Who Always Goes the Extra Mile

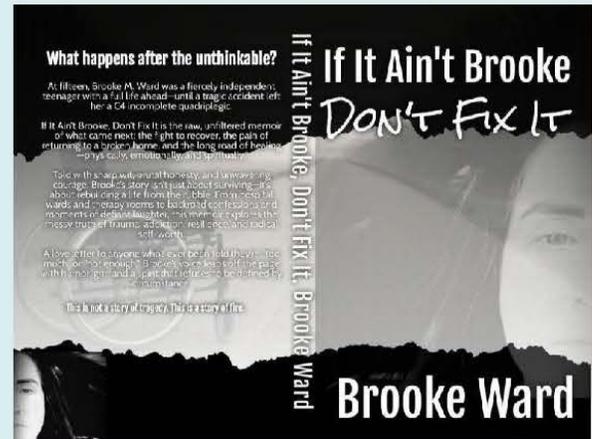
Around the store, there's one nickname that stands out: "*The Best*." It's a title affectionately given to Johnathon by his coworkers, and for good reason. Day after day, he proves just how fitting it is.

Whether it's stepping in to lend a hand when a task needs an extra push, sharing knowledge with newer team members, or simply offering a positive word to brighten someone's day, Johnathon consistently goes above and beyond. His willingness to help doesn't stop at his own responsibilities he looks out for the entire team, ensuring that everyone has what they need to succeed.

Coworkers say his dedication makes the workplace feel more like a community. "He's always there when you need him," one team member shared. "No matter how busy things get, he makes time to help and that's why we call him *The Best*."

It's employees like Johnathon who set the tone for teamwork and create a culture of support. His actions remind us that success isn't just about individual effort it's about lifting each other up along the way.

Thank you, Johnathon, for living up to your nickname and showing us all what it means to be *The Best*!



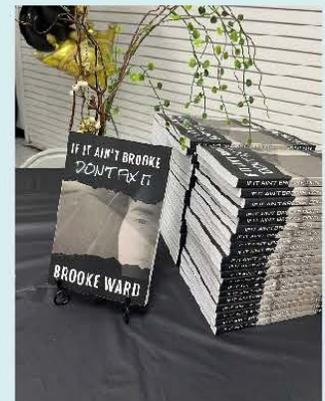
Celebrating Success: Brooke Publishes First Book

We are excited to share some wonderful news – Brooke has officially become a published author! Her new book, *If It Ain't Brooke Don't Fix It*, was recently released and has already been met with enthusiasm and support from friends, family, and the community.

To mark this exciting accomplishment, Brooke held two book signing events, where many had the opportunity to meet the author, purchase a signed copy, and hear firsthand about the journey of writing and publishing.

In addition, Brooke was invited to speak at the Liberty Center pep rally, where she inspired the crowd with her story of perseverance and determination. Her message highlighted the importance of following your dreams and believing in yourself - reminding everyone that great things can be achieved with dedication and passion.

We are proud to celebrate Brooke's achievements and look forward to seeing the positive impact her work will continue to have on our community and beyond. Congratulations, Brooke, on this incredible milestone!



Let's get cooking

Cook Night sponsored by HARC Inc.



This month's Cook Night was a hit as everyone came together to prepare a delicious down-home meal featuring a creamy copycat Cracker Barrel hashbrown casserole, fluffy scrambled eggs, savory sausage links, and golden biscuits coated with cinnamon sugar for the perfect sweet crunch.

Participants worked together to measure, mix, and cook each dish — filling the kitchen with mouthwatering aromas and plenty of smiles. The evening wrapped up with a shared meal that everyone was proud to have made from scratch. It was a fun and tasty way to build cooking skills, teamwork, and confidence in the kitchen!

If you are interested in joining the group sign up by contacting Randy Barnes at 419-591-6498 or 419-599-2892.

Hope to see you next month!





🏀 October Highlights –Henry County Special Olympics

October has been full of energy, teamwork, and community spirit for Henry County Special Olympics! We kicked off the month by returning to the basketball court, with both **youth and adult teams** jumping into the season. Practices have been lively, and our athletes are excited to sharpen their skills and compete together.

🎯 Our **cornhole program** has taken off in a big way! We've been averaging **30 athletes per practice**, and the enthusiasm is contagious. On **October 18**, we proudly brought **7 athlete teams and 3 unified teams** to the **Northwest Regional Cornhole Tournament** in Bowling Green. It was a fantastic day of competition, friendship, and Cougar pride!

🏐 October brings **Unified Volleyball Games with Wood County Special Olympics**. Several of our athletes play alongside community members each week, creating a fun and inclusive environment to build friendships and practice volleyball skills.

🍕 Our **Flag Football Team** had a special opportunity to tour **Frozen Specialties, Inc.** in Archbold. Athletes learned how FSI is one of the most profitable plants in its division and enjoyed some delicious pizza while connecting with staff. We're incredibly grateful for the continued support FSI provides to the Cougars!

🏈 Before heading to the **State Flag Football Tournament on October 24**, **Team 1** scrimmaged with **Defiance County on October 22**. Thanks to **Defiance College**, we were able to use the

Smart Center when weather conditions turned rough. That extra practice time was invaluable to all the athletes helping each other improve, and coaches were able to fine-tune strategies. We're always thankful to Defiance County for their partnership and hospitality.

🌟 Athlete Leader Spotlight

Our **Athlete Leaders** have been busy this month, showing up with heart and hustle at every turn!

Many participated in the Girls Run the City event along with Health Messenger Krysta Delgado in Columbus on October 5. This event was meant to bring light to inequities in women's health care, and especially women with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Krysta was able to present to doctors in the Columbus area about her own personal experiences.

They helped plan the Special Olympics Trunk and work it at the **HOPE Services Trunk or Treat** and set up at the event hosted by **Wildcat Nutrition**. These Halloween celebrations are always a favorite, and our leaders love engaging with the community while spreading joy. Stay tuned for more updates on our Athlete Leaders and the incredible impact they continue to make!

😊 Young Athletes Program Returns This Fall – Building Skills, Confidence & Inclusion for Ages 2–7!

Don't forget our fall sessions of Young Athletes will run November 1, 8, 15, December 6, 13, and 20th. They will be held at HOPE Services (135 E. Maumee Avenue, Napoleon) from 10 am – 11 am. Each week will include games and fun activities that encourage movement and gross motor skill activities. This program is open to all kids in Henry County ages 2- 7. To sign up or if you have questions, please contact Zach (419-260-2176) or Renita (419-601-2372).

Basketball season is just around the corner! Be sure to follow our Facebook page Special Olympics Ohio – Henry County to stay up to date on our events.

We hope everyone has a wonderful Thanksgiving season with your friends and family.

Coach Zach and Coach Renita



SPEAK UP

Synergy Conference Highlights

Our group of advocates had an inspiring trip to the Synergy Conference, filled with powerful speakers, new ideas, and renewed motivation to bring back to our community.



Key Takeaways from Our Favorite Sessions

Jan Spence – Cheer Leadership™

Jan brought high energy and real-life sports stories to show how small, intentional actions and

words can build trust, engagement, and a positive culture. She reminded us that anyone can be a leader simply by lifting others up.

John & Mark Cronin – John’s Crazy Socks

John and his dad shared how a dream became a thriving business centered on joy,



inclusion, and purpose. Their message was clear: inclusion creates stronger workplaces, better communities, and more happiness. Their challenge to us—“Spread Happiness”—stuck with everyone.



Cody Byrns – E.P.I.C. Resilience

Cody shared his journey of surviving a life-changing tragedy and introduced his E.P.I.C.

framework for resilience. His story encouraged us to shift perspective, build strength through adversity, and keep moving forward with purpose.



Bringing the Inspiration Home

We returned from Synergy feeling grateful, motivated, and full of fresh ideas to support our mission and community. The messages of leadership, inclusion, and resilience will continue to guide our work every day.

VOICES OF HOPE LEADERSHIP NIGHT & DINNER

Join us for the meeting, featuring officer elections and a delicious pasta dinner and dessert. This evening is to connect and take part in shaping the future of the group through your vote.



RSVP Required

Register To Save Your Spot By November 3rd

Please bring a canned good or personal care item. We plan to donate to the current food drive on behalf of Voice of HOPE.

RSVP at this link:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/qscx483/lp/cddc1cdb-1718-4f3a-a2f5-9005e169a7ef>

Call, text or email Keri Bunke
419-599-2892
419-966-3239
kbunke@henrydd.org

Or scan the code to RSVP!



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.

