



# NEWS FROM THE SENECA COUNTY OPPORTUNITY CENTER

*A publication of the Seneca County Board of Developmental Disabilities*

**Our Mission: To improve the lives of persons with disabilities**



SCOC had a staff breakfast hosted by management team to express their gratitude to staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

## SCOC Calendar

- Jan 20 Martin Luther King Day (program closed)
- Jan 30 Privatization Q&A at Preferred Pathways
- Feb 17 President's Day (program closed)
- Mar 17 Teacher In-Service (school closed)

SAVE THE DATE FOR PALM SUNDAY DINNER: APRIL 13TH!

## Board Members

- Erin Simmons, President
- Arrin Allen, Vice President
- Jim Oliver, Secretary
- Frank Lengel
- Joe Moore
- Kim Radison
- Michelle Smith

## Contact Us

Opportunity Center  
780 E.Co. Rd. 20, Tiffin, OH  
419-447-7521

Early Intervention  
419-447-7674

Early Childhood Center of Fostoria  
419-436-0797

Service and Support Administration  
567-938-2381

Find us on Facebook and  
instagram!



## Letter from Lew by Lew Hurst, Superintendent

As we're in the new year, changes continue to happen at the Seneca County Opportunity Center. First, the adults have resumed services at the Optimal Opportunities building and Fair Lane building. Preferred Pathways staff worked over break to move supplies and materials to the new buildings. We invite anyone interested to a townhall on January 30 at 5pm at the Preferred Pathway building (541 West Market St.) to discuss changes to adult services and tour the new building. Rodney Biggert and I will host the meeting and answer questions for families and individuals in adult services.

Second, we are continuing to renovate the Seneca County Opportunity Center to address needs expressed by the local schools for additional classrooms. We're currently in the contracting phase of the construction process. The additional space will create three additional classrooms. We will also be working to recruit staff for these new spaces. The combination of these two resources are needed to address the growing number of children in Seneca county whom have a developmental disability.

Finally, we are excited to announce that our board president, Erin Simmons, has been appointed to the Ohio Association of County Boards. This opportunity will enable Erin to continue to advocate for children with developmental disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

*Lew Hurst*

# Las Vegas: Betting on Self Advocacy Unity 2024



Unity 2024 “Las Vegas: Betting on Self Advocacy,” was an absolute jackpot of a good time! We started out Saturday morning with a welcome from Unity President Cindy. Then we began our presentations! Lieutenant DeMonte and Officer Liz Miller demonstrated the different things the K-9 Unit trains for and gave information on the program. Superintendent Lewis Hurst gave a speech on what self-advocacy means, then to end the afternoon, Wood County Board of DD’s Carly Dauch, OT, and Sarah Heldmann discussed different types of assistive technologies. The afternoon breakout sessions consisted of master wood worker, John Hoesman, creating a face out of wood as well as a hands-on assistive technology session from Carly and Sarah. After a day of learning, everyone broke into free time by jumping into the pool, playing BINGO, and shopping at Dollar General. The night finished off with magic from Rodney Biggert, candidate speeches, a photobooth, and a dance featuring Elvis(es). Sunday morning started off with beautiful music from DJ Brad Hoffman and shoutouts for those involved in advocacy groups in 2024. The new Unity Sargent of Arms, Nathan, and Vice President, Timothy, were announced, and Self Advocate of the Year, Brian, was honored. The 2025 Unity President, Penny, said some encouraging words and then it was time to close Unity 2024!

## Unity Merry Mixer

The Seneca County Opportunity Center’s Unity Council hosted their Merry Mixer before break. They sang Christmas songs, made cards and crafts, played games & simply enjoyed the merriment of the season!



## Bell Ringing

Aktion Club members continued their annual tradition of bell ringing for The Salvation Army in front of Kroger. Thank you to all who donated!



SCOC Aktion Club is a division of the Tiffin Kiwanis Club. SCOC Aktion Clubbers are passionate about giving back to their community! They do this by hosting fundraisers & completing service projects throughout the community.

## Student Council Election

The School of Opportunity participated in their own election day on November 5th! Students running for President, Vice President, and Secretary of Student Council gave speeches and then everyone was given a chance to vote.

Congratulations to the new Student Council President, Skyler, Vice President, Caden, and Secretary, Maddox.

Students also voted on the name of the new coffee cart that is soon to begin and chose "Brew Buddy!"



## Youth Assets Celebration

On Tuesday, November 12th some outstanding individuals were recognized at the Youth Assets Celebration at Camden Falls presented by Tiffin Rotary Club and Seneca County Family and Children First Council.

Student, Sarah Wolf, residential provider and one-on-one aide, Jackie Jarret, SCOC Board President, Erin Simmons, and Oliver Beidelschies, valued member of our program, were all recognized for their impact in the community.

Congratulations to all on this achievement!



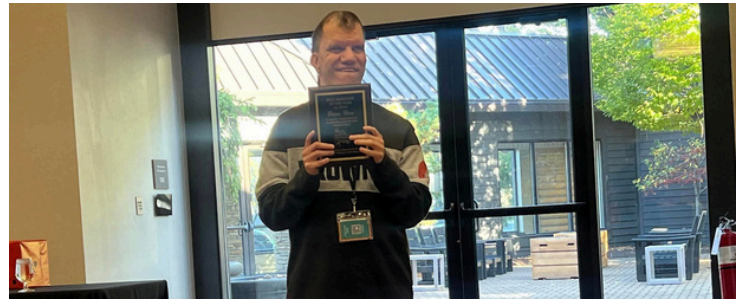
## Self Advocate of the Year Award

During "Las Vegas: Betting on Self Advocacy" Unity Conference, the Self Advocate of the Year award was announced. This is given to someone who has shown growth and development in advocacy. Brian Hess was chosen as this year's Self Advocate of the Year.

Brian graduated as a Good Life Facilitator in 2016. After completing this training, he had a goal of becoming a better public speaker and to help train staff and others to speak up for themselves. Brian not only has achieved that goal, but continues to motivate others with his positive attitude and leads by example. Those that nominated Brian shared this about him: "Over the years this person has not only made strides for advocating for himself, but others around him. Those that know him describe him as kind, humble, insightful, caring, compassionate, hilarious, and quite the joker." These words were shared by Lew Hurst during the presentation of the award.

Congratulations to Brian for the amazing achievement!

Unity Conference is planned BY and FOR adults with developmental disabilities in Seneca County! The Self-Advocate of the Year award is presented annually at the conference to those nominated by fellow peers and staff.



## Christmas Party

SCOC rocked their best holiday attire, enjoyed delicious cookies, and sang along to festive tunes thanks to our amazing volunteers from UAW Local 2021 and Grammer Tiffin Communication! A huge shoutout for bringing the Christmas cheer and for Santa and The Grinch coming for a visit!



## Kitty Cohort Training 2024 Graduates

The Seneca County Opportunity Center celebrated the graduation of Dr. Kitty Brandal's three-year training program. This training covers topics such as leadership, communication skills, ethics, emotional intelligence, and gives employees the chance to get to know each other to create a positive workplace environment.

SCOC is grateful to work with Dr. Kitty Brandal on trainings that help grow leadership skills and strengthen our teams. Congratulations to the graduates!



## Congratulations on Retirement Deana Depinet & Lori Bouillon

At our recent board meeting, we had the honor of recognizing the outstanding contributions of Deana Depinet and Lori Bouillon! Deana has been a shining star for 30 years and Lori, for seven years. Their last day at work was December 20th. Make sure to wish these two a happy retirement if you see them!

As Deana and Lori are ready to embrace the next chapter of their lives and step into retirement, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for their unwavering dedication, hard work, and the countless ways they have enriched our organization and community.



## DSP of the Month of November and December:

Every month, ACT Council and SCOC Board Members plan to recognize a DSP. Direct Support Providers support people with disabilities and help them live, learn and work in their community. If you or someone you know would be interested in becoming a DSP contact Karen Frank, Provider Liaison at 567-938-2381 ext 1010 or email [kfrank@senecadd.org](mailto:kfrank@senecadd.org).

### November: Sabra Tate

Sabra works for Renaissance House and was nominated by Terry, with the help of his SSA:

"Sabra is very nice and takes me places. She also helps me cook supper because I'm afraid of burning myself on the stove. Recently, Sabra helped me make fish and noodles!"



### December: Anthony Goehring

Anthony works for Future Horizons and was nominated by Kelly with the help of her SSA. Kelly is someone he provides services for.

"Kelly wanted to nominate Anthony because he is easy to get along with. He helps her with things at her apartment including cooking meals. She thinks he is fun to be around!"



## SCOC Welcomes New Employee



Vince Windau  
Service and Support Administrator  
Favorite snack: chips  
Favorite restaurant: Olive Garden



Anna Girdler  
Substitute RN  
Favorite beverage: Dr. Pepper  
Favorite season: fall

## We Are Hiring!!

If you or someone you know would be interested in a job please check out our website listed below to see open positions or check out our Facebook page:

<https://www.senecadd.org/general-9>

Check out our DSP video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhjud9EzSOU>

Instagram page: [@senecacountyopportunitycenter](https://www.instagram.com/senecacountyopportunitycenter)

[www.senecadd.org](http://www.senecadd.org)

# DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2025

**March 13-Bakery Bingo**  
**5-7 PM**

Seneca County Opportunity Center  
780 E. CR 20, Tiffin, Ohio 44883  
Free Event: Doors Open at 5:00

**March 27-Celebrity Basketball Game**  
**7 PM**

Heidelberg Seiberling Gym  
132 Rebecca St., Tiffin, Ohio 44883  
Free Event: Doors Open at 6:00

**April 13-Palm Sunday Dinner**  
**11 AM-1 PM**

DRIVE-THRU (no in-person seating)  
PRE SALE ONLY  
CALL 419-447-7521 x. 1134  
or  
EMAIL [jfrederitz@senecadd.org](mailto:jfrederitz@senecadd.org) to order tickets by April 1st.



### SENECA COUNTY OPPORTUNITY CENTER

CREATING A LIFETIME OF  
**opportunities**

Follow or visit our social media  
hubs for other upcoming events:

