

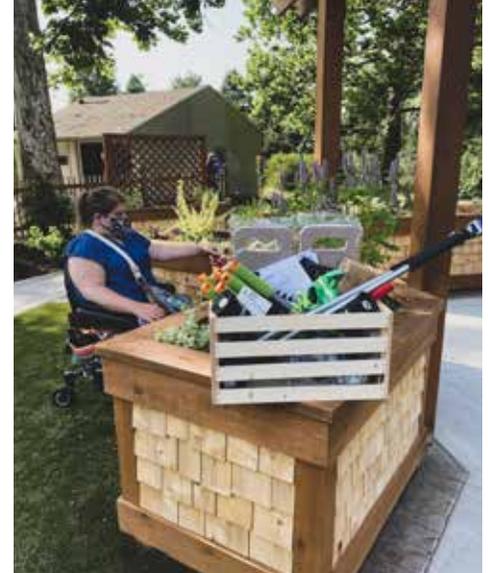
Metroparks Toledo Unveils Inclusive Garden

Newly unveiled, named in honor of Charles and Lera Doneghy, the inclusive garden was created by Metroparks Toledo and developed in partnership with Ability Center staff. The project was born from a conversation between Tim Harrington, Executive Director of The Ability Center, and Joe Fausnaugh, Chief of Operations for Metroparks Toledo. Two years of conversation and collaboration followed and the project came to life on July 30, 2020 at a ribbon cutting ceremony at Toledo Botanical Garden. The Ability Center also delivered a collection of accessible garden tools to be used at the unique space.

Katie Shelley, Disability Rights Advocate, shares, "In my current role, one of my focus areas is public access. I used this knowledge to advise Metroparks Toledo staff during planning stages of the inclusive garden to ensure that the finished product would be truly inclusive and accessible to all who visit. One of the

accessible features is the raised garden bed, which I was fortunate enough to test prior to the grand opening of the garden. I planted a geranium in one of the raised beds – which, as a wheelchair user, was the first time I was ever able to plant anything independently in my life! Not only was this a great experience for me personally and professionally, it has been so rewarding to see the positive reaction from community members about this inclusive garden and know that I was a part of helping to make it a reality."

Have you visited? Share about your experience:
abilitycenter.org/inclusivegarden





MASK-WEARING FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

COVID-19 has challenged families with children living with autism in more ways than one. Families are home together, their supports have shifted, and are experiencing sudden adjustments to their daily routine. Social distancing guidelines are put in place to protect at-risk individuals and limit the spread of the coronavirus disease. Visual cues and explanations of guidelines may be appropriate for people with autism to understand sudden changes to normal activity. Like any transition, preparation is essential. For those who best understand through imagery, use a picture to display air particles and how a mask blocks them. For others, use a video. Find the best way to explain, using strategies that are individualized.

VISUAL SUPPORT EXAMPLES:

- Social Stories
- Video
- Songs
- Books
- Pictures

The Ability Center can assist with creating social stories and visual supports for our consumers. An emergency preparedness class including a preparedness kit funded by our Auxiliary is offered through our youth programming. Visit our website to discover other offerings for youth with disabilities.

WRITTEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



WHY IT MATTERS

Social distancing will keep your child safe as we navigate life until treatment options are available.

Wearing masks may be uncomfortable for your child, and it may take time to build up tactile senses. Gently remind them that you understand it's not comfortable and it's expected to take some time to get used to. Any social story, resource, or example can be individualized by using real names of people.

"Usually, we love to hug Grandma Smith but since we love and want to protect her, we want to keep her safe from any germs. We can draw pictures and wave to Grandma Smith from afar."

THERAPY DOGS IN THE CLASSROOM

Dogs in our school therapy dog program have a unique opportunity to be a calming influence during an uneasy time in local school districts. Handlers worked tirelessly to impose safety procedures for both dogs and students for those learning in person.

"Willow is such a great addition to our Perrysburg family. The joy she brings to our school of students, teachers, and staff is tremendous. She has made school a nicer place to be, in just the few short visits she has had," shares Alana Sigg, handler for Perrysburg High School.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Puppy raisers care for and train dogs in our Assistance Dog Program from 8 to 16 weeks of age. Volunteers learn basic obedience and simple commands at weekly classes. Fun and educational games are taught to build good recall and skills training. Cuddling, extra love, and loads of playtime are also a big part of your job as a puppy raiser!



PUPPY SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Searching for a unique way to give back to a local organization and promote philanthropy within your own company? Puppy sponsorships support The Ability Center's Assistance Dog Program which trains and places service and therapy dogs for people with disabilities. Naming opportunities begin at \$5,000.

Sponsors often develop a close bond with the family of the dog they support. Donors follow the dog throughout the process from initial training to meeting their forever person to watching the pair take on their new life together. "We can't tell you how much we appreciated our visit. What a wonderful placement. This is the best birthday present I have ever received," shares one puppy sponsor. Customized sponsorship programs are developed to fit the needs and wants of the sponsor.



BACK TO SCHOOL Webinar Series

Throughout the month of August, we hosted virtual webinars exploring local resources from professionals in the education field that support students with disabilities. Webinars delivered open dialogue and many tangible resources. Recordings were archived and placed on our website at www.abilitycenter.org/backtoschool.

(TOPICS INCLUDE)

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL THERAPIES AND RELATED SERVICES FROM HOME

Representatives from local schools examined tactics to navigate between in-person school and virtual learning during the pandemic.

VIRTUAL LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER IDEA & ADA

Ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to best support students with disabilities. Parent rights and advocacy for particular needs were discussed.

PARENT ADVOCATE ROUNDTABLE

Local parents shared their experience with virtual learning, strategies to be successful with virtual/in person/hybrid school, and tips for advocating for your child.

TIPS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stay flexible!
- Limit screen time not related to school work - turn on something educational such as PBS Kids.
- Turn your child's screen time into extended educational time. Use probing questions with your child to keep them engaged.
- Continue clear communication between your family and their provider. Talk about barriers, roadblocks, and share what is working well in the home.
- Create a work space for your child - provide sufficient lighting in the area.
- Organize supplies and label them.
- Work on language skills whenever possible during daily activities like watching tv, doing the dishes, or playtime.
- Remember that providers and teachers are there to help solve problems – no question is too trivial.
- Attempt to recreate or mimic support as you can in the home with household items.
- Keep your child comfortable. Consider the support of their feet. If a child is not stable, they will not focus.
- If toys or games are visible in the "work area" either move or throw a sheet over them.





"This is really great and a really great job!, Thank you very much"

— Debra Hatch

Debra Hatch smiles warmly from her new wooden stairs and railing built through our Home Accessibility Program. For 27 years, Debra has called her Point Place residence home. A referral from Med1Care brought her to our agency to sustain her independence and continue safely living in her own home.

INCLUSION STARTS HERE

Partnership E-mail

Our agency is proud to unveil a new monthly email series produced to recognize partners who are moving our mission forward.

A disability-friendly community takes everyone working together. For 100 years, The Ability Center has been surrounded by leaders and organizations working together toward a common goal.

Each month, success stories, disability-friendly initiatives, and best practices to take the next step in becoming more accessible and inclusive will be delivered straight to your inbox. Visit the "contact us" section on our website to sign up to receive partnership email updates.



Disability Rights Advocate, Jimmy Russell, and Pastor Larry Clark from Monroe Street United Methodist Church at groundbreaking of tiny homes project

ADA SEMINAR Webinar Series Oct. 6 - 15, 2020

National experts and local panelists discuss how the disability community has been impacted during COVID-19. All webinar sessions will be archived on our website for future viewing.

- Website Access
- Panel Discussion: Disability and Access in the Time of COVID-19
- Emergency Planning and Disability
- Health Care Equity During COVID-19: Community Partnership Award Winner, Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio



ADA SEMINAR

Disability
Issues &
COVID-19

COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY

Voting in important elections promises effective solutions to everyday barriers facing people with disabilities.

Visit www.abilitycenter.org/vote to view significant dates, processes, and procedures to ensure people with disabilities know and understand their right to vote in this year's presidential election.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Call The Ability Center to help you through the voting process and answer any questions you may have.



AUXILIARY STYLE SHOW

As we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, the health and safety of Ability Center consumers and supporters has been and will continue to be our main priority.

The 2020 Ability Center Style Show has been canceled. Although we would have loved to commemorate our 100th anniversary with a Style Show fundraiser, we know there will be many inspiring moments and opportunities to celebrate in the future. If you would like to contribute to The Ability Center in honor of the Style Show Fund, your check made out to Auxiliary to The Ability Center is appreciated. Donations may also be made online at www.abilitycenter.org/donation.



Parker received a ramp courtesy of funds from our Auxiliary and an iPad from our Tech for REC program. "This iPad will help immensely as he is not as mobile as other kids right now. We are so thankful for this service." - Jossie Carman (Parker's Grandma)



JALEN BALLARD
University of Michigan
Engineering



TESSA BAKER
Hobart and William
Smith Colleges
International Relations



CONTESSA STROTHERS
Kent State
Education



KIRSTEN PRICE
The Ohio State University
Nursing

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS

Since 1999, \$310,000 in college scholarships has been gifted to outstanding local students. Recipients chosen reflect hard work, determination and a will to move past barriers. Members of the Auxiliary to The Ability Center are passionate about giving local students greater opportunities to succeed.

MEET THE STUDENTS

Since we were not able to recognize these bright students at our in-person Auxiliary luncheon, we've captured award recipients' messages and photos in a video honoring the scholarship program.

Visit our Facebook or website to see this year's award winners.

abilitycenter.org | [@Ability Center of Greater Toledo](https://www.facebook.com/AbilityCenterToledo)



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DID YOU KNOW? Adaptive rope course at the Metroparks Toledo