

# options

What is the quality of life if not for options.



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## Joyful Christmas Gathering and Friendship

We celebrated Christmas with our friends at True North Church. The youth group provided a delightful meal, accompanied by carol singing, an enjoyable trivia game, and a heartfelt holiday message. To cap off the evening, Santa made a special appearance to distribute gifts. It was a joyful time filled with friendship and fellowship.



# From our Superintendent

Welcome, 2025! This year's theme is "When We Are United, We Are Strong." This message couldn't be more timely as everyone has committed their time and enthusiasm to learning and growing in the field of advocacy, which is prominently featured throughout this publication.

Additionally, each March we observe Developmental Disability Awareness Month. This year, we are "uniting" with Sara's Garden and Triangular Processing to raise awareness and support, as we believe that everyone has the potential to be active, contributing members of their communities. Orange is the official color for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, so together we will be displaying orange ribbons in downtown Wauseon and distributing them to our community members and partners to wear. On March 13th, we will dedicate the day to wearing orange in Fulton County.

We invite individuals, families, schools, and the community to wear orange in support of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Also, please begin searching for your mismatched, colorful socks for "Rock Your Socks" day on March 21st, in support of individuals with Down Syndrome and World Down Syndrome Day. As always, we plan to share photo opportunities on Facebook, so don't forget to post or send them our way. We are grateful not only to "unite" with Sara's Garden and Triangular Processing but also for a community that is and will continue to be "strong."

*Robin Shepherd*

## Sharing a Festive Meal as a Gift

A few days prior to Christmas, a team of SSA's delivered meals to individuals who would be celebrating the holidays with staff. This is an annual tradition we uphold to express our gratitude to our DSP's for their exceptional work every single day.



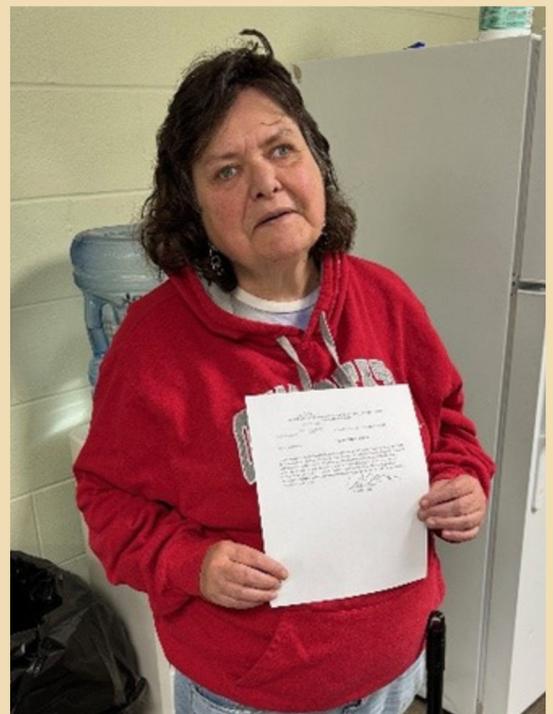
# Self-Advocacy Cookie Decorating Night

The Come Together group organized this event, and we had a wonderful time enjoying Christmas music, sharing pizza, and decorating cookies. Everyone had a blast, and it was delightful to see cookies stacked high with vibrant frosting and sprinkles.



## Taking Charge of Me

Angela Dillon had a guardian for much of her adult life. Realizing she no longer needed one, she set the ambitious goal of becoming her own Guardian. Angie dedicated herself to taking control of her life, remaining steadfast in her commitment to personal growth, and she succeeded! Angie shared that, "It was one of the hardest things that I had to do but I knew that I wanted to make my own decisions, support myself, and grow into the person that I knew that I could be. It has given me the freedom that I have been wanting for so long and have desired to have."





# Tips for Parents of Picky Eaters

Picky eating is a common phase for toddlers. While babies typically triple their weight, a toddler's growth rate and appetite tend to slow down.

During this stage, toddlers begin to establish their food preferences, which can change rapidly. A food that is a favorite one day might be rejected the next, and something previously disliked may suddenly become popular. For weeks, they might only consume one or three preferred foods, ignoring everything else.

It's important to remain patient and not let this typical behavior frustrate you. Focus on providing healthy food options, and understand that, over time, your child's appetite and eating habits will stabilize.

Here are some helpful tips to navigate through this picky eating phase.

1. Family Style – Gather around the table for meals as a family whenever possible. Ensure that mealtime is free from distractions like TV or cell phones. Use this opportunity to demonstrate healthy eating habits. Serve one meal for everyone and resist the temptation to prepare a separate dish if your child declines what you've offered, as this can promote picky eating. Aim to include at least one food that your child enjoys in each meal while maintaining a balanced menu, regardless of whether they choose to eat it or not.
2. Food Fights – If your toddler refuses to eat, try not to make a fuss. It's beneficial for children to learn to listen to their bodies and to use hunger as a guide. If they have had a substantial breakfast or lunch, they may not be interested in eating much for the rest of the day. As a parent, your role is to provide food, while your child decides whether to eat it. Pressuring or punishing children for not eating can lead to a dislike of foods they might otherwise enjoy.
3. Break from Bribes – Although it may be tempting, avoid offering treats as rewards for eating other foods. This can make the "prize" food more appealing and turn the foods you want them to try into an undesirable chore.
4. Try, Try Again – If your child refuses a food once, don't lose hope. Continue to present new foods and those they have previously disliked. It can take ten or more exposures to a particular food before a toddler warms up to it. Establishing set meal times and limiting snacks can help ensure your child is hungry when new foods are introduced.
5. Variety – The Spice of Life – Provide a diverse array of healthy foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, and include higher-protein options at least twice a week.
6. Make Food Fun – Toddlers are often more willing to try foods that are arranged in visually appealing, creative ways. They tend to enjoy any food that involves dipping, and finger foods are usually a favorite.
7. Involve Kids in Meal Planning – Harness your toddler's growing desire for control by allowing them to choose which fruits and vegetables to include in dinner.
8. Tiny Chefs – Some cooking tasks are suitable for toddlers, but always supervise them closely.
9. Crossing Bridges – Once a food is accepted, use what nutritionists refer to as "food bridges" to introduce others with similar colors, flavors, and textures to help broaden your child's palate.

If you have concerns regarding your child's diet, consult your pediatrician, who can assist in troubleshooting and ensuring your child receives all the essential nutrients for growth and development. Remember, picky eating is often a typical developmental phase for toddlers. Do your best to gently guide them toward healthy eating habits.



# Building Healthy Relationships

FCBDD is collaborating with neighboring counties and NOWAC to offer educational sessions focused on building Healthy Relationships. The Center for Child and Family Advocacy will lead these presentations.

They will cover the topics of sexting and internet safety on March 6, followed by a discussion on consent on April 3. Both sessions are set to take place from 5:30 to 7 p.m. FCBDD will host an in-person event while also joining the presentation virtually as a group.

When: March 6th, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Where: This will be a virtual meeting, with an in-person gathering at the FCBDD and also accessible via Zoom. The presentation will focus on sexting and online dangers.

A boxed dinner will be provided, including a sandwich, chips, a cookie, and a bottle of water. Everyone attending in person will have the chance to enter a drawing for a gift basket.

Please RSVP by emailing [kellynagel@fultoncountyoh.com](mailto:kellynagel@fultoncountyoh.com) or by calling 419-337-4575.

(Please note that a part 2 of this series will be held on April 3rd)



## MARCH IS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

Please show your support by hanging an orange ribbon or bow on your door, car, mailbox or somewhere in your home or place of business.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13  
WEAR ORANGE and post your picture on your personal or business social media pages.

Follow us on our social media sites for more updates & activities regarding Developmental Disabilities Month!

