

THE CDC CORNER

MISSION

PROVIDING SUPPORTS AND SERVICES TO CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHILE ADDRESSING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL PERSONS IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH WE SERVE.

ENABLING TECHNOLOGY SUCCESS STORY

Enabling Technology is all about promoting independence for the individuals we support. There are a variety of technologies that range from tablets and Ring doorbells, to microwaves and safe touch stoves. There are even pets that help individuals learn to take care of something. One of our Independent Support Coordinators (ISC) recently learned about dental hygiene challenges facing many of the individuals we support. Enabling Technology has many options of toothbrushes - even ones that light up, prompting people who have trouble keeping track of time to focus on brushing. *Lumicare* has aided in providing a "Y toothbrush" (pictured below) for one of our individuals who just doesn't have the patience to effectively brush their teeth daily. It is the hope of this individual's Circle of Support that this will promote better dental hygiene and less distress for brushing their teeth. The Y toothbrush is simple - cover with toothpaste, set it in your mouth, press a button, and voila! The mouthguard-like design, paired with sonic vibration, is meant to brush all teeth at once - even getting in the hard-to-reach spot on the backside of the molars. We are excited to start this journey with enabling technology, not only to help prompt independence, but encourage better hygiene as well.

FUN FACT!

Y toothbrushes are made for both children and adults. To learn more about Enabling Technology, please visit www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging.



SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Check it out! Thank you to our friends at Waste Management for inviting us to their Cedar Ridge Landfill Open House in June. We always appreciate the opportunity to celebrate your support and inclusion of our community. Our Clinical Coordinator, Rachel Rudolf, and Early Intervention Manager, Becky Jamison, had a blast at this year's event!



HOLIDAYS

AUGUST Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Awareness Month

AUGUST 17 National Nonprofit Day

SEPTEMBER Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Awareness Month

SEPTEMBER 30 Limb-Girdle Muscular Dystrophy (LGMD) Awareness Day

OCTOBER National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

OCTOBER 9 World Sight Day

Local Happenings



Bedford County:

Bell Buckle Webb Art & Craft Festival

9am - 5pm on Saturday, October 18th & 9am - 4pm on Sunday, October 19th
at Sawney Lot on Maple Street, Bell Buckle, TN 37020

Coffee County:

Manchester Old Timers Day Festival

9am - 5pm on Saturday, October 4th
at Downtown Square, Manchester, TN 37355

Davidson County:

Watermelon Festival

10am - 2pm on Saturday, August 16th
at Nashville Farmers' Market, 900 Rosa L Parks Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37208

Franklin County:

12th Annual Fall Heritage Festival

5pm - 9pm on Friday, September 19th, 10am - 9pm on Saturday,
September 20th, & 11am - 5pm on Sunday, September 21st
at 101 Cumberland Street East, Cowan, TN 37318

Giles County:

Ardmore Crape Myrtle Festival

9am - 3:30pm on Saturday, August 16th
at John Barnes Park, 30515 Ardmore Ridge Road, Ardmore, TN 38449

Hickman County:

National Banana Pudding Festival

9am - 6pm on Saturday, October 4th and 12pm - 5pm on Sunday, October 5th
at Hickman County Ag Pavilion, Upper Shipp's Bend Road, Centerville, TN 37033

Lawrence County:

42nd Annual David Crockett Days

Saturday, August 23rd, Sunday, August 24th, and Monday, August 25th
at David Crockett State Park, 1400 W Gaines Street, Lawrenceburg, TN 38464

Lewis County:

Oktober Heritage Festival

10am - 8pm on Friday, October 10th and 10am - 8pm on Saturday, October 11th
at 100 East Main Street, Hohenwald, TN 38462

Lincoln County:

Lincoln County Fair

8pm on Saturday, September 20th
at 1003 Hedgemont Avenue, Fayetteville, TN 37334

Marshall County:

Goats, Music, & More Fair

Friday, October 10th & Saturday, October 11th
at Rock Creek Park, 300 Old Farmington Road, Lewisburg, TN 37091

Maury County:

Whole Hog Festival

10am - 5pm on Saturday, October 11th
at Oak Lawn Mansion, 3331 Denning Lane, Spring Hill, TN 37174

Moore County:

Jack Daniel's Work Championship Invitational BBQ

Friday, October 10th - Saturday, October 11th
at Jack Daniel's Distillery, 280 Lynchburg Highway, Lynchburg, TN 37352

Rutherford County:

Peach Cobbler Festival

10am - 3pm on Saturday, August 9th
at 6790 John Bragg Highway, Murfreesboro, TN 37127

Williamson County:

Franklin Pumpkinfest

10am - 6pm on Saturday, October 25th
at Main Street, Downtown Franklin, TN 37064



In The Community

BUILDING BRIDGES



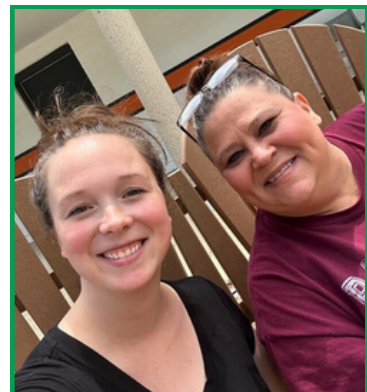
We had so much fun at our Building Bridges events in May and June! We loved playing outdoor yard games like bowling, cornhole, Kan Jam, and Tic Tac Toe. We had a great time eating Kona Ice and pizza, coloring, and blowing bubbles with our friends, too! We also had our first event together across Bedford, Coffee, Giles, and Marshall Counties! We had a “zoo”-per time at the Nashville Zoo!



LEADERSHIP TEAM RETREAT



Our Leadership Team held their annual retreat this May at the University of Tennessee Space Institute. It was a time of fun, fellowship, and planning for the future of our agency. They brainstormed goals, checked in on accomplishments achieved, and stretched their imaginations and leadership skills. All Leadership Team members received a hand-selected book on leadership, thanks to our amazing and thoughtful Executive Director. We are so grateful to have a team of leaders like these ladies!



Early Intervention



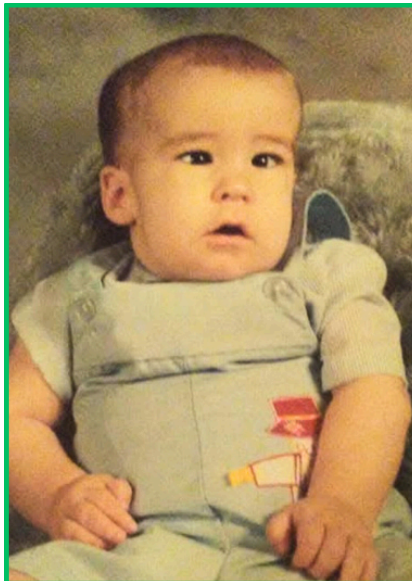
27th Annual Helping Hands Golf Classic



What a beautiful day for golf! 22 teams joined the CDC out on the greens of Saddle Creek Golf Club in Lewisburg, TN on May 8th for the 27th Annual Helping Hands Golf Classic. Thank you to our fabulous Corporate Sponsor, WM, for once again helping make this truly spectacular event possible! Our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation goes out to the sponsors, teams, and volunteers who contributed to the benefit of the Marshall County Child Development Center and Children's Center for Autism.



The Answer That Took Three Years: Christopher "Buster" Gerard's Journey



Three years is a long time to wait for answers—especially when a child's life hangs in the balance. When Tymna Lee brought home her son, Christopher "Buster" Gerard, in February 1990, doctors gave him less than a year to live. He had no muscle tone, couldn't feed from a bottle, and had no trunk control. But Tymna, a nurse and a mother, fought fiercely for him. At six weeks old, Christopher began receiving physical, occupational, and speech therapy at the Child Development Center. These early interventions helped him gain control of his body, walk, use his hands, and eventually speak—milestones that once seemed impossible.



After three years of testing, Christopher was diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder affecting muscle tone, metabolism, and cognition. But he didn't just survive—he thrived. Now 35, Christopher lives independently in Wisconsin in a supportive program for adults with PWS. He works on a dairy farm, rides a four-wheeler, swims, roller skates, and fishes. His mother visits several times a year, grateful for the life he leads. Tymna credits everything to early developmental therapy. It didn't just help Christopher grow—it gave him a future. His story is a powerful reminder of what early intervention can make possible.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS!



The Children's Center for Autism



Back to School Tips for Children with Autism



Going back to school can be exciting, but it can also be stressful; especially for children with Autism. A new classroom, new people, and changes in routine can feel overwhelming. But with a little planning, the transition can go more smoothly.

1. Start the Routine Early

Begin adjusting sleep and wake times a couple of weeks before school starts. Practice the morning routine—getting dressed, eating breakfast, and packing a bag—so it feels familiar when school begins.

3. Use Visual Supports

Pictures, calendars, or a visual schedule can help your child understand what will happen each day. You can also use a social story to explain what going back to school looks like and how to handle different situations.

If possible, take a tour of the school before the first day. Walk through the building, visit the classroom, and meet the teacher. This helps your child know what to expect.

2. Visit the School

Talk to teachers and staff about your child's needs. Share what helps your child stay calm, learn best, and feel supported. This helps create a strong team around your child.

4. Communicate with the School Team

5. Practice Coping Skills

Review calming strategies like deep breathing, asking for a break, or using a fidget tool. Practice these at home so your child is ready to use them at school. With a little support and preparation, the school year can be a positive experience for your child and your whole family.



Looking to help support the CCA program?

Here is a list of possible donation items that CCA uses on a daily basis to help support our kids.

Laminating Paper - Velcro - Multi Colored Construction Paper - Glue - Washable Paint - Sensory Bin items like: dry rice, dry beans, dry pasta, playdoh, cornstarch, bubble wrap, sand, colorful fish rocks, etc.

Independent Support Coordination/TN Strong Families

Friendship in Full Bloom

As spring initiated new life into the world once again, it was not only flowers and plants that started to blossom - this year, two young men supported by our ISC program were a significant part of that growth. Donte and Torrick, two individuals looking to expand their social network, began what has turned into a beautiful friendship, thanks in part to their agency staff and ISC's. Bonding over a shared love of basketball and video games, these two young men were able to pinpoint a connection to further reduce their risk of social isolation and increase their opportunity to find more fulfillment in their lives.

Through dedicated friendship building, Donte & Torrick are learning how to foster their newfound friendship monthly by broadening their communication skills and planning skills. This has given both of them a focused goal to work towards - and it sure is working! They recently planned to spend time together via text. It has been truly inspiring for all involved to witness this friendship, and both Donte and Torrick themselves, grow on this journey.

*Independent Support Coordinators:
Amanda Plahuta and Jennifer Rutka*

Celebrate-A-Lot!

Eddy is excited to share that he got employee of the year at his job. Eddy will celebrate his 16-year anniversary working at Save-A-Lot this November. He enjoys working and being able to maintain his job with the help of his job coach, Derrick! Eddy's favorite part of his job is helping customers find items in the store and restocking the shelves.

Independent Support Coordinator: Jayme Fuller



Family Support

Family Support Local Council Member and Friend Jackie Christie 1959-2025

I was the newly hired Family Support Coordinator, stepping into the role of someone who had served as coordinator for many years and was well loved by the families she worked with. It was a little daunting, to say the least. One of my first tasks was to add a member to the Local Council. Jackie Christie of Bedford County was the person suggested and nominated to serve. At our first meeting, Jackie let me know that the former Coordinator was her sister. Oh my, another reason for me to feel nervous about the shoes I had to fill! I think Jackie could sense my apprehension, because one of the first things she told me was that she loved her sister, and that her sister did a great job, helped a lot of people, but she knew that I would too and was looking forward to working with me. That was almost 20 years ago, and I have looked forward to working with Jackie every day since. She not only was a devoted and compassionate Local Council member, but became a wonderful friend. Jackie recently lost her short battle with cancer. It was hard saying goodbye, but during her graveside service it was pointed out that when someone dies, we are reminded in print and in discussion of the date at the beginning of their life and the date at the end, however what was most important was the dash in between, representing what they did and how they lived life in between those dates. Jackie was an amazing, devoted wife, mom, sister, friend, and just an all-around good person in "the dash", that time in between. She was caring, loving, selfless, helpful, and thankful. And she dealt with a lot of what she had to face in life with humor, making those around her feel at ease. She and her husband Johnny had one child Joey, who had special needs, and required their assistance and care 24/7. When it came to Joey, Jackie stayed focused on what Joey could do for himself, what made him happy, and what she and Johnny needed to do to make Joey's life easier, yet filled with what he enjoyed. When they lost Joey a few years ago, it was a very difficult time for Jackie and Johnny. Joey was their whole life - as children are with parents, but Jackie would say, "When you have a special needs child your world is just so different." Jackie herself, had Epilepsy and health problems which altered a lot of her life. All of this helped Jackie in her role as a Family Support Local Council member. Jackie was soft spoken, but pulled from her life experiences, her knowledge, and her compassion as she served on the council. It helped her and the other council members make the very best decisions for the families we serve. Jackie is missed, but we are so thankful for the life she lived in the dash, her time in between.



~ Christy Jensen, Family Support Coordinator

Community & Employment Services

The Community and Employment Services team wrapped up another successful school year for the Pre-Employment Transition Services, serving a total of 166 students from August 2024-June 2025.



The CES team went through Person-Centered Training in June. With Person-Centered Training, the CES team is better equipped to ensure that the focus of their work and planning stays on the perspectives of the persons supported.

The CES team hosted Pre-ETS Summer Sessions in Lawrence, Giles, and Marshall Counties in June. Summer sessions will be offered in Giles County and Coffee County in July as well.



The MAPs program continues to grow, with the Community and Employment Service program accepting 6 new individuals since April. The MAPs program currently serves 32 individuals total across 9 counties.

The CES team attended the Building Bridges Zoo Day alongside a few of their MAPs members. Through Building Bridges activities and MAPs services, several MAPs members were able to increase their community engagement and build community relationships.

Senior Equipment Loan

2024

2025

In FY 2024-2025 we loaned...

2 lift chairs
2 8-foot wheelchair ramps
1 bariatric potty chair
1 6-foot wheelchair ramp
4 wheelchairs
3 rollators
1 shower chair
1 cane

BEDFORD

LINCOLN

COFFEE

MARSHALL

GILES

MAURY

in these counties!

Welcome to the Team!

Jessica Harvey	Bedford CCA	April 21
Angel Jordan	Lincoln CCA	April 23
Melissa Darby	Early Intervention	May 2
Lexi Bailey	Marshall CCA	July 1
Kylie Dye	Bedford CCA	July 7
Tayhana Alexander	Early Intervention	July 7
Amber Belcher	Independent Support Coordination	July 7
Jorden Goodwin	Community & Employment Services	July 8

Staff Spotlight

Learn all about Independent Support Coordinator, Debby Halvorsen!



1. What did you want to be when you grew up?

A Mom and a full service gas station attendant.

2. What is one of your favorites aspects of your job?

Oh!!! By far the people. I love visiting and learning new facts about their lives. It is amazing.

3. Describe your dream vacation!

I want to go to Bali and Australia. I am petrified of the snakes and creatures but they are so beautiful. I want to take my family because I want to share it with the people I love the most.

4. If you could go back to your first day at the Community Development Center and tell yourself one thing, what would it be and why?

Slow down and realize you don't need to learn everything all at once.

Learn from others and ask people how to do things. There is a wealth of knowledge from my co-workers and they can help you through the hard days also.

5. Who inspires you and why?

People who follow their dreams and make them happen because there is true happiness with being true to who you are and doing what you are capable of being.

Wendy Walleman	August 6
Sarah Martin	August 8
Jennifer Rutka	August 8
Melissa Darby	August 24
Teresa Winnette	August 28
Britney McConnell	August 30
Rose Tomlin	September 3
Tabatha Norton	September 7
Madelyn Hicks	September 14
Lindsay Rose	September 18
Sheri Vaughn	September 20
Becky Jamison	October 3
Tela Warren	October 3
Amanda Plahuta	October 18
Tiffany Ward	October 18
Bethany Mize	October 24
Whitney Nash	October 25
Jacey Jackson	October 28
McKinley Lowe	October 30

NEW! Read All About It!

34th ANNUAL PENCIL COUNTRY GOLF CLASSIC

The 34th Annual Pencil Country Golf Classic will take place on

Monday, September 15th at River Bend Country Club.

Proceeds will benefit both the Early Intervention program and the Children's Center for Autism in Bedford County.

Thank you to all of our 2025 sponsors for supporting the children of Bedford County!



Contact Us

Children's Center for Autism: (931) 684-2293

Early Intervention: (931) 684-9203

Community & Employment Services: (931) 684-4269

Family Support: (931) 684-7673

Independent Support Coordination: (931) 680-0094

Main Office: (931) 684-8681

HAPPY Anniversary DAY		
AUGUST		
Monica Robinson	Early Intervention	3 years
Amiey Bisig	Marshall CCA	2 years
Bethany Mize	Early Intervention	3 years
Shena Tomlin	Marshall CCA	2 years
Leslie Throneberry	Early Intervention	20 years
SEPTEMBER		
Debby Halvorsen	Independent Support Coordination	1 year
Rose Tomlin	Community & Employment Services	3 years
Madelyn Hicks	Lincoln CCA	6 years
McKinley Lowe	Early Intervention	1 year
OCTOBER		
Mandy Kellar	Early Intervention	3 years
Amanda Plahuta	Independent Support Coordination	1 year
Lisa Fields	Early Intervention	3 years
Catherine Emerson	Administration	3 years
Allison Crouch	Bedford CCA	2 years
Chastity Crowe	Early Intervention	3 years



Community Rewards Program



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