



CHDC's James Winnen selected to represent the US in Germany!

February

American Heart Month

Black History Month

2/1 National Freedom Day

2/3 National Wear Red Day

2/10 Blue Umbrella Turns 4

2/14 Valentine's Day

2/15 Susan B. Anthony Day

2/20 President's Day

2/20 Daisy Gatson Bates Day

2/21 Mardi Gras

Special Olympics Arkansas announced Friday, January 20th, the two coaches and two athletes who will represent the US this summer in Germany at the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023. Conway Human Development Center's own James Winnen will be one of the two coaches from Arkansas. See below for announcement from Special Olympics Arkansas.

James Winnen of Springfield, Arkansas, has been involved with Special Olympics for the past 17 years, starting as a volunteer in 2005. As a member of the Games Management Team, he now manages the Special Olympics Arkansas Area 17 swim meet. He has coached Special Olympics Athletes in basketball, bocce, bowling, flag football, floor hockey, golf, softball, stand up paddle board, swimming and volley ball. He has also competed as a Unified partner and served as an official. In the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023, he will serve as an assistant coach in swimming. His first World Games, James has participated in the Special Olympics USA Games in 2010, 2018, and 2022.

James joins a select group from across the country to make up Special Olympics USA at the World Games this June. Read his full bio and learn more at SpecialOlympicsUSA.org #Cheer4USA

Congratulations James on this amazing accomplishment! Your DDS family is cheering you on!



Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration in the United States that recognizes the history, culture, and contributions of Black Americans every February. The origins of Black History Month developed just a little over 60 years after the 13th Amendment was ratified. In 1926, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History sponsored a national “Negro History Week,” coinciding with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas in the second week of February. This was created by Carter G. Woodson, an African American historian, scholar, educator, and publisher. He is considered the “Father of Black History.” It wasn’t until 1976 that Black History month was officially recognized by President Gerald Ford. Before it was officially recognized by the president, students and educators at Kent State first celebrated Black History Month in February 1970. Other countries that formally recognize this holiday are Canada, Ireland, the UK, and the Netherlands.

Now that you have a little background. What can you do to honor Black History Month this year?

1. Watch a documentary about the Black experience.
2. Add some new podcasts to your queue— Code Switch, Seizing Freedom, Black History Buff, Historically Black
3. Read books by black authors— All about Love: New Visions by Bell Hooks, Call Us What We Carry: Poems by Amanda Gorman, Carry on: Reflections for a New Generation by John Lewis.
4. Pick a handful of Black leaders throughout history and learn more about them.
5. Visit the museums: Central High Museum, Daisy Bates home, Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, Delta Cultural Center.
6. Take a virtual museum tour.
7. Support black-owned businesses-shops, restaurants, service providers.



Let's Talk DDS— January Highlights

The first Let's Talk DDS of 2023 took place January 25th via zoom with all DDS (non-HDC) staff. January's meeting included special guest Secretary Kristi Putnam. She shared details regarding her family and her work history prior to being appointed as the new DHS Secretary by Governor Sarah Sanders. Secretary Putnam commended DDS on its ongoing commitment to our clients and is looking forward to visiting our HDCs and learning more about our community programs.

Director Melissa Weatherton had a one-on-one meeting with the Secretary later that same day and was able to brag on our previous accomplishments and plans for the future to improve our existing programs.

Assistant Director Regina Davenport discussed the DDS Spotlights for the month. Representing Children with Chronic Healthcare Needs Family Engagement was Rodney Farley. She shared some of Rodney's background in the DD community and focused on the annual conference he started and has hosted for the past ten years named the Family Bistro. Representing First Connections Family Engagement was the creative team behind First Connections mascots, Miles and Stoney, and increased community outreach— Zabrina Swift, Amanda Jackson, Jacoby Jackson, and April Nichols. DDS Intake and Referral Unit highlight focused on the new website, DDS Citizen Portal, with resources kicking off soon. Assistant Director Davenport also reported on the PHE wind down, DDS Response, DDS unwind monitor (tracking ICF eligibility, independent assessment), and the mailboxes for Autism, CES, and PHE.

Assistant Director Portland Gilbert shared information on the new Diagnostic and Evaluation Manual for both DD and Behavioral Health. Providers can enroll now through provider enrollment. The services within the manual are available to old and new beneficiaries of all ages. It is an asset for those coming off the waitlist, those needing Medi-caid redeterminations, and for establishing a diagnosis of Autism (ASD).

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/divisions-shared-services/medical-services/helpful-information-for-providers/manuals/diageval-prov/>

Division Manager Kathleen Hoskins gave an update regarding the Behavioral Consultation Committee enlisted to review and offer recommendations on ways to revamp the restraint policy, usage and data collection in the HDCs. A committee was created with members from DDS Central Office Administration, HDC Superintendents, and medical and psychiatric representative from all five HDCs and outside stakeholders. The committee works to address the recommendations and have made great headway. The updated summary from the committee can be found on the DDS Website.

https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/restraints-repo_54379489_12423.pdf

Sue Conaway's Retirement Celebration

Peace, Love, & Retirement

Celebrating the Retirement of Sue Conaway!

On January 20, 2023, family, friends, and colleagues celebrated the retirement of Sue Conaway, DDS Intake Specialist. Sue has dedicated her life to the service of the DD population and has been a member of The ARC since the age of 13. Prior to her 16 years of service with Arkansas DHS/DDS, Sue had 30 years of service with Mid Nebraska Individual Services, a Non-Profit DD services agency. While in Nebraska, she was also an Adult Family Home provider and respite provider for individuals with developmental disabilities for 8 years.

Throughout her 16 years of dedicated service to Arkansas DHS/DDS, Sue not only had a positive impact on the lives of the individuals and families she served, but also on her coworkers and area community agencies. Sue has always been quick to step in to make sure the individuals and families received the help they needed. She also has always been willing to provide support and assistance to her coworkers.



“Having worked with Sue throughout the years, I found her to be one of the most positive individuals when working with the individuals and families that we serve. She handles tough situations with a generosity of spirit that does not allow adversity to triumph. Her attitude is infectious and makes for a fun, yet productive atmosphere. Sue, you will be truly missed.” ~ Regina Davenport

“When I think of Sue – it is hard to find a place to start. She is one of the most caring people that I know. She is always trying to figure out how to assist someone in the best possible way and goes above & beyond to make this happen. She is so active in the community and willing to go to events after hours to help advocate and spread her knowledge of programs with other people and organizations so more people are aware of programs that might assist our consumers.

As far as being a member of our unit, when I first came on board, she was so willing to share her knowledge and information so that I would have the same access to anything that she had previously learned and it was so greatly appreciated by me....and even if I had to ask her a couple of times (just to be sure), she was always so patient & gracious to explain things until I understood!!

I am going to miss Sue. She is always so upbeat & positive, and it is contagious! I always feel happy whenever I am around her!! Are we sure we can't convince her to just stay a few more years?

Seriously though, I am so happy that she is getting to retire and be able to travel and do some of the things she wants to do! There is no one who deserves it more than her!! I love you Sue, and I am so happy that you were a person who came through my life and made such an impact on me.... personally & professionally. I am certain that we will stay in touch, and I look forward to hearing about all your tales & travels. Happy (and safe) trails my friend.” ~ Priscilla Skaggs

We would like to thank Sue for sharing peace, love, and sunshine with all of us here at DDS throughout the years!!! We hope Sue enjoys her retirement and her travels!! We will miss Sue around here.... and we ask her, **“Please don't be a stranger!”**

Sue Conaway's Retirement Celebration cont'd



Meet Vernon Wiley



Vernon Wiley is a DHS PASSE Program Coordinator. He has been with DDS going on 4 years. He was a Waiver Program Coordinator before the PASSE took over Case Management. Vernon has been a State of Arkansas Employee for 13 years. “I wanted to work in DDS because of my past work experience with Medicaid Eligibility. In past DHS jobs, I have worked approving Medicaid for providers, Easter Seals and Arkansas Pediatric Facility. The clients benefit from the hard work that we do in DDS.” Vernon enjoys the single life. He also enjoys reading books, classic cars, and listening to music.

Quotes that Vernon lives by:

“I have used all the manure that has been thrown on me as fertilizer to make me stronger.” — Eartha Kitt

“I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.” – Bill Cosby

“If you're not invited to the party, throw your own.”- Diahann Carroll

Vernon Wiley’s motivational quote is “Do it with passion, or not at all.” - Rosa Nochette Carey

Vernon is unique to our team because he is always eager to learn new things whether it is policy related or technology. He is a very passionate person not only with the population that we serve, but to his peers as well. We are currently in the introductory phase of our new Salesforce Incident Management system and Vernon has this system almost mastered. With his productivity rate and team player mentality he is a great asset to our unit. We would like to express many thanks to Vernon and his commitment to DDS.

Save the Date

February

The Blue Umbrella Turns 4– 2/10

March

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Blue & You Fitness Challenge 3/1-5/31

Blue & You Fitness Challenge Kick-off

Dept of Health

3/1

11am– 1pm



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.

The Blue Umbrella Newsletter



Dog Biscuits

FROM ICM, INC.

New Year - New Product!

"Biscuits" are now available in The Blue Umbrella. These 100% natural dog treats are made by customers at Independent Case Management, Inc. and come in five flavors: Beef, Cheddar Cheese, Chicken, Peanut Butter and Veggie.

Stop by to pick up your best friend a bag or two.



NEW BRAND, 2SCENTZWORTH

Who doesn't like free things? The newest artist in The Blue Umbrella and owner of 2scentzworth, Jana, is always eager to give away "free sniffs" of her product.

Jana carefully handcrafts candles and candle melts in her home, then donates a portion of each sale to the Arkansas Autism Foundation.

Stop by today to claim your "free sniff!"



February 2023

→ 02/02

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is around the corner.



Shop online
or visit us in-store

www.blueumbrellaar.org

Monday-Friday
10 AM - 2 PM
700 S Main Street
Little Rock



Handmade cards & more

This Valentine's Day, give a unique gift. We have a variety of handmade cards, new calendars, and sweet treats to choose from that are sure to put a smile on your face! Stop by today!



Social Media →

@blueumbrellaar

