

# Employment First



## In Erie County

July/August 2016

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Kaitlyn S has a BIG personality, so it is only fitting that she has found a job

in our BIG new Kroger! Previously spending her days in a sheltered workshop, Kaitlyn is stepping out of the day program and stepping into community employment. Kaitlyn,

with a big smile, talks excitedly about her job at the new Kroger store. “My favorite part is talking with the customers. I get to meet a lot of people from out of town visiting Sandusky. The other day I met a woman from Florida!” Working in the community, Kaitlyn has the chance to meeting new people, try new things and build

great skills. “I got tired of working at the day program, it was the same thing everyday.” Since leaving the day program, Kaitlyn gets to enjoy more of her day, sleeping in if she wants. When not at work, she spends time with her family and her fiancé. In her new position, Kaitlyn is responsible for bagging groceries and helping people to their

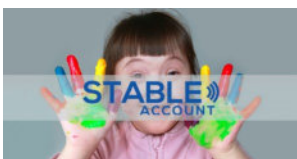
cars. “There is a special technique to the job, I really had to learn new job skills”, she shares as she boasts about the tips she earns!

Kaitlyn is excited about the changes in her life. She hopes to continue at Kroger and dreams of becoming a cashier!

Contact Jennifer Yingling via email at [Jyingling@ecbdd.org](mailto:Jyingling@ecbdd.org) to share your own story this year.

## STABLE ACCOUNT

In December 2014 ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) was passed. This legislation allows individuals with disabilities the opportunity to create tax-advantage accounts that can be used to help plan and save for life events.



Prior to ABLE, many Americans felt unable to save for their financial future because they could only have \$2,000 in cash savings to keep benefits

like SSI or Medicaid. This basically required people to remain in poverty to keep their benefits.

With ABLE, families and individuals will be able to save and plan without having to worry about the impact on SSI, Medicaid or other similar benefits.

Ohio is the first state to launch their ABLE accounts called ‘STABLE’. Ohio STABLE accounts are investment accounts, similar to a 529 college savings account or a 401k. You may have watched the commercial with Urban Meyer and

Josh Mandel talking about the new STABLE accounts



With a STABLE account you can plan, save, and pay for life events. “Qualified Expenses” include basic living costs, housing, transportation, education, assistive technology, employment training, personal support services, legal fees, health and wellness, and financial management costs.

STABLE accounts are not specific to individuals with a developmental disability. To be eligible for a STABLE account, the individual must have developed their disability before the age of 26 & must be living with their disability for at least one year or must expect their disability to last for at least one year. For more information or to sign up for your own STABLE Account visit [www.stableaccount.com](http://www.stableaccount.com).

Bring your in person questions to the November 9th FIN (Family Information Network) meeting as we host Clearwater COG Benefits Expert Dawn McDiffitt.

# Ohio Employment First - Path to Employment

[Employment First was signed into rule in 2012](#) by Governor Kasich. A part of the rule includes defining different words or phrases.

A primary part of the Employment First rule is the introduction of the 'Path to Employment'.

The Path to Employment is four different locations that an individual can be found, on their journey to community employment. Below I will outline the second two spots using

both the person friendly language seen on many path sheets and the definition as written in the Employment First rule.

**Spot 3.** *I'm not sure about work. I need help to learn more.*

**Rule-** *Individual is unsure about community employment and needs support to identify career options and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision to work*

**Spot 4.** *I don't think I want to work, but I may not know enough about it.*

**Rule -** *Individual does not express a desire to work and needs supports to learn more about careers and employment opportunities and the economic impact for their decision not to work.*

The shared point in both of these spots is the individual having information and supports they need to make an informed choice when it comes to employment.

When you know and understand the path you can figure out where you best fall. This will help you know what steps to take to reach your employment goals.

## Working in the Community - at a glance

About 32 different community employers currently employing those served by the ECBDD.



Average Hours Worked = 23.69 hours per week



73 individuals were born in or before 1959. They are either at or close to retirement age.

Average Wage = \$9.00 per hour



## Upcoming Events and Training Opportunity

### Self-Advocates of Erie County

This group of local self-advocates meets the first Monday of every month (second Monday if there is a holiday) from 4:00–5:30pm at the ECBDD.

Check out the group or contact [JYingling@eriecbdd.org](mailto:JYingling@eriecbdd.org) with any questions!

### Koinonia - Provider Transformation. Tuesday September 20th 11am-12pm at ECBDD

Join us and hear from this Cleveland area provider on their transformation from a sheltered workshop to a community based program. Learn how they work with individuals on all spots of the path to employment and

## Upcoming EVENTS

how they are involved in their community! Learning from others is a great way to get ideas for our own community!



Wishing everyone a fun and safe summer!



## Win BIG - Support Advocates Synergy Club 2016

Members of the Self-Advocates of Erie County have formed a group called Synergy Club. These 10 people are set a goal to raise the money needed to attend Synergy, a conference with a focus on teaching self-advocacy

and self-determination skills. Synergy is held annually in Columbus, Ohio. This conference provides a shared learning experience for individuals, family members, professionals and support staff. Taking fundraising

efforts into their own hands, the club set out to sell 300 raffle tickets to raise the \$3,000 necessary to attend the conference. With business and community support the group is happy to announce they sold all 300 raffle tickets.

If you have ever considered attending Synergy be sure to talk with a group member to learn more!



One of the 4 prize packs!

## STIR

Congratulations to our 2016 Project STIR graduates. On June 23rd, ten people graduated from the STIR program hosted at the ECBDD. Project STIR (Steps Towards Independence and Responsibility) is a self-advocacy training program that teaches tools a person can use to live a more self-determined life.

A highlight to the 7 week program was hearing from Sargent Synder of Sandusky PD about communication skills and from Fire Chief Degnan about the importance of problem solving and rights and responsibilities as a community member. Our very own Carrie Beier spoke about local board history and Jaclene Pisano shared about her

new FANs and community goals. Participants agree this local class was a great success!

*“STIR has taught me to be a better leader, to stand up for myself, to be a better person, to be a better friend, to respect people’s ideas and not to be afraid of trying new things.” - E.H.*



## Family Information Network (FIN)

FIN group is a chance for families and guardians to get together, learn something new and support each other.

Contact Megan at [metzel@eriecbdd.org](mailto:metzel@eriecbdd.org) for more information



Project STIR Class of 2016



Thanks for joining us in August as we hosted Ohio Sibs! September we will hear from more local providers. FIN meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month from 6-7:30pm at the ECBDD.



## Volunteering - Giving Back

If you are looking for work or if you just want to give back volunteering is a great thing. Our community has a great resource called The Volunteer Center. Located downtown Sandusky, this agency connects those who want to volunteer to agencies and programs looking for help. Many people served by the ECBDD volunteer in our community! To find your own volunteer opportunity check out VOLY at [Erie.Voly.org](http://Erie.Voly.org).

## Employment First In Erie County

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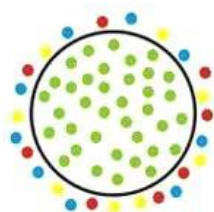


Employment is not a  
program. It's an outcome

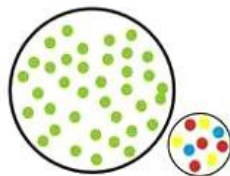
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### *From the Superintendent Carrie Beier*

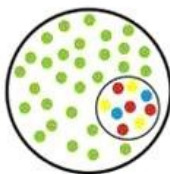
Our agency strives to empower people and their families while living, learning, working, and being a part of the community. We are committed to partnering to provide opportunities for employment and community integration for all individuals through person centered planning and supports. People will recognize possibilities, pursue opportunities, and achieve personal success as valued members within the community.



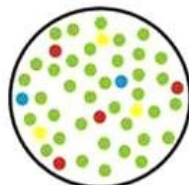
**Exclusion**



**Segregation**



**Integration**



**Inclusion**

Different Realities, Different Possibilities.  
Every person has a story. What's yours?