

# What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement can be defined in various ways. We choose to describe it as:

**The process of working collaboratively and building relationships among community members, who will work side-by-side in support of one another, with the outcome of making the community a better place to live.**



One of our agency goals is to become a respected, valuable and visible member of the Erie County community. We strive to achieve this through promoting the following Community Engagement initiatives to the individuals we serve, their family & friends and our local community:

- Community Connections
- FANS Network
- Me & My Community

# About ECBDD



At the end of each day, the Erie County Board of Developmental Disabilities has a simple mission: We exist to enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities.

The service we provide takes many forms. It ranges from early intervention, which can begin the day a child comes home from the hospital, to our senior citizens. The services we provide are throughout the life span.

We have made great strides in enhancing the quality of life for individuals. Our supports are unique and the approach is different from other county boards of D.D.



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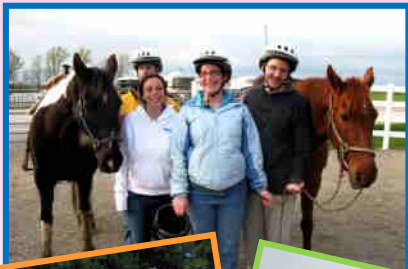


# Community Connections

Community Connections is a recreational tool used to introduce small groups of individuals, 18 years and older, to activities, leisure opportunities and organizations within Erie and the surrounding counties.

A Community Connections calendar of events and a planning guide are released monthly to those individuals enrolled in the program.

Activities may include dining, touring museums, art classes and various other adventures. These opportunities, which can occur locally and in neighboring counties, will give participants the chance to explore their interests and hobbies while getting to know the community they live in.



**Enroll today! Call 419-502-4130**



# FANS Network

**The Friends, Allies, and Neighbors (FANS) Network is a community volunteer movement consisting of individuals, of any age, with and without disabilities.**

Our mission is to help ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to live less segregated lives and enjoy the best possible quality of life according to their individual wants and needs. Community is better when people help and support one another; when you empower people, the possibilities are limitless.

**FANS help meet needs & fill gaps in our community. Examples include:**

- Donating household items
- Volunteering with local community organizations
- Helping fulfill special requests
- Assisting with Community Connections activities
- Mentoring
- Sharing a special skill

**No matter the reason, being a FAN is such a rewarding experience for all those involved. It is a great way:**

- To have fun, meet people, and make new friends
- To get valuable experience and boost your resume
- For local businesses to demonstrate a practical commitment to the community
- For youth to build confidence, self-esteem and communication skills
- To discard stereotypes and learn about things in new ways
- To contribute to something really worthwhile
- To help pioneer an entirely new way of doing things that may be significant far beyond the borders of Erie County

# Me & My Community

Me & My Community is a new approach to educating and introducing individuals, 14 years and older, to their surroundings and creating independence. Any board eligible individual, may take advantage of this benefit.



**Examples:**

- Personal calendar planning
- Accessing community resources to fulfill personal interests
- Volunteer placement opportunities

If you need assistance identifying leisure, educational or recreational opportunities within Erie County, **please call the Community Engagement Specialist at 419-502-4129.**

# Get Involved!

- Anyone can become a FAN!
- NO official commitment, NO formal membership and NO standard protocol.
- Share your contact information.
- FANS will receive a monthly virtual newsletter containing volunteer or giving opportunities to help support individuals with developmental disabilities & their families.
- If you are interested, respond to the message. If not, just delete.

**To learn more about volunteer opportunities call 419-502-4129 or visit [www.eriecbsd.org](http://www.eriecbsd.org)**

