

ALLIES

WINTER 2015

A MAGAZINE FROM THE BHN ALLIANCE

**Actor. Writer.
Dreamer.
Rachel Doak**

**Around
the
Alliance**

**A Job
Well Done
Corey Baker**

**A
Conversation
with...**

Make the Connection

By Stephen L. Williams
BHN Alliance Superintendent



How connected are you?

We don't often think about our connections, yet they are how things get done. Our first and most important connection is to our family, the people we love, nurture and support. After our families are community connections – our friends, coworkers, the people we worship with and volunteer alongside. Connections are in the fabric of our lives, so when we pause to answer the question, it's easy to see that a life without connection is not much of a life at all.

For some time now, the Belmont, Harrison and Noble county boards of developmental disabilities have been at work connecting people to their community. This purposeful effort started by asking the people we support what they wanted and then listening - really *listening* - to their answers. Their answers included statements like "I want a job where I can make more money" and "I want to live closer to my family" and "I want to learn how to drive a car."

Armed with these answers, we set our course toward helping people achieve their goals and we are seeing real results. Every day someone else is engaged in the community and everyone is better because of it.

You see, connections are not about programs, processes, or systems. They are about relationships, the kind that link people to what matters the most. What does this look like? It looks like a young man whose goal is to help senior citizens so he finds a job in a nursing home. It looks like a young woman who collects toys so children without can have a happier holiday. It looks like an adult who has always wanted to read and then finds the Adult Basic Education teacher who will take the time to teach him. These ambitions are all accomplished through connections.

The 2015 awareness theme we have chosen is **MAKE THE CONNECTION. Ready. Willing. Able.** It is a call to action that our community is already answering. Business owners, churches, schools, civic organizations and neighbors are embracing what the people we support have to offer and our community is better because of it.

Consider becoming a connection for someone today. It will have a lasting impact on you, the person you connect with, and your community.

Make the connection and make a difference in the life of someone you have yet to meet.

ALLIES

ALLIES is published quarterly by the BHN Alliance (Belmont-Harrison-Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities), 330 Fox-Shannon Place, St. Clairsville, OH 43950. Its goal is to spotlight the accomplishments of people with disabilities who are living, working, learning, and contributing in communities across the three counties. Comments and suggestions for articles may be sent to the Editor at the above address, or by e-mail pmccort@bcbdd.org

Publisher
Stephen L. Williams
Superintendent
740-695-0233
swilliams@bcbdd.org

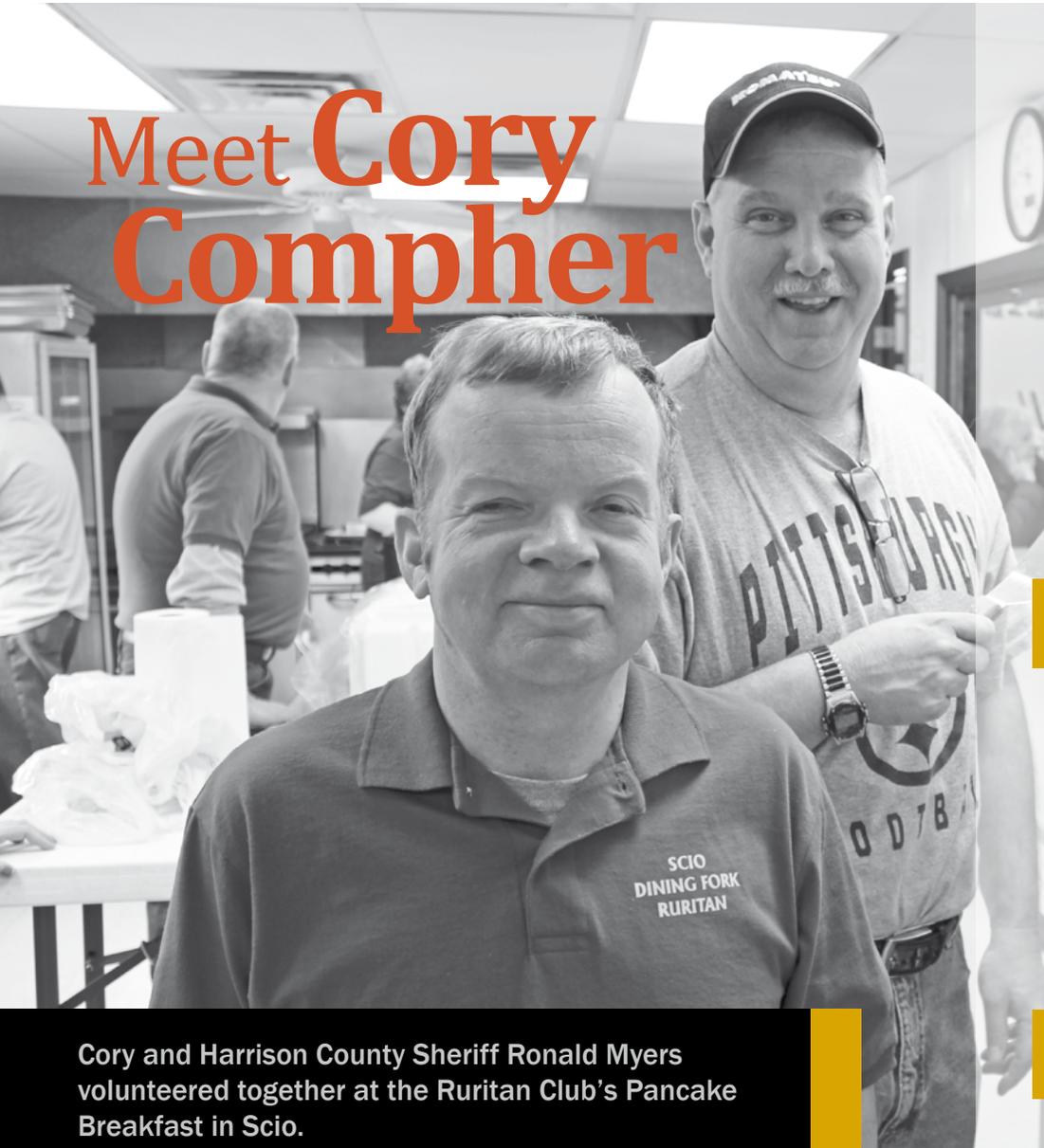
Contributing Editor and
Photographer
Pamela R. McCort
Communications
Coordinator
pmccort@bcbdd.org
740-695-0407, ext 335

Belmont County
Board of DD
www.bcbdd.org

Harrison County
Board of DD
www.hcbdd.org

Noble County
Board of DD
www.ncbdd.org

Meet Cory Compher



Cory and Harrison County Sheriff Ronald Myers volunteered together at the Ruritan Club's Pancake Breakfast in Scio.



Cory and Richard Beatty sing together in the New Rumley United Methodist Church Choir.



Cory waits for the punch line to a joke Richard told during a break at choir practice.

Volunteers make a difference in our everyday lives and have a tremendous impact on our communities. For the volunteer, it doesn't just make one feel good, it is a way to get to know people and make friends.

Volunteering is good for everyone and everyone has something to give. There is, however, a mistaken belief that people with disabilities can't volunteer or give to their communities. Fortunately, that is changing, due in large part to people like Cory Compher in Harrison County.

Cory doesn't receive the attention a politician or business leader might receive, yet he is as well-known in his community as any person can be and people are quick to point out that "Everybody knows Cory." That's because Cory gives of himself whenever and wherever he is needed.

As a member of the Scio Dining Fork Ruritan Club, one might find Cory greeting guests at the Pancake Breakfast or working the Ruritan booth during the Scio Fall Festival. He is also an active member of the New Rumley United Methodist Church where he sings in the

choir, serves as an usher, and volunteers at Easter Sunday Breakfast.

Richard Beatty sings with Cory in the church choir:

"Cory is a great guy," Richard said, "People can depend upon him."

Cory is well-liked and admired. Some have even dubbed him the "ambassador" of New Rumley and Scio because of his presence in the community.

Activities are important, but it's the impact Cory's presence has on others that makes the most difference. If someone is ill, Cory is willing to sit with them until they feel better.

Fellowship, Goodwill and Community Service are part of the Ruritan Mission. Cory demonstrates all three across his community and toward his neighbors. He is there, when and where he is needed.

Dependable, liked, and admired are words that describe Cory Compher. And Ambassador, too.

Cory smiles at that last one. "I wouldn't go that far," he said.

A Job Well Done

Reaping the Rewards of Work

Corey Baker doesn't see himself as a role model, yet he is in more ways than one.

Corey knows what he wants and goes after it, despite pressures that might have stopped someone else. He is a hard worker and reaps the reward of a job well done – self-esteem, friendships, and financial gain.

Corey has worked in the community for many years. For 10 years he worked at a job that required him to walk many miles or take multiple busses just to get

“Corey is pretty amazing,” Joey said. “I know people who have given up when faced with things Corey has faced. Instead, he works very hard and is open to trying new things.”

When Corey was ready for a job change, he contacted Joey. Corey's 10 years were spent working in a restaurant where he washed dishes. When he wanted to leave, he found it was a struggle to convince people he could work somewhere other than a restaurant.

“That's all people thought I knew,” he said. “I knew there were other jobs around.”

Through the *Employment First* initiative, Corey chose Goodwill Industries as his employment support provider and it located a job opportunity at Hampton Inn St. Clairsville. That's when Corey met Maxine Russell.

Maxine is the Operations Manager at Hampton Inn St. Clairsville. She has spent 38 years in the hospitality business and has hired people of differing abilities before.

“It was just something I wanted to do,” Maxine said. “I believe in giving people the opportunity to prove themselves.”

A willingness to give Corey an opportunity was just what he needed. Corey was hired last year as a Facility Attendant responsible for the main entrance to the hotel and the expansive lobby.

Other employees welcomed Corey and made the connection with him.



Corey is part of this team of Hampton Inn St. Clairsville employees (l-r): John Schreyer, Corey, Donnie Russell, and Dale Palmer.

there. It was hard during those years, and there were people who did not always respect him, yet he stayed motivated.

Joey DiCesare is a SSA who coordinates supports for Corey through the BHN Alliance. He said that Corey maintained his motivation and self-respect with every challenge.

“This is one of the best crews I ever had,” Corey said of his co-workers and supervisor. “They take care of me and I take care of them.”

Stephanie Work is the General Manager at Hampton Inn and she said that Corey is held to the same standard as everyone else.

“Corey meets that standard and even exceeds it at times,” Stephanie said.

Maxine agreed.

“Corey is a smart guy. He thinks of things we can do differently and if it’s something we can change, we will,” she said.

Corey said he likes this job and the good benefits that come along with it. Those benefits include a wage that lets him enjoy his model train hobby. Corey’s interest in trains started in childhood and became a passion when he began working as an adult and earning enough money to buy the trains he wanted.

Stephanie believes Corey’s enthusiasm is what makes him a good employee, too.

“Passion is a quality I see in workers with disabilities and we have definitely benefitted from having Corey work for us,” Stephanie said.

The growing hotel/motel industry in Belmont, Harrison and Noble counties is welcoming employees with disabilities and two others have been hired by Hampton Inn St. Clairsville and Microtel Inn & Suites over the past year. Both are managed by Century Hospitality.

When asked if he had advice for someone looking for a job, Corey shared the three rules he lives by: be on time; do what your boss says, and never ask for a raise.



Corey says his life revolves around his hobby – model trains. He set up a train display in Hampton Inn’s lobby this past Christmas. When he’s not at work or working on the over 200 trains and accessories he owns, Corey volunteers at a local hobby shop.

“If you’re doing your job, the boss will give you a raise,” Corey said with a knowing smile.

Because of the example Corey and others have set, Stephanie and Maxine said they will continue to hire workers with disabilities.

“If there is an opportunity, we will interview and offer the job,” Maxine said. “We are so lucky to have Corey.”

Are You an Employer Looking For Good People?

Stephanie Work, General Manager of Hampton Inn St. Clairsville, knows the value of hiring workers of all abilities. She was motivated to hire Corey after hearing a presentation on the benefits of hiring workers with disabilities that was given by the BHN Alliance.

“I returned to work and told Maxine this was something I wanted us to do,” Stephanie remembers. Maxine wholeheartedly agreed. They contacted Adam “Nick” Nicholoff at the BHN Alliance, who connected them with local providers that were serving people looking for work. Corey was one of them.

“Many people hear the word ‘disability’ and think the person can’t do this or can’t do that. I have learned people with disabilities can do more than what others can do,” Maxine said.

If you are an employer with a position that needs filled, call Nick at 740-695-0407, ext. 352, or email anicholoff@bcbdd.org He will connect you with people who are ready, willing and able to help you and your business succeed.



Rachel takes a last look at her latest essay before she submits it to The Journal for publication.

Working Toward Her Dream

Time after time, goals are achieved and dreams come true when people make the most of their opportunities in life. Rachel Doak of Caldwell is a person who has a dream and makes the most of her opportunities to work toward it right where she lives.

Rachel loves the theatre. It is her passion and she has a big dream. Rachel would like to be on Broadway one day, cast in the part of Christine in her favorite play, “Phantom of the Opera.” Rachel admits the odds are against her, yet she still dreams the dream. In the meantime, she’s not waiting in the wings. She

is performing in local theatrical productions as often as possible.

In fact, Rachel has been performing most of her life.

“My first speaking part was Mary in my church pageant when I was eight years old,” Rachel said.

At age 12, she joined the Muskingum College Children's Choir and performed in that group for two years. She has been singing and acting in productions from Cambridge to Marietta ever since.

Today, Rachel is active in Noble County Performing Arts. She was in the chorus of its latest production, "The Happy, Hippy 70s Show" and also cast as Cindy in the Brady Bunch segment of the production. In last year's Performing Arts' show, she played Dolly in the "Hello Dolly" number of "Give My Regards to Broadway."

Rachel and her husband, Asher, met when both were cast in a play in Marietta. A trip to New York City and the show "Godspell" was inspiration for a column she wrote, entitled "Broadway Dreams."

On my first night of performing, which would be a Monday, I'd arrive at the theater about two hours before show time, check in, then go to the hair and make-up to get that done first. The wig mistress would put my hair in pin curls, then put Christine's wig on me. After my hair and make-up were done, I'd get in my costume for the opening scene while I warmed up my voice, then warm up with the other dancers.

Rachel also loves to write and says she has a "whole truckload" of articles she has written. She said her interest in writing could be inherited. Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost are distant cousins.

"Maybe it rubbed off on me," she said.

Rachel's "Broadway Dreams" column and others have appeared in *The Journal and Noble County Leader* newspaper and its monthly magazine, *Around the Square*. Her first published story was about the life of her dad, Paul Wallace. She has also written about her favorite aunt, the late Maxine Laughlin.

Anne Chlovechok, Publisher of *The Journal*, said her relationship with Rachel is a "win-win" situation.

"Rachel has many stories to tell, and is good at

telling them," Anne said. "I enjoy giving Rachel a place to publish her work, and in return, she reliably contributes interesting content to my magazine or newspaper."

Rachel has kept a diary since she was 15 years old and has written about her personal experiences.

"Being in special education, I was bullied a lot," Rachel recalled. "That was hard to write about, but I felt better when I did."

Anne noted that unless Rachel writes about her disability, it's not evident she has one.

Rachel was born with congenital hydrocephalus, yet it has not stopped her from doing what she loves. And that just may be the point of Rachel's story.

Her disability does not upstage Rachel's interests or her life. It is simply part of who she is, a remarkable woman who makes the most of her opportunities, doing what she loves and sharing her talents with others in the community.

As for that Broadway dream, she's moving toward it, one play and one song, at a time.



Rachel connected with Anne Chlovechok (left), Publisher of *The Journal and Noble County Leader*, some time ago. Anne said she enjoys giving Rachel a place to publish her work and appreciates the point of view Rachel offers in her essays.

A Conversation with... Karen Fisher of TEAM Consulting



Karen Fisher

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series where we give local providers an opportunity to talk about the supports they offer to people with developmental disabilities. This conversation is with Karen Fisher, Founder and CEO of TEAM Consulting, LLC.

Karen worked as a job developer and work adjustment coordinator before she founded TEAM Consulting in 2002. It is a certified provider of Medicaid Waiver, adult day supports, vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services. Employment supports and day supports are designed to fulfill TEAM's mission which is: *Helping others surpass obstacles through self-empowerment so that 'Today Everyone's Accomplishments Matter.'* TEAM serves people in 15 counties in southeastern Ohio and has offices in Old Washington and Bethesda.

ALLIES: The developmental disabilities system is changing and the Employment First initiative is driving much of the change. TEAM has provided vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities since it was founded and also has two sheltered work settings. With the recent shift away from sheltered environments toward employment in the community, how has TEAM evolved to address the changes?

K.F. In my opinion TEAM has the advantage here. Since inception, we have provided competitive job placement services for OOD (Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities). So, it is not the challenge of placing people in as much as how people and the system will adapt to support the changes. When we started Adult Day Support (ADS), we continued to train people for competitive work, holding them to the same standards as community employers. For example, we have always paid minimum wage to clients who earn a wage and created learning environments outside of our facilities to enhance skills. We developed the WAGES (Working And Gaining Employment Skills) program in an effort to get people out in the community and exposed to the real work world. Because we are a small agency, we can listen closely to the needs of persons served and local employers and develop work sites that are individualized and supportive. This is all part of looking for natural supports in the community.

I believe people want to be a part of something positive that makes a difference, yet many people fear the unknown. We must educate society, teach the world that we are all the same and natural supports are everywhere, every day, for everyone. If we can erase fear through exposure at TEAM, we believe our stakeholders will be successful in many ways.

To sum that up, we have added many community

inclusion options and talked to each person we serve about what they want. We have made referrals to Employment First and other options while reassuring people that if they do not want to work, they can contribute to society in many other ways. The changes in the system have caused a lot of fear in persons as to how their services will look in the future. We are trying to support everyone through an ever changing world.

Allies: Vocational rehabilitation is one of the primary services offered by TEAM, which is a certified Employment First provider. Talk a little about your "Supported Employment Before Day Services" approach and some of the ways you are helping people find work in the community.

K.F.: TEAM was founded as a Community Rehabilitation Partner with OOD. It is the agency mindset that jobs had to be competitive and people with any disability can work with the proper supports. In 2008, when funding streams began shifting, and by 2012 when Employment



Photo Provided

TEAM connected Lauren Kaldor with her job at Burger King. She is pictured with her BK supervisor, Jim Luckino.

First was being implemented, TEAM shifted with the state systems. That's when we started Adult Day Support, yet our mindset did not shift. People who want competitive employment deserve that opportunity. We support those who want referrals to services or resources that can help them achieve it.

Before we started adult day support, it was a struggle deeming someone unemployable and sending them to a sheltered workshop. As owner of TEAM, I never saw myself operating sheltered workshops. We started day services for people we believe are between competitive employment and sheltered workshops. We created a safe place to learn transferable skills. Before enrolling someone into day support, we first assess his or her desire for Supported Employment. We also provide transition services, encouraging participation in the community for all people. For example, one person came to us after failing in other provider facilities. This person just needed the individual structure that we provide. In less than a year, the person began working in a day care and has remained successful in that setting for over five years now! Things like this did not happen when the systems worked against one another, so partnerships like Employment First are exciting for the future of all job seekers with disabilities.

We developed "Focus" days that include transferable skill development to help people prepare for employment or independent living. Topics include Current Events / Community Awareness; Healthy Living and Fitness; Home Economics; and Life Skills for Vocational Success.

Allies: Families, guardians and other advocates have worked to put rules and policies in place to make sure people with disabilities are not segregated. TEAM offers opportunities that are all about including people with disabilities into their community. What are some of your new opportunities and what results are you seeing for the people you support?

K.F.: These new opportunities have our participants excited about getting out, trying something new and meeting different people. WAGES is a very new concept that is evolving to encompass work and community living. Participants go to host employment sites – a hotel, restaurant and grocery store - where they learn good worker traits or receive work adjustment training. Each is paid minimum wage and gains exposure to jobs in the community. Some have never been to a competitive worksite, so it is exciting to see them giving 110 percent effort to impress the employers and show their skills. WAGES is evolving in Summer 2015 to include transitional group homes for persons working toward Employment First and independent living.

Our volunteer group, Helping Hands, develops methods to get involved in the community. In the first six months,

volunteers created Pink Ribbons and distributed them at a breast cancer walk. They also made Christmas cards, caroled at a local nursing home, held a basket fundraiser for Cystic Fibrosis, and read books to a preschool class. We plan to hold our first Healthy Living Day this summer. These are just a few examples of how person-centered thinking has always been a part of staff training and agency mission.

Allies: Supporting people with disabilities can be very rewarding work, yet it can also be challenging for providers. When hiring someone, what characteristics do you look for in a person?

K.F.: We have a list of core competencies for Direct Support Professionals, yet there is no better way of determining if someone is right for this job than seeing it for yourself. Job candidates shadow an employee during their first interview and they work directly with people at that time. This lets us observe their reactions and gives the candidate a feel for the job. We look for people who have compassion and can adjust without losing respect for boundaries.

We also look for people who believe in the concepts of equality and normalization, so persons served can be included and understood. We have also invested in a Learning Management System for continuing education and to keep staff current with trends in our field.

Allies: If you had a magic wand, what would the world look like as it relates to people of all abilities living and working together?

K.F.: My first thought was a memory of the old Coca Cola commercial and featured song, "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony." I visualize that picture, thousands of people in one place, doing the same thing, for the same reason, as ONE unit, in harmony. If more people got the big picture, we could all live in peace and harmony. If only it was as easy as sharing a Coke! If I had a magic wand, I would give everyone a Coke that was filled with knowledge and the power of understanding.

We are all on this earth with the same basic needs and those needs can be met by building strong foundations of support for all people. Where one person is weak, another is strong, and if we could learn to build these relationships to balance society, there would not be misconceptions or barriers that make success so hard for the people we serve and those who try to support them. Then we could live in perfect harmony.



Zac Ferguson, a Bridges to Transition participant, works at the Noble County Sheriff's Office. He is pictured with job coach Betty Carpenter.

Breakfast Guests Students of the Harrison Preschool welcomed the Harrison County Commissioners to their annual Green Eggs & Ham Breakfast held March 17th. Pictured in the photos are: Commissioner Don Bethel with Jaidyn Carlson; Commissioner Dale Norris with Regan Applegarth and Lilly Yarish; and Commissioner Bill Host with Bentley Manbeck and Hailey Carlson.

Around the BHN Alliance



New Office Opens Present for the ribbon-cutting of the new administrative offices of the Noble County Board of DD were County Commissioners Virgil Thompson, Stephen Bond and Gary Rossitter. The Board of DD is now located in the county's multi-agency building at 46049 Marietta Road, Suite 4, Caldwell.



Proclamation Issued Developmental Disabilities' Awareness Month was proclaimed by the Belmont County Commissioners in March. The official Proclamation was accepted by management and staff of Hampton Inn St. Clairsville, which employs several workers with disabilities. Pictured, from left: Commissioner Ginny Favede; Stephanie Work, General Manager, and employee Corey Baker of Hampton Inn; Commissioner Matt Coffland; and Maxine Russell, Hampton Inn Operations Manager.

empower united colleague
hobbies volunteer
clubs
employee
bond
people
meaning
jobs
friendship
sharing
caring
community
teams
student
similarities
neighbor



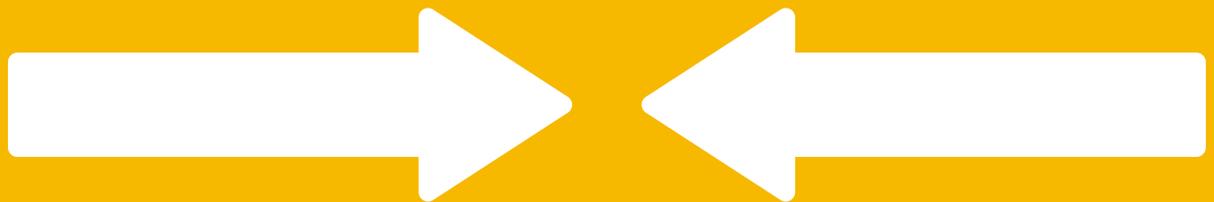
make the connection



A message from the Belmont-Harrison-Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities



Make the CONNECTION



READY. WILLING. ABLE.
To help your business succeed.

From receptionists and secretaries to carpenters and carpet fitters, workers with disabilities are ready to put their skills to work for your business.

To learn how you can make the connection, call Nick at 740-695-0407, ext. 352, or email anicholoff@bcbdd.org



Belmont-Harrison-Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities