

 CUYAHOGA COUNTY
Board of Developmental Disabilities
ANNUAL REPORT 2021



DEAR FRIENDS OF CUYAHOGA DD:

I do not need to tell you that 2021 was another extraordinary year. Indeed, 2021 brought many challenges for all of us in the disability community, but it also provided us with opportunities to be innovative in supporting the people we serve. As you will see in the following pages, across departments and service areas, we focused on one question: How could we use the resources available to us to make sure that people with developmental disabilities in Cuyahoga County are safe, supported and engaged in their communities, despite an ongoing global pandemic?

As you read on, you will see the responses to this question varied in size and scope, but all made a clear and direct impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities. Cuyahoga DD staff were inventive and holistic in their approach to supporting people with disabilities, serving the provider community and other community-based partners in addition to providing support directly to individuals and families.

In 2021, we:

- » Hosted COVID-19 vaccine clinics to ensure the health and safety of the people we serve;
- » Increased access to needed supports and services through the Family Supports Program and the use of Supplemental Funds;



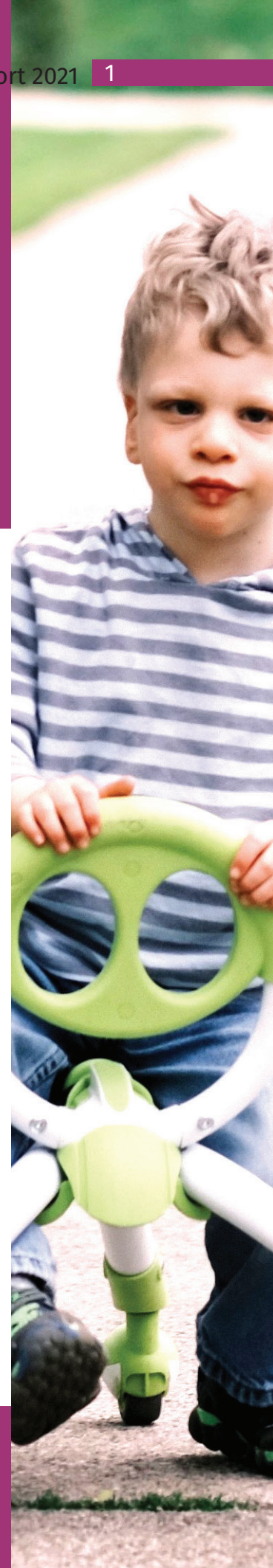
- » Helped create safer communities through partnerships with local municipalities;
- » Provided grants to local providers to help with recruitment and retention as they faced unprecedented workforce shortages; and
- » Supported community partners in creating more accessible, adaptive programming.

One thing that stands out to me about 2021 is the collaborative spirit of the Cuyahoga County disability community. At every turn, providers, families and community partners did whatever they could to make sure the people we serve received high-quality supports and services with as little disruption as possible in uncertain times. I am very proud of everything we achieved together in 2021; and I believe that after reading this report, you will be very proud of our community as well.

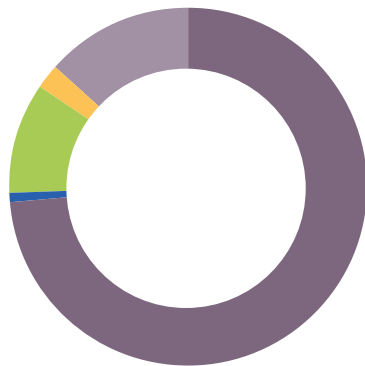
Kelly A. Petty

KELLY A. PETTY
Superintendent & CEO

2021 FINANCIALS



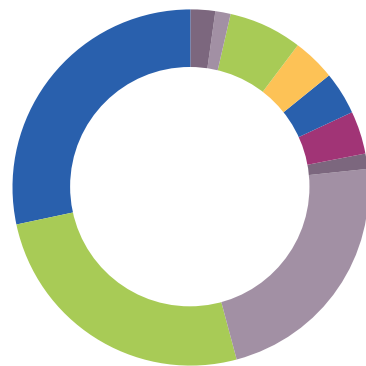
REVENUE



Levy	73.66%
State of Ohio	0.87%
Federal Funds	10.08%
Other	2.20%
SFY 2019 Cost Report Settlement	13.19%

\$155,385,274

EXPENSES



Services for Children	2.47%
Services for Adults	1.19%
Special Services	6.76%
Building Operations	3.81%
Business Operations	4.00%
Administration	3.92%
Provider Development & Support	1.25%
Community Medicaid Services	22.51%
Local Match	25.97%
Transfer to Reserve	28.13%

\$159,997,033

BY THE NUMBERS



13,283 Total Number of People Supported in 2021



31,020 Early Intervention Home Visits

5,993 People on Support Administration caseloads

3,000 Families in the Family Supports Program



330 New waiver allocations (203 Level 1 Waivers, 127 Individual Options Waivers)



1,300 People Ages 14-22 Who Received Transition Services

5,827 Referrals made for services to help people find providers/caregivers

72 Families Who Used Respite



18,597 Individual Service Plans (*initial, redeterminations, and revisions*) completed by Support Administrators



2,664 People Who Received Behavioral Health Support

1,836 Major Unusual Incident Investigations

247 People Supported by Forensic Services



76 Service providers supported by 2021 Cuyahoga DD Grants



\$193,117.83 Spent on Home Modifications

2,629 Children Served through Early Intervention

1,266 Items Borrowed from the Lending Library

USING VIRTUAL REALITY TO HELP IN REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS



In 2021, Cuyahoga DD's Behavior Curriculum Intervention Specialists (BCIS) began using cutting-edge technology for school-age youth sessions with Floreo, a virtual-reality (VR) platform that teaches social, behavioral, communication and life skills.

Initial Floreo modules help users develop eye-contact skills, while later modules teach how to interact with peers or people in the community, like police officers. Cuyahoga DD is a Floreo featured partner. The Floreo team has been deeply responsive to our needs – founder Vijay Ravindran once left his own board meeting to hop on a Zoom with Cuyahoga DD – and is working to incorporate our suggestions for new modules and avatars who use wheelchairs, are other ages, and have personalized appearances. Cuyahoga DD has also created its own experience-based VR modules like “How to Use the RTA.” This immersive VR technology not only helps our therapists teach individuals, but also provides sensory modules for self-regulation and calming techniques, like experiencing a 360-degree view from inside a fish tank.

Cuyahoga DD has purchased 10 Floreo headsets. “Eight are currently in use and the other two may be added to the Lending Library so families can be trained for home use,” said Kelly Rainey M.Ed., EdS., Special Instruction Manager, Cuyahoga DD.



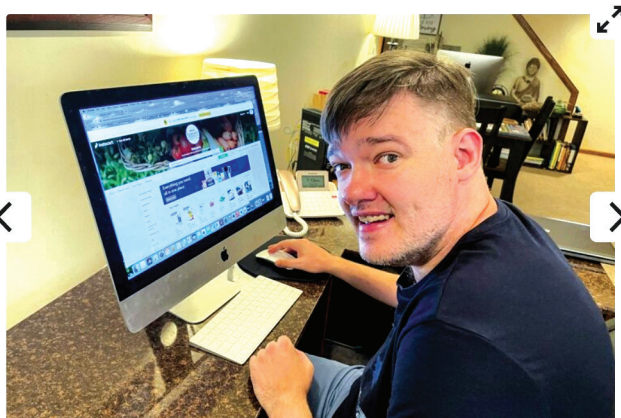
*For full tutorial
scan QR code.*



Gaining independence: After 34 years, Ben is living on his own

KARIN CONNELLY RICE | THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021

SHARE    

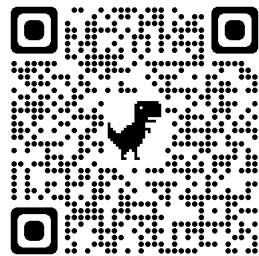


LENDING LIBRARY INCREASES ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Cuyahoga DD provides more than 5,000 pieces of equipment worth more than \$1 million across its two Lending Libraries: a technology library and another library with items to help with activities of daily living. Before checking out a library item, an assessment determines the appropriateness of the equipment for a person. For example, based upon the assessment, someone who has difficulties eating could try adaptive utensils all the way up to a robotic feeding system. Many of these items are available for demonstration purposes in Cuyahoga DD's Custom Living Environment (CLE) smart apartment example. The person then receives training for the item and uses it in their home on a trial basis. If the trial period is successful, Cuyahoga DD helps them find potential funding sources so they can purchase the item. And sometimes, if a purchased item is no longer appropriate for an individual, they will donate it to the Cuyahoga DD Lending Library so somebody else can benefit from it.

In 2021, 1,266 items were checked out by 601 individuals, including Ben Hill. When Ben decided to live independently, Cuyahoga DD physical therapist and home modification safety consultant Timothy Sommer helped Ben and his mom demo technology-based home additions to help keep Ben safe (as reported by *FreshWater Cleveland* on June 24, 2021).

Scan QR code for
full article.



FAMILY SUPPORTS PROGRAM GROWS BY 12 PERCENT IN 2021

In 2021, the Cuyahoga DD Family Supports Program expanded eligibility to include some people who live on their own. Through this program, we provided funding for a variety of services and supports to help them meet their needs and more fully participate in their community.

Program funds can be used to make home modifications, access recreation activities, purchase needed equipment, and provide respite care for families. The most-requested recreation activities were aquatics, music, gymnastics, horseback riding and karate.

Family Supports grew 12 percent in 2021, adding 334 new participants, surpassing the goal of expanding enrollment to an additional 250 families. More than 3,000 people are now enrolled in the program.

Get to know a couple of the people who were aided by Family Supports in 2021.

MEET KHAI

Khai and his family started receiving support from Cuyahoga DD in January 2021. With the help of his mother, the aid of skilled therapists, and equipment purchased through the Family Supports Program, Khai went from only being able to sit by himself to walking, crawling and climbing in six months. Foam blocks and crash pads allowed Khai to safely develop his motor skills. He can now eat and drink more independently and happily play games with his family.



MEET LUKE

Luke and his family used the Family Supports Program to fund therapeutic horseback riding. With the help of the horses Butter and Tater, Luke was able to build confidence, relax and have fun while playing in the community. Family Supports Program funding has assisted Luke with equipment for sensory supports, a zoo membership and horseback riding. Horseback riding has provided Luke with the opportunity to engage in a calming activity that he enjoys while using his social skills.



HELPING PEOPLE ENGAGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

In 2021, Cuyahoga DD created a special fund in our annual budget allowing Support Administrators to pay for items or events that would benefit and allow the people they work with to better access the community. Throughout the year we distributed \$657,500 in supplemental funds to provide access to fun activities in the community like Cleveland Guardians and Cavaliers games, Playhouse Square shows, Cleveland Zoo trips, and Botanical Garden visits.

We also helped people enroll in art, music and dance classes, secure memberships to local recreation centers, take driving lessons, and purchase items that would benefit them that could not be funded via Medicaid waivers or other programs. Some people started gardens; others bought bicycles they had wanted for many years. Many people who benefited from this unique initiative said our funds allowed them to regain a sense of normalcy after pandemic shutdowns and get back to having fun in Cuyahoga County. Over 2,000 people we serve with developmental disabilities accessed this funding, including Antonio,



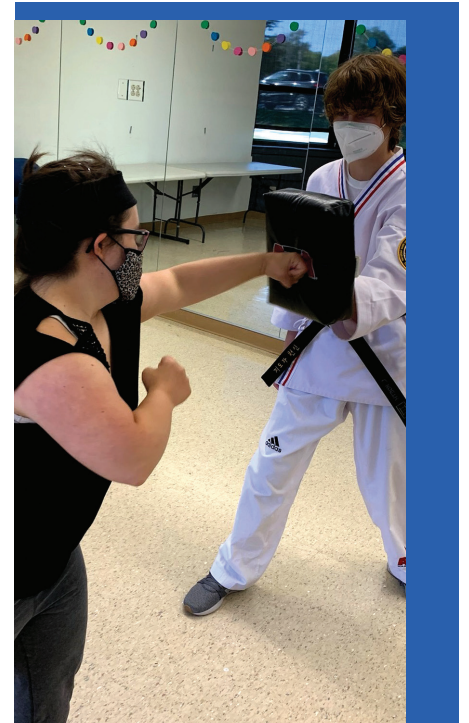
Cuyahoga DD staff helped Antonio and others reach goals while enabling them to have fun participating in the community.

a young man with a passion for rap and R&B music. Antonio's Support Administrator helped him use funding to participate in Cardio Drumming, visit a music recording studio, and even obtain headphones that allow him to listen to music without disturbing his neighbors.

SUPPORTING THE PROVIDER COMMUNITY

In 2021, Cuyahoga DD made grants totaling \$1.27 million to local service providers. This funding reimbursed providers who experienced unusual and extraordinary costs due to the impact of COVID-19. Some of the expenses that Cuyahoga DD reimbursed with Provider Support Funds included:

- » MARKETING
- » SIGN-ON BONUSES
- » RETENTION BONUSES
- » SHIFT DIFFERENTIALS
- » GIFT CARDS FOR FRONT-LINE STAFF
- » COVID-19 SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT
- » TRAINING AND CPR CLASSES
- » MEALS SENT TO HOMES
- » QUARANTINE EFFORTS (E.G. HOTEL STAYS)



With Active Day, I can witness the relationships between agency providers and other county boards in Ohio. As far as I saw, Cuyahoga DD went above and beyond any other county board. During the pandemic, the communication between providers and Cuyahoga DD blossomed and strengthened, as we were all navigating these uncharted waters—it felt like we were all in this together.

BO LAMBERT, AREA DIRECTOR, ACTIVE DAY

The messages of gratitude, significant financial support, and words of encouragement from Cuyahoga DD are consistent with how they carry out their mission. Their relief funds ensured that we had the necessary staff to provide quality care in a time of uncertainty for all of us.

TAMI HONKALA, PRESIDENT & CEO, HELP FOUNDATION

Over the past 100 years that Rose-Mary has been providing services, we've not had to weather the types of storms we've recently encountered. We are blessed to work with Cuyahoga DD and appreciate their support to us as a service provider.

GINA KERMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROSE-MARY

[Cuyahoga DD] rallied the provider community to collaborate and basically reinvent safe services and provided the PPE needed to continue services. The Provider Support Funds bridged a gap in funding that providers faced with pandemic-related expenses including, PPE, vaccine mandates, staff shortages and continually increasing staff costs. During these tumultuous times, Cuyahoga DD was a true partner to continue to provide safe and quality services for our individuals.

LAURA LAMB, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES

INCREASING AWARENESS ABOUT HOUSING OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Cuyahoga DD Housing Staff spent 2021 reviewing and understanding the current needs of the people we serve through surveys, discussions, and focus groups and learned that many did not have enough information about the current housing supports and benefits available to make informed housing decisions.

The information from the focus groups was broken down into themes of what people wanted to know and we utilized this information to guide and develop educational resources for the people we serve,

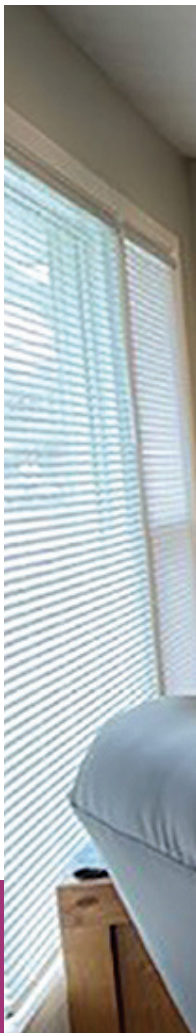
including a series of videos about housing opportunities, highlighting different options in the county that show how people can live in different settings based on the level of independence they want.

Educational projects were developed internally as well. Support Administrators (SAs) were re-educated on the supports, housing opportunities and resources available in the county. SAs were then better equipped to support individuals who were seeking housing on the best options for them.

TRYTECH

Also in 2021, Cuyahoga DD began a large housing project, TryTech, at the Cranford Apartments in Lakewood. Cuyahoga DD's Housing staff worked together with many community partners including North Coast Community Homes, The Cleveland Land Bank, and many community development corporations to identify a good location for this project that would include access to a bus line, highways, supermarkets, restaurants, and medical services. Additionally, the goal was to find a location that was integrated within the community. Of the 14 apartments in the building, four of them were set aside for the TryTech experience.

With the location identified, we began our collaboration with internal partners from Assistive Technology, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy to identify top technology and home modifications to make these apartments a great experience. TryTech is designed to be a short-term housing opportunity for individuals to live with, test and try remote supports and assistive technology in a home setting. One of the apartments is also fully accessible, opening this opportunity to individuals of all abilities. Construction at TryTech was mostly completed in 2021, and it will be open for tenants in summer 2022.





EXPERIENCE LIVING WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS

In 2021, Cuyahoga DD partnered with a second university and landlord to expand the Experience Living with College Students Housing Opportunity. Through this initiative, two people, who are eligible for Cuyahoga DD services, ages 18-25, are matched as housemates with college students. The college students become mentors to the individuals, providing guidance, support, and friendship.

This two-year experience gives individuals a safe and fun way to learn skills that will help them live independently.

This new home, pictured here, is located in Berea, near the campus of Baldwin Wallace University. (The other home is located near Notre Dame College on the east side of Cleveland.) Look for the Experience Living with College Students program to continue to grow in 2022 and beyond.



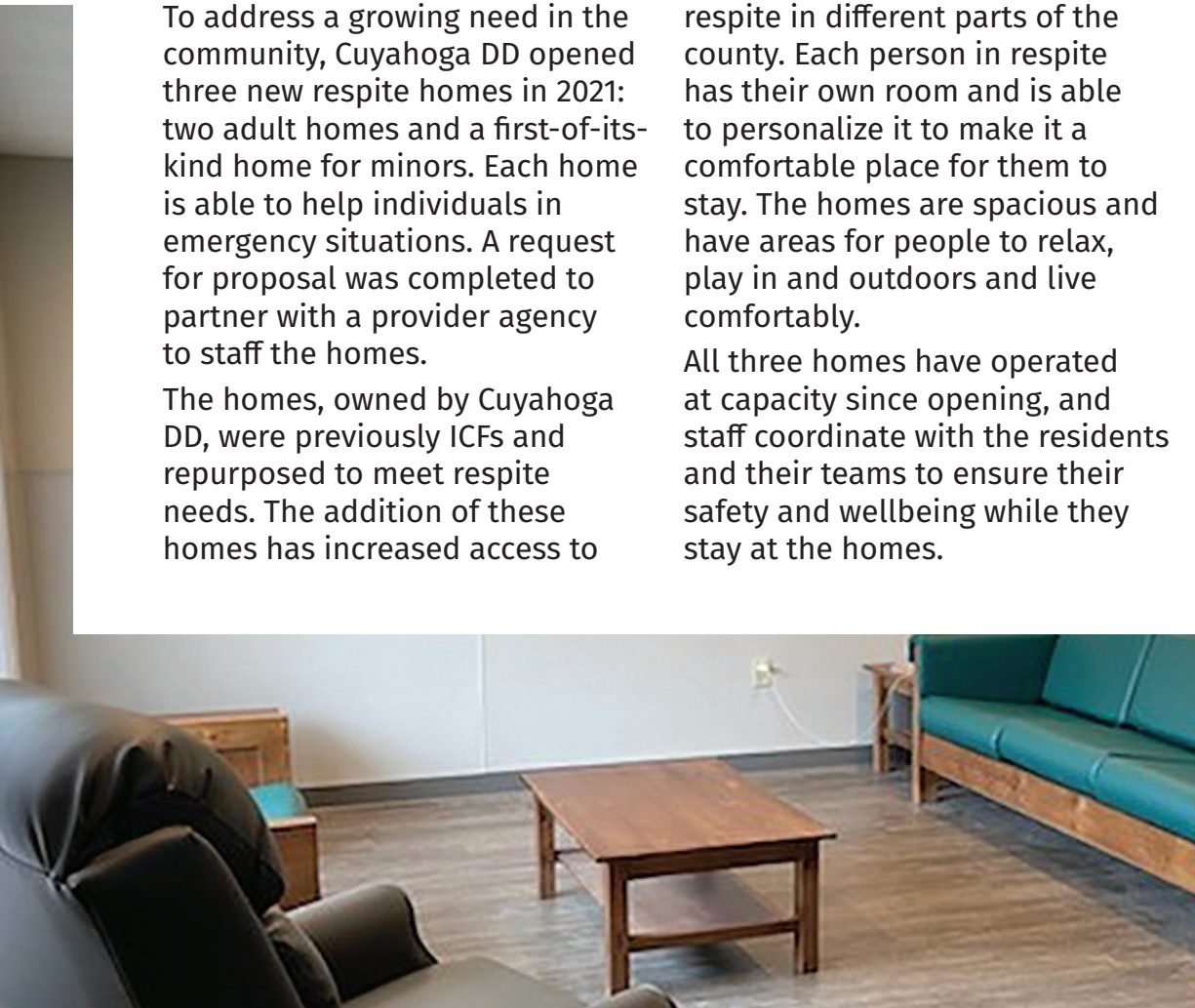
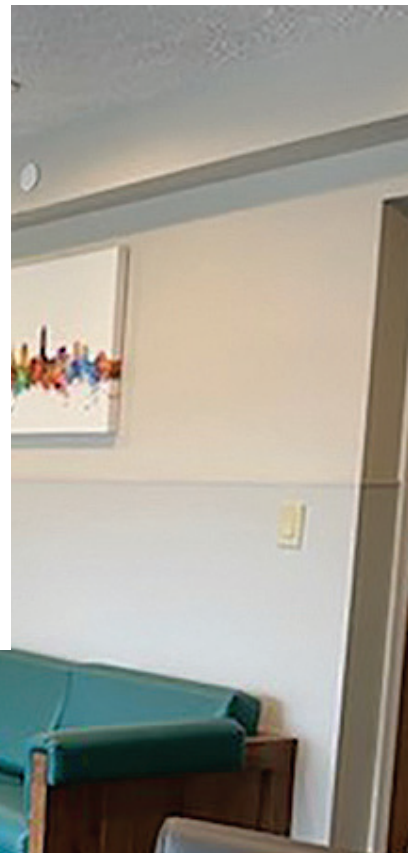
RESPIRE

To address a growing need in the community, Cuyahoga DD opened three new respite homes in 2021: two adult homes and a first-of-its-kind home for minors. Each home is able to help individuals in emergency situations. A request for proposal was completed to partner with a provider agency to staff the homes.

The homes, owned by Cuyahoga DD, were previously ICFs and repurposed to meet respite needs. The addition of these homes has increased access to

respite in different parts of the county. Each person in respite has their own room and is able to personalize it to make it a comfortable place for them to stay. The homes are spacious and have areas for people to relax, play in and outdoors and live comfortably.

All three homes have operated at capacity since opening, and staff coordinate with the residents and their teams to ensure their safety and wellbeing while they stay at the homes.



CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

In 2021, Cuyahoga DD issued \$150,000 of Recreation Services funding to community partners committed to creating and expanding accessible, adaptive programs, while also editing their business and service processes for greater stability in unstable times.

Solon Center for the Arts used grant funding from Cuyahoga DD to create adaptive dance and theater classes in their community.

“One of my favorite memories from offering Adaptive Adult Dance classes is seeing friendships blossom! At the dance studios, we offer monthly dance classes and at the conclusion of one of our months, the class made plans together to go get ice cream after class. They also exchanged contact information so they can stay in touch as well. It was just delightful to watch them come each week for their dance class but really so much more as they had fun, learned something new and built friendships!”

—ALLISON URBAN, SOLON CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Orange’s Community Education and Recreation Department used Cuyahoga DD funds to expand the number of adaptive program offerings in their community and create a new division with a focus on accessibility within their department, AccessABLE Recreation.

“The grant has given our department a whole new focus and lets our entire team get involved. [It] has been so rewarding to watch the evolution of our newest division, AccessABLE Recreation, and we cannot wait to see what the future holds for our participants!”

—KELLY BORDERS, M.ED., ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ORANGE COMMUNITY EDUCATION & RECREATION

With funding from Cuyahoga DD, Empower Sports invested in new programs and increased participation by 115 people (16 percent) in 2021.

“The 2021 Cuyahoga DD Recreation Services Grant was a major catalyst to helping Empower Sports develop more programs and reach new athletes. Thanks in large part to support received from the Cuyahoga DD grant, we increased both the number of programs offered and the number of athletes served. Support from Cuyahoga DD was especially impactful given the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2021.”

—TOM HEINES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMPOWER SPORTS

Support from the recreation services grant also enabled Empower Sports to offer several free one-day events including playing basketball at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse on the night of the NBA Draft!



INCREASING ACCESS TO COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Helping people with developmental disabilities connect to opportunities for competitive employment – jobs for which people with disabilities perform the same function, at the same rate of pay, and with the same opportunities for advancement as people without disabilities – has long been a focus of Cuyahoga DD, so much so, that the Board created a dedicated Workforce Development team in 2018. Their unique dual-role approach, working with Support Administrators and employment providers to develop a pool of qualified candidates, and working with the business community to increase awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, resulted in 328 more people in competitive jobs by 2020 than when the department started. As many others also experienced, people supported by Cuyahoga DD lost their jobs during the pandemic hit. But as businesses started reopening, the Workforce Development team worked hard to ensure that people served by Cuyahoga DD were being considered for openings. By December 2021, the pandemic-related decrease in employment we saw among people we serve had been eliminated, and people were working in competitive jobs at pre-pandemic levels.



Jameason is a team member of the Westlake Bonefish Grill. The management team at this location created a special position and developed a training program that within days made Jameason a thriving member of the amazing team here. His duties include serving as host and busser, and he is known for his bright personality!

In total, 458 people served by Cuyahoga DD found competitive employment in 2021, and the Workforce Development team, in collaboration with the Employment Collaborative of Cuyahoga County worked directly with 550 local employers to develop and share over 460 unique job opportunities.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE SAFETY AND FAIR TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Cuyahoga DD works closely with many partners in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) – law enforcement, prosecuting and defense attorneys, first responders, corrections personnel, etc. – to ensure that the people we serve who encounter the CJS receive the supports they need and the fair treatment they deserve.

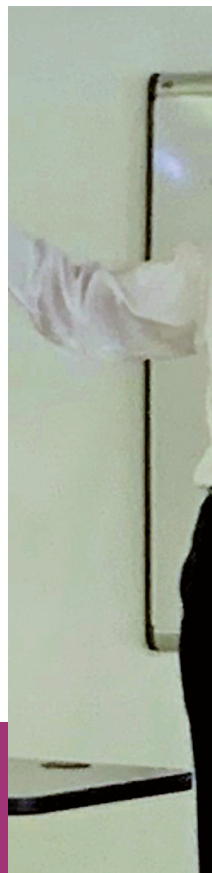
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TEAM PROVIDES CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING TO LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS

In 2021, a Cuyahoga DD team of trainers, led by Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Richard Cirillo, provided training on Autism Spectrum Disorders as a mandatory in-service for the 1,600 officers in the Cleveland Police Department. Required by the 2015 consent decree, the curriculum was developed by Cuyahoga DD Behavioral Health, Speech, and Occupational Therapy staff in collaboration with the Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC), which included the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board and the Cleveland Police Department. The curriculum, reviewed by federal monitors and approved by a federal judge, taught officers how to interact with Autistic people. Over 70 three-hour training sessions were held between March and August 2021. “People with disabilities have a different way of approaching things, or a different way of understanding cognitively what’s going on,” said Dr. Randolph Dupont, professor and clinical psychologist at the University of Memphis and member of the

consent decree federal monitoring team. “If the officers don’t have a very intensive and very sophisticated understanding of this, they may respond in a way that would not de-escalate, but actually escalate the crisis.”

Dr. Dupont also says that while the data is not final yet, initial findings show that, because of the specialized training Cleveland Police received, arrest rates among people with disabilities and other behavioral issues are decreasing. And the impact of this work goes beyond Cleveland, too, he says, as the curriculum developed by Cuyahoga DD and the MHRAC is being used as an example for other communities across the country.

In addition, Behavioral Health Staff provided regular training on Developmental Disabilities to Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) police officers from multiple police departments across Cuyahoga County. The CIT model is internationally recognized for giving specialized training to officers around mental health and related law enforcement challenges.



MUI COMMUNITY LIAISONS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FIRST RESPONDERS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Cuyahoga DD's Major Unusual Incident (MUI) Community Liaisons work in 56 of the 58 communities in Cuyahoga County to build relationships with municipal police departments at a grassroots level. In addition to working with local police on elopement, missing persons and cold cases, MUI Community Liaisons serve as a bridge between police and Cuyahoga DD staff from various departments, including Service and Support Administration, Behavioral Health, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, etc., to plan for people on their caseloads

after someone has had an interaction with the police. In 2021, the MUI Community Liaisons supported local police departments on over 100 cases. Community Liaisons also work with police to deescalate situations before they become a crisis.

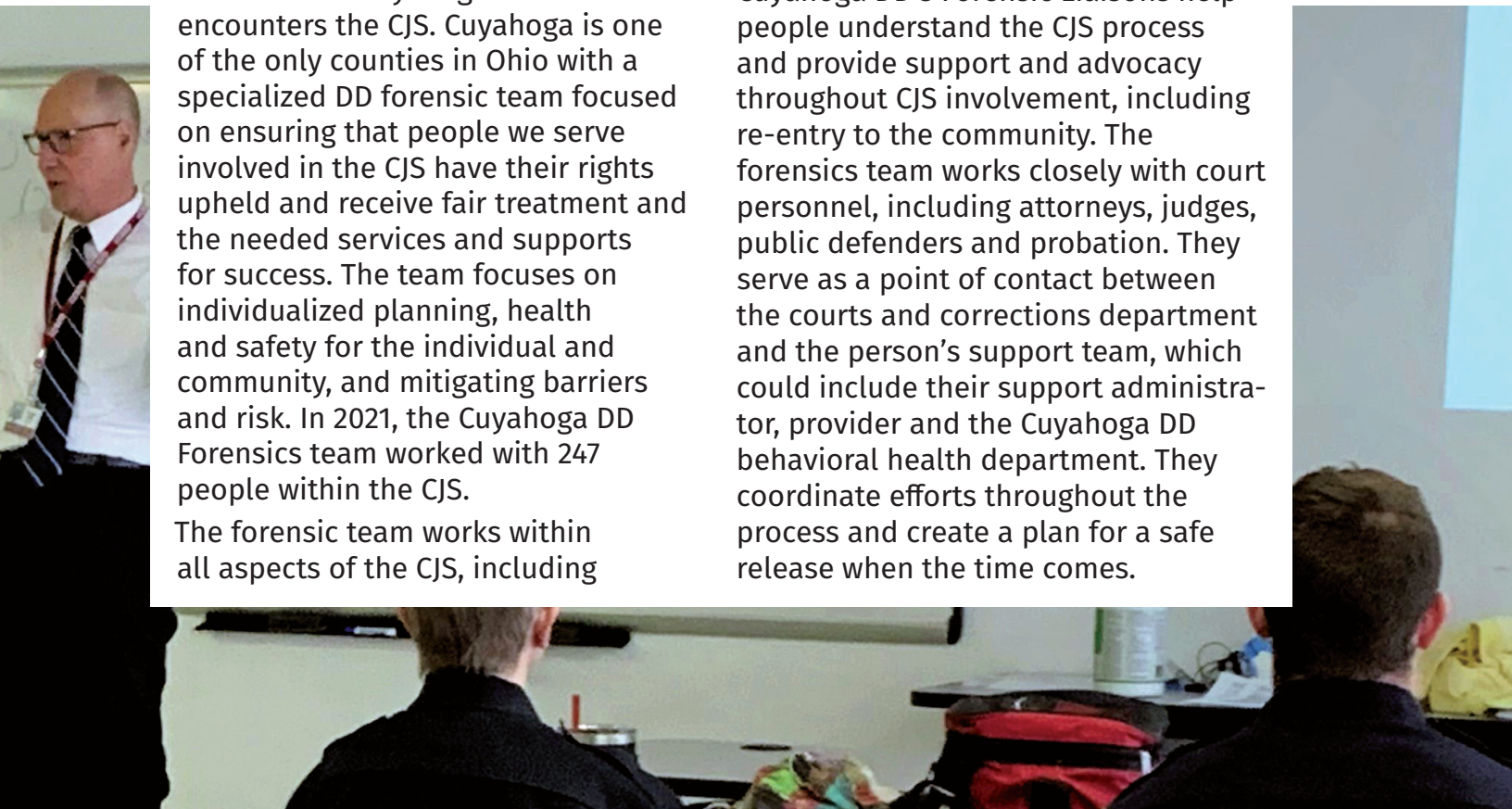
Kate McLaughlin, who works in Community Policing for the Euclid Police Department, says that Cuyahoga DD "provides a framework to Euclid Officers for responding and interacting in a way that shows compassion and understanding to provide residents with disabilities appropriate service."

FORENSIC LIAISONS HELP INDIVIDUALS THROUGH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

Navigating the Criminal Justice System (CJS) is difficult. Cuyahoga DD has a team of Forensic Liaisons who get involved anytime someone who receives Cuyahoga DD services encounters the CJS. Cuyahoga is one of the only counties in Ohio with a specialized DD forensic team focused on ensuring that people we serve involved in the CJS have their rights upheld and receive fair treatment and the needed services and supports for success. The team focuses on individualized planning, health and safety for the individual and community, and mitigating barriers and risk. In 2021, the Cuyahoga DD Forensics team worked with 247 people within the CJS.

The forensic team works within all aspects of the CJS, including

all thirteen Municipal Courts and Cuyahoga Common Pleas Mental Health/Developmental Disability (MHDD) Specialized court docket. Cuyahoga DD's Forensic Liaisons help people understand the CJS process and provide support and advocacy throughout CJS involvement, including re-entry to the community. The forensics team works closely with court personnel, including attorneys, judges, public defenders and probation. They serve as a point of contact between the courts and corrections department and the person's support team, which could include their support administrator, provider and the Cuyahoga DD behavioral health department. They coordinate efforts throughout the process and create a plan for a safe release when the time comes.





C U Y A H O G A C O U N T Y
Board of Developmental Disabilities

MISSION

OUR MISSION IS TO SUPPORT
AND EMPOWER PEOPLE WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND
PLAY IN THE COMMUNITY.

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