



DECEMBER

Safe Toys and Gifts
Month

Universal Human Rights
Month

11/28-12/6 Hanukkah

12/1 Rosa Parks Day

12/1 World AIDS Day

12/2 Special Education
Day

12/3 International Day of
Persons with Disabilities

12/21 Winter Solstice
Day

12/25 Christmas

12/26-1/1 Kwanzaa

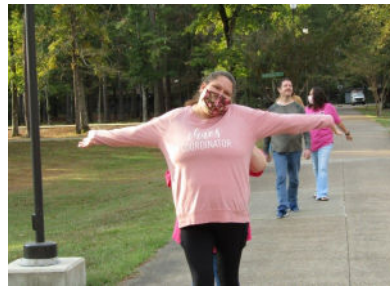
12/31 New Year's Eve

DDS staff living the mission

We care. We act. We change lives. DDS took this motto to heart in 2022. We did this by coming together to fellowship for holidays, taking fishing expeditions with residents, preparing and participating in state level Special Olympics, creating luau and other experiences for residents in the human development centers, and providing a platform for artisans with disabilities to showcase their arts and crafts at the annual DDS Fall Food & Craft Fair. These are a few pictures, in addition to the others, featured throughout the year, of colleagues from around the state living the mission not only for our clients but for each other. One incredibly touching example of how we show support for each other was in this year's Breast Cancer Awareness walks. Some of us are survivors, some have family members who are survivors, and some have loved ones who have transitioned from this disease. DDS walked together. DDS Cares. DDS Acts. DDS changes lives.

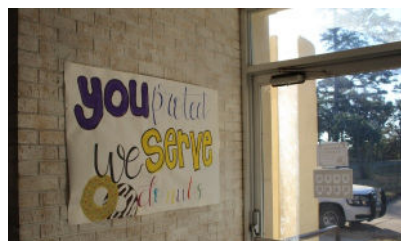
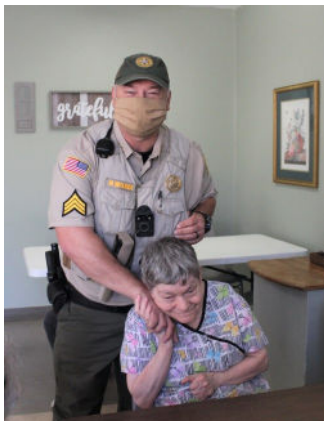


Central Office & AHDC show their support by participating in Breast Cancer Awareness Walks



BHDC hosts Donuts with a Cop

BHDC's Judge Hill Living Area hosted 'Donuts with a Cop' as a way to say thank you to our law enforcement. Logan County Sheriff's Department and Booneville Police Department came up and enjoyed a morning of donuts, coffee and fellowship with a very thankful and energetic bunch. Sheriff Jason Massey commented how much they enjoyed this time with our clients and looks forward to more opportunities. BHDC hopes to make this a more regular event with our local heroes.



DHS celebrates Veteran's Day

DHS Secretary Mark White led the annual Veteran's Day ceremony on Wednesday, November 9th where we recognized our veterans. Col. Nathaniel "Nate" Todd, Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs, was the keynote speaker. There are currently 214 portraits on the Veterans Wall of Honor. These photos are taken and placed by DHS photographer Stephen Thornton. If you are a Veteran and have not had your picture taken, please email Stephen for an appointment to get you added.



National Initiatives

National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services Conference

DDS Director Melissa Weatherton attended the NASDDDS Directors Forum and Annual Conference November 2-4 in Alexandria, VA. I/DD Directors across the nation met at a gathering exclusively for these professionals. Conference keynote speaker, LeDerick Horne, diagnosed with a learning disability in the third grade, was an inspiring motivational speaker. During a Dual Diagnosis Strategy session Director Weatherton and other attendees participated in small group exercises; listen to expert speakers, and shared group experiences to advance knowledge in this important topic area.

Arkansas DDS was invited to be one of a few states to join a Capacity Building Institute to focus our services on clients with complex care needs – clients with IDD who also need behavioral health support. It was an honor to be selected. Arkansas is being recognized nationally on the work we are doing with this population under our PASSE model.

DDS Central Office Staff delivers at provider meeting

DDS represented in a special way November 3rd at Access. Access is one of Arkansas' providers that offer an array of services for children and adults with special needs. Some of these services include day treatment services: OT/PT, Speech, psychological evaluation, CES Waiver, and other non-waiver services. Sabrena Harris, Riconda Johnson and Yolanda McDonald presented information on the services that DDS fosters and how to obtain DD services. There have been several referrals returned as a result of this meeting. Several participants who attended the meeting had questions pertaining to the PASSE, CES Waitlist, and Optum assessments. Many also responded with gratitude for DDS coming and sharing their knowledge and the open doors of communication for contact if they had further questions.

If you or anyone you know has questions related to receiving services through DDS, please have them to contact any Intake and Referral Staff or call 501-683-5687.



Holiday Season note~

As you are preparing to celebrate the many upcoming holidays, we wish you love, joy, and peace with your family and friends.

We realize that for some this may be a difficult time of the year for you. If you find yourself stuck in a hard time and can't shake it, please reach out for help. If you feel you don't have someone in your circle to talk to, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-TALK (8255)). You don't have to be suicidal to call. If you are experiencing emotional distress, they have counselors available 24/7 to talk. We want to see all of our DDS family return after the holidays. You are needed and you are appreciated.

There is a lot coming up at DHS. Stay tuned!



December

Lighting of the Restore Hope Tree & Blue Umbrella Open House

12/2

10:30 a.m.

Donaghey Plaza South lobby

Polar Express & Empower Donation

12/5

5:00 p.m.

The Grounds of CHDC

DHS Chili Cook off & Fundraiser

All proceeds going to purchase Christmas gifts for teens in Foster Care, clients at the State Hospital, the Health Center, and those in custody of Adult Protective Services and DYS

12/9

11:00 a.m.

DHS Central Office

DDS Christmas Party

12/15

DDS Director's conference room



Comments, Suggestions, and Q&A

What would you like to learn more about or see featured? Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to Yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov by the 15th of the month.

Our Year in Review

2022

IN-STORE

- Welcomed new visitors from:
 - 19 different states
 - 2 countries
- Created The Blue Umbrella's employee training program and hired our first two part-time employees
- Sold art work from over 175 different artists
- Welcomed 1 new community provider
 - Bost, Inc. (Fort Smith, AR)



ONLINE

- Launched Facebook & Instagram Social Media pages in February
 - @blueumbrellaar
- Revised The Blue Umbrella's website
 - www.blueumbrellaar.org
- November 1st, launched The Blue Umbrella's online store!



OTHER

- Generated over \$17,000 for artists with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Appeared on TV multiple times:
 - AR Style
 - Channels 4 & 7 evening news
 - The Vine
- Participated in 3 Pop-Up Shops
- Facilitated the purchase of mobile credit card readers for all 5 Human Development Centers



Upcoming Events

The Blue Umbrella **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**



December 2nd | 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Door prizes will be available during the event!

Online shoppers can shop from Fri, 12/2 until Sun, 12/4 and be eligible for a separate door prize.



700 Main St., Little Rock, AR 72201
blueumbrellaar.org

Shop Online + Get Social

www.blueumbrellaar.org



@blueumbrellaar