

The Crusade

March 2024

Ross County Advocacy Newsletter



DD Awareness Month

The Kickoff of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month 2024 is Friday, March 1st, 10 AM. It begins with the DD Month Walk for Awareness in Downtown Chillicothe. Come to the courthouse Friday as Mayor Luke Feeney and our county commissioners declare March DD Awareness Month.

Those wanting to walk should meet on the corner of Paint & Water St. by 10 AM. We will have food trucks with great food to try and things to do near the baseball diamond in the park after the walk. We will have activities if the weather permits.

On the 7th, there is an Art Show at the Pump House Art Gallery. The show opens at 6:30pm. The DD showcase will be on display through the month of March.

Also, on March 8th, 15th and 22nd there will be food trucks at the Ross County Board of DD Administration Building from 11-2pm. The address is 167 W. Main St., Chillicothe. Everyone is welcome.

In the News



Figure 1 Starbucks drink

Starbucks is making changes to make its stores are more inclusive and accessible to employees and customers. The company has new accessibility guidelines to help with independence, choice, and ease for all people with disabilities.

These new standards apply to all newly built and renovated company-operated stores in the U.S. Some of the changes include barrier-free pathways and lower counters to provide wheelchair access, optimized acoustics and lighting, power-operated doors, and a visual status board to notify customers when their order is being prepared and when it's ready.



Special Olympics News

The special Olympics celebrity basketball game promises to be a must see. It is being held at the CHS Hatton gym at 6 pm March 20, 2024. Admission is free, and donations are being accepted. The Special Olympics Trailblazers will host a team of local celebrities. The coaches are Bryan Alley, the Southeastern boys' basketball coach and Alan Blue, the Unioto boys' basketball assistant coach. Players for the celebrity team includes local celebrities Jillian Bluck—Adena High School, Ryan Wade—Chillicothe Fire Department, Tetrin Betts—YMCA of Ross County, Jeff Lehner—Ross County Auditor, Kristen Kaiser—Big Brother Big Sisters, Clay Archer—Ride the Wave Show, Quinn Dunn—State Highway Patrol, Matt Thornsberry—Union-Scioto School District, Tiffany Steiner—Ross County Board of DD, David Strickland—State Farm Insurance, Allen Hawk—Ross County Parks District, Clay Beeler—Huntington Highschool Football Coach, Don Mishlan—First Capital Enterprises, Steve Gilliland—US Navy Veteran & Special Olympics Coach, Chris Hiles—St. Peter's Catholic Church & Special Olympics Coach. Cheerleaders for the Celebrity Team are Karen Graves—Southeastern HS

Cheer Coach and Kelli Johnson—SE District for OH US Senator JD Vance. Celebrity Photographer will be Robert McGraw and the Celebrity officials will be Jamie Bryans, Dave Sarver, and Lynn Johnson. Go Trailblazers!

Health and Wellness



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting a flu vaccine yearly. While CDC recommends getting flu shots before the end of October, getting a late flu shot can be better than not getting one at all. The flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent the flu and any related complications.

Prevention Tips In order to avoid the flu:

- cover coughs and sneezes,
- stay home when sick,
- lather up (wash your hands often),
- mask up,
- use infection control procedures,
- sleeve up to get your flu vaccine,
- doorknobs, handles, and tables,
- frequently clean surfaces like,

- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth,
- get enough sleep, exercise, and avoid stress,
- drink plenty of fluids,
- and avoid close contact with sick people.

Ohioans with developmental disabilities may be at a higher risk for the flu due to chronic lung conditions like asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis. The risk of aspiration may be increased due to difficulty swallowing, gastroesophageal reflux disease, seizure disorder, tube feeding, cerebral palsy, and suppressed or absent cough or sneeze reflex. In fact, 9 out of 10 people hospitalized with the flu had at least one underlying health condition.

Get to know...



Hello. My name is Austin Speakman. I'm 22 years old. I was diagnosed at an early age with autism spectrum disorder. I graduated from Chillicothe High School and Pickaway/Ross via the Option 4 program. During my school years, I was also diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder and

Depression. I worked as a student worker at Pickaway/Ross in the cafeteria kitchen before landing a job at the Pioneer Center Admin building as a self-advocate.

My current project is to make school for people with developmental disabilities a better experience, especially when it comes to labels. How I see it, no one should be labeled based on who they are as a person.

We are always looking for articles for this newsletter, if you want to add your birthday to the calendar, or if you'd like me to research and put information into the newsletter. You can contact me by email at bcoey@rossdd.org.