

The In-Sider

Richland Newhope



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Independent to agency provider

(Editor's Note: The following is part of a series of stories about the provider partners that work with Richland Newhope to provide services for people with developmental disabilities in Richland County.)



There are currently more than 150 providers of services for people with developmental disabilities in Richland County. The vast majority are independent providers, like Lorri Lewis.

But, after 12 years, Lewis says she's ready to grow and create her own agency called Choice Express.

She first began working for agencies that support people with disabilities while still employed as a teacher's aide with

the Madison Local Schools. Lewis provided supports a few times a week to one woman who lived in her own apartment. As the woman changed agency providers, Lewis would change employers.

"The more I did, the more I liked it; the more I wanted to do it," says Lewis.

After about three years, Lewis decided to leave her full-time job with Madison and become an independent provider doing adult foster care. She started with one individual who lived in her home with her husband and two daughters. Eventually a second woman moved in and, not long ago, she took on a third individual.

"I serviced her in her own home, however, the time had come when her parents could no longer take care of her," says Lewis. "We didn't want to take her out of the home that she had lived in for 65 years, so the opportunity came to where this home could be purchased; we could keep her there."

Lewis' husband bought the home, which happened to be a short distance down the road from their own house. The two women already living with them decided they would move to the new home. Lorri Lewis moved in, too.

"At first, we didn't know how it was going to work and honestly, I was scared," says Lewis. "However, it has benefited the three ladies so much that I've made it work with my family."

She says she lets the three ladies "do their own thing." They all help with housework and take turns deciding what to eat for dinner. They all love to go shopping. Weekdays, the

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trio attends Richland Newhope Industries, Inc.

"I think the best part is the gratification of knowing that I've made a difference in their lives every day," Lewis says.

There is a fourth individual on a Level One waiver that Lewis also supports on an as-needed basis.

This fall, she filed paperwork with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to become an agency provider.

"I think I want to open up a little bit more opportunity for myself," says Lewis. "I would like to have the home with the three ladies, possibly a home with three males because I have not had the opportunity to work with many males."

She has also applied to provide some transportation services and possibly open a small day hab that would be a place where young adults just coming out of high school could learn skills to live on their own. It would also be a place where retirees could come rather than going to a workshop.

Lewis points out her role in supporting people with developmental disabilities hasn't changed much the past 12 years, but she says there is a lot more paperwork and training required. Once she transitions to an agency provider, she will hire staff. But she wants to keep Choice Express small.

"You can't run a good agency or a household and have a big turnover," she noted. "They (staff) have got to have a bond with individuals to make everything work."

Lewis encourages anyone interested in becoming an independent provider to first do research and an observation with another provider to make sure it's something you want to do.

What's the best part about the job? "I think the best part is the gratification of knowing that I've made a difference in their lives every day," she says.

E-newsletters coming soon

In an effort to be more cost-effective as well as to have more timely communications, Richland Newhope will be moving to electronic-only newsletters in 2017. We are planning to do shorter, more frequent news briefs while also periodically publishing The In-Sider with longer feature stories and photos. If you would like to continue receiving our e-newsletters in the coming year, sign up now at www.rnewhope.org. You can also find the latest Richland Newhope news on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

For information about becoming a provider, go to www.dodd.ohio.gov



Thanksgiving feast: Residents of Raintree, along with their friends and family members, enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving meal on Nov. 16. The festive dinner included special decorations plus turkey, ham, and all of the trimmings. Afterwards, families gathered to enjoy dessert and entertainment by Sarah Spayde. Guests also received a plate of cookies to take home. This was the 16th year for the event.

Top employers and employees honored



2016 Employees of the Year: (L-R) Louie Bauer, Andy Gibson, and Karen Carter

Over the past year, 150 area employers have played a role in giving job opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities in Richland County. Those employers were recognized during the 28th Annual Employer Recognition Breakfast sponsored by Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. (RNI) on Oct. 27.

The event was also an opportunity to highlight RNI's recent accomplishments. For the fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2016, a total of 264 individuals earned paychecks with wages totaling \$560,909.

Community Services also provided employment services to more than 300 individuals who are interested in obtaining employment in the community. These services include job placement, Project SEARCH, job tryouts and assessments,

driver's permit training, employability classes, and the Summer Training Employment Program (STEP). STEP is a five-week paid summer work program for youth who are transitioning into the world of employment. Twelve students and three employers participated in the program this past summer.

Recognized as RNI's 2016 Community Employer of the Year is OhioHealth-Mansfield Hospital. For the past 11 years, the hospital has been a host site for Project SEARCH – a nine month program designed to give students and adults with disabilities work experience. Project SEARCH is a collaboration between Richland Newhope, Pioneer Career and Technology Center, and OhioHealth. Since it began, 38 Project SEARCH participants have been hired directly by OhioHealth. The first participant hired by the hospital 11 years ago remains employed there. OhioHealth-Mansfield has been a committed partner that has consistently shown its dedication to hire and maintain in employment people with disabilities.

Therm-O-Disc is the 2016 "Industrial Employer of the Year." A valued customer since 1976, Therm-O-Disc has contracted with RNI over the years on various subcontract jobs, pallet assembly, and microfilm services. The company currently receives monthly document scanning services. In August 2015, Therm-O-Disc offered an opportunity for an enclave within its facility where a crew of four disassemble/scrap parts daily. This relationship has enabled RNI to continue to expand its employment for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The community-based Employee of the Year for 2016 is Karen Carter of Mansfield. Carter has been employed at McDonald's since April 2014. She also works at Vector Security. Carter is considered a dedicated employee who usually shows up to work early. When she's not at one of her jobs, Carter enjoys spending time with her family, which includes three daughters and three grandchildren. She also likes making jewelry and ceramics, attending Cleveland Indians games, and watching football.

Richland Newhope Industries' facility-based 2016 Employees of the Year are Louie Bauer and Andy Gibson, both of Mansfield. Bauer does sub-contracting work for companies such as MTD, Sky Box, and Stoneridge at RNI's 4th St. facility. He also works at RNI's enclave at Thermo-O-Disc, scrapping and sorting thermostat parts. Described as a hard worker who always has a smile on his face, Bauer has not missed a day of work since he started at Therm-O-Disc more than a year ago. When he's not working, he enjoys participating in Special Olympics basketball, softball, and volleyball as well as fishing and playing video games.

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Top employers and employees honored

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Gibson was recognized for his excellent work ethic at RNI's woodshop on W. Longview Ave. He has a positive attitude, sets personal goals, rarely misses work, and often comes in early and stays late to complete tasks. In his spare time, Gibson enjoys computer games, going to church, and participating in Special Olympics.

Speaking at this year's breakfast were representatives of three local companies or organizations that employ people supported by Richland Newhope.

Rebecca Owens of Catholic Charities talked about the importance of community partnerships.

"Without partnerships within the community, we won't get near as much done," Owens noted.

Cassie Monica, whose family owns nine local McDonald's restaurants, pointed out you are only as good as the people you hire. She recognized four individuals currently employed at McDonald's.

"These individuals have been loyal, always dependable, honest, and hardworking," she noted.

Tom Fesler with OhioHealth-Mansfield praised the 14 individuals he supervises in environmental and laundry services.

"Their attendance is fantastic, they always pass the drug screening...they're always on time," Fesler said.

In Memoriam
Dennis "Buddy" Collins
 RNI
 Nov. 10, 2016

The more than 200 people in attendance also heard from several other individuals employed in the community, including Mark Kelley, who works at Deer Ridge Golf Club.

"Working makes me happy and has given me a sense of pride," says Kelley.



2016 Newhope Christmas Party

Emerging leader



Richland Newhope Human Resources Director Alicia Bailey was recently recognized as one of this year's recipients of the '10 under 40' award presented by the Richland Community Development Group (RCDG).

The awards are presented to young professionals who have made a significant impact on local businesses, organizations, and the community.

Alicia is an active member of our leadership team and has provided human resource services to almost 400 people employed by the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities for the past six years.

She's also involved in the community, serving on the Board of Directors for the Richland County Domestic Violence Shelter and as a cheerleading advisor for the Lexington Local School District, where she also serves in the Parent Teacher Organization.

New tool helps Ohioans in crisis

Ohio is making it easier for individuals who are experiencing a stressful situation to find immediate help.

The state recently launched a free confidential Crisis Text Line that operates 24/7. Any Ohio resident who needs help coping with a crisis can now text the keyword "4hope" to 741741 to be connected to a crisis counselor.

The Crisis Text Line is an outgrowth of an ongoing "Strong Families, Safe Communities" partnership between the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to fund innovative projects to assist families and youth who are at-risk.

Licensed and experienced crisis counselors are on stand-by to provide a personal response and information on a range of issues, including bullying, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The specialist helps the user stay safe and healthy with effective, secure support and referrals.

"We are pleased this accessible method of communication is being made available to people with developmental disabilities who may be experiencing a crisis in their life," said Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Director John Martin.



Rights and responsibilities

Mansfield Municipal Court Magistrate Phil Naumoff was the guest speaker for the Aktion Club and People First meeting on Oct. 19. He talked to club members about citizens' responsibilities, such as renewing your driver's license and paying for any traffic violations. He also talked about people's rights as a homeowner or renter and the importance of voting in elections.

30 Years and still making a difference



The December Employee of the Month says receiving the honor is very humbling and reassures her that she's still "making a difference."

Julie Litt, who is the coordinator of Student Services and Early Intervention (EI), has been a part of supporting children and families for more than 30 years.

Her co-worker says she has always been an extremely hard worker.

"Her work ethic is superb and her dedication to Newhope shows each and every day she steps

through the door," said staff.

Her peers say for over the past few years she has not only been doing her own job duties but has been overseeing the Applesseed Childcare Center at the Early Childhood Center (ECC).

"This has been a huge undertaking for her, but she never complains about the extra work and always has things completed on time," shared her co-worker.

A fellow employee also shared that a couple months ago their intake specialist left the ECC, and Julie took on those responsibilities as well until someone was hired.

Julie has many favorite moments during her Richland Newhope tenure, including one that occurred after taking some high school students on a hayride one evening.

"Donna Shank and I spent the night with students from Newhope School. One of the students let me know she claimed the cot and I was going to sleep on the floor in my sleeping bag. This still makes me smile," shared Julie.

She also said her favorite memories are wrapped around making others smile and laugh and letting them know she enjoys just spending time with them.

Her peers also say she is a strong advocate of the families that she serves.

"She genuinely cares about all she comes in contact with and has a HUGE heart. On top of all of this, she belongs to state groups and regularly attends meetings to advocate and help to give input into rules and regulations," said a co-worker.

Julie's co-worker adds she is literally a wealth of information and EI would not be the same without her!

Simple Sayings

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home."

Edith Sitwell, British poet

Employee Milestones

19 Years

Hobart Prince

17 Years

Ronda Sherman

16 Years

Jennifer Curry

Shannon Mahoney

Karen Pruitt

15 Years

Laura Brackett

Ben Crouch

Nancy Riebau

Karen Smith

Nicole Vantilburg

14 Years

Nicole Vantilburg

Nancy Riebau

13 Years

Jeri Zeigler

12 Years

Nicole Maglott

Star June

11 Years

Nancy James

Claudia Strong

Diane Thrush

8 Years

Chris White

6 Years

Alicia Bailey

Susan Fairchild

5 Years

Melanie Gebbie

What's Happening

*Richland Newhope Calendar of Events**

Dec. 12 - SCRAP recycling trailer, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m., Early Childhood Center, 255 Hedges St., Mansfield

Dec. 19 – Jan. 2 – Winter break for preschool classes at the Early Childhood Center

Dec. 26 – Dec. 27 – Christmas Holiday: Richland Newhope Administration Building, Service and Support Administration, and the Early Childhood Center closed

Jan. 2 – New Year's Holiday: Richland Newhope Administration Building, Service and Support Administration, and the Early Childhood Center closed

Jan. 6 - First Friday, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Element of Art Studio/Gallery, 96 N. Main St., Mansfield

Jan. 16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: Richland Newhope Administration Building, Service and Support Administration, and the Early Childhood Center closed

Jan. 25 - Richland Co. Board of Developmental Disabilities meeting, 11:30 a.m., Newhope Administrative Offices, 314 Cleveland Ave., Mansfield

Feb. 3 - First Friday, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Element of Art Studio/Gallery, 96 N. Main St., Mansfield

**For more information, go to www.rnewhope.org*



Treats galore

There was plenty of fun, smiles, and tasty candy during the annual Halloween parade and Trick or Treat at the Early Childhood Center on Oct. 27. Preschoolers wore Halloween costumes, sang songs in the gym, and then paraded the hallways where they made several stops for candy. Some family members and staff got into the spirit and also dressed up in costumes.

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The In-Sider

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Supporting children and adults with disabilities throughout their lifetime



From:
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