

SPRING 2024

**AUTISM AWARENESS  
MONTH**

**LIFESHARING**

**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**SWEETS FOR  
OUR PEEPS**

**MENTAL HEALTH  
AWARENESS MONTH**

**SELF-ADVOCACY**

**INTELLECTUAL  
DISABILITIES  
CARNIVAL**



**Office Hours  
8:30 AM-4:30 PM**

**Upcoming Office Closure Dates**

5/27/24—Memorial Day

6/19/24—Juneteenth

7/4/24—Independence Day

## Autism Awareness



*Pictured above left to right: Commissioner Dave Lohr, Michelle DeForrest-FCBHA Behavioral Health Director, Commissioner Scott Dunn, Dayna Shallenberger and Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites*

On March 21, 2024, Fayette County Commissioners, Scott Dunn, Vincent A. Vicites, and Dave Lohr proclaimed April 2024 as Autism Awareness Month in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. The Fayette County Commissioners call upon all citizens, government agencies, public and private agencies and institutions, businesses and schools in Fayette County, to recommit to increasing awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder, and encourages all citizens to learn what they can do to support individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

Visit [autismspeaks.org](https://autismspeaks.org) to learn more about Autism

A free Sensory Treasure Hunt will be held on April 25, 2024 at Hutchinson Park. Attendees will explore different textures through the sense of touch. Numerous sensory bins containing a variety of treasures to seek and find will be set up for the eager hunters to delve into.



Prizes and snacks will also be available. This is a free activity open to all ages.



# Lifesharing

On March 20, 2024, Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration hosted a Lifesharing luncheon at the Ivory Ballroom in Uniontown. The event was a learning and networking opportunity to discuss the benefits and logistics of Lifesharing as a residential option for individuals with an intellectual disability or autism. Attendees included current Lifesharing participants, individuals and families considering Lifesharing, Supports Coordinators, Administrators, and providers.

A panel of two individuals living in Lifesharing and their hosts spoke to the group; one being the newest Lifesharing recipient in the county, and the other being the most seasoned. They discussed the benefits of the program and how Lifesharing has enhanced their lives. Guests had the opportunity to ask questions and interact during an open discussion Q&A, and providers were available to answer questions regarding process and regulations. Supporting providers were ARC Fayette, Fayette Resources, Inc., and Laurel House, Inc.

Today, Fayette County serves 21 individuals in Lifesharing homes. Lifesharing is also known as Family Living. The terms are used interchangeably because the concept is the same – a person in services resides in the home of a host person, persons, or family to receive the care and support they need to live a fulfilling life while the host gets paid to provide that care and support. They live like a family and share their lives. People who can do Lifesharing include singles, companions, married couples, birth families, and relatives. Lifesharing can be done with 1-2 people with disabilities in a single home. Hosts are independent contractors with a provider agency and the monthly stipend is tax free.

If you would like more information on Lifesharing, please contact Brandi Denny, AE Program Specialist, at 724-430-1370.





# Community Partnerships

FCBHA recognizes the good work done for our community cannot be achieved without partnerships. It truly takes a village to make an impact on any and every individual. At our March Staff meeting, we recognized Laurel House, Inc. as one of our many partners that support our mission to enrich lives.

FCBHA has had multiple individual crisis situations over the last 1-2 years. This includes complex, dual diagnosed individuals that have been difficult to successfully support and place. Laurel House has never turned us, or these individuals, down when there was a need. They have taken them under their wing and have supported them to have great lives. Laurel House is easy to work with, have available and supportive staff and always have the best interests of the individuals in mind. They encourage community participation with their individuals and go above and beyond to encourage their participation in county sponsored events and activities. They are always willing to come to the table to think of new and exciting projects, or new and different ways to do things better.

They are wonderful to work with, from their executive staff to their Direct Support Professionals.



*Pictured above left to right: Amy Wasko-FCBHA Administrative Entity Director, Jeannie VanBremen and Jamilah Bey-Laurel House, Inc.*

How do plants greet each other?



Aloe there!



## Sweets for our Peeps

On Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, Rachael Cramer and Jeremiah Johnson (aka the ADAPT team bunnies) delivered beautiful Easter baskets full of treats to each of the Long-Term Structured Residence (LTSR) residents.

We hope that everyone enjoyed the baskets as much as Rachael and Jeremiah enjoyed putting them together and delivering them.

# Mental Health Awareness Month

May is recognized nationally as Mental Health Awareness Month. Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration will sponsor and/or participate in various awareness events and trainings during the month of May. Trainings are as follows:

- \* **Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR) Training**-Learning the signs of suicide and how to help someone in need. This training will take place on May 6, 2024 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. at the FCBHA office. RSVP by April 29, 2024 to [MichellePurnell@FCBHA.org](mailto:MichellePurnell@FCBHA.org)
- \* **Adult Mental Health First Aid**- This training also helps you to assess the risk of harm or suicide and encourage help and support. This free training will take place May 10, 2024 from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the FCBHA office. RSVP to [ChristineStone@FCBHA.org](mailto:ChristineStone@FCBHA.org) by April 24, 2024.
- \* **Youth Mental Health First Aid**-Hosted by Penn State Fayette on May 13, 2024 from 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Contact Melissa Andrews at (724) 430-4211 for additional information.
- \* **Understanding Involuntary Commitments**-This training provides information on involuntary commitments, the 302 process and more. There will be two sessions; May 14, 2024 from 10:00 -11:30 a.m. (which is full) and May 21, 2024 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. at the FCBHA office. RSVP by May 6, 2024 to [MichellePurnell@FCBHA.org](mailto:MichellePurnell@FCBHA.org).

Events being promoted by FCBHA for Mental Health Awareness Month include:

- ♦ **Adrienne Russell's Health and Hygiene Drive**-Collecting hygiene items and/or monetary donations until May 10, 2024 at Adelphoi Village, 6 Oliver Road, Uniontown, Pa.
- ♦ **Connellsville Counseling & Psychological Services Backpack Buddies**- Collecting non-perishable food items in May at West Crawford Elementary School to send home with students over the weekend. Call Roxanne Mongelluzzo at (724) 626-8420 for more information.
- ♦ **Mental Health Association Open House**-May 2, 2024 starting at noon at the new location; 680 Cherry Tree Lane, Uniontown.
- ♦ **Union Station Clubhouse 5K and Health Fair**- May 4, 2024 at the Uniontown Mall. Event starts at 8:00 a.m. Email [Scott.Bombach@goodwillswpa.org](mailto:Scott.Bombach@goodwillswpa.org) or call (724) 439-9311 for more information.
- ♦ **Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services, Inc. (CRCSI) Flea Market**-CRCSI at 100 New Salem Road in Uniontown will host a free 2-day flea market for those in need on May 8 & 9, 2024 from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- ♦ **Live 4 Tomorrow Today "Burn Out the Stigma" Car Show**- May 11, 2024 from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.at the Dawson Grange Community Fair Grounds. Event will feature a car show, live music, speakers and resource booths, raffles, food and more.
- ♦ **Arts, Crafts, and Games**-Crosskey's Psychiatric Rehabilitation center at 123 Brownsville Avenue in Brownsville will host a day of fun and crafting on May 15, 2024 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. For more information, contact Bernadette Behary at (724) 366-2890.

A calendar with details of the events listed above and others will be published and available at [FCBHA.org](http://FCBHA.org) and on our Facebook page in late April.

# Summer Kick-Off & Wellness Event

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month

FREE



May 23<sup>rd</sup>

4-7 p.m.

Yough River Park-Pavilion 2  
Connellsville

Fun Games  
Free Food  
Prizes



Resource Information

This event is **FREE** and all ages are welcomed.



## Self-Advocacy

The Fayette County Developmental Disabilities Self-Advocacy Group met recently to talk about positive self-talk. Julie Harris, MS, CRC, NCC, Outpatient Therapist with Chestnut Ridge Counseling, Inc. led the group in a discussion and activities related to the different ways that we treat ourselves. The group talked about ways that we negatively talk to ourselves and how doing that can set us up for a negative day. The group shared some of their positive attributes as well. If you would like to participate in Self-Advocacy meetings and activities, please email [AmyWasko@FCBHA.org](mailto:AmyWasko@FCBHA.org).





# ★ Intellectual Disabilities Carnival

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration, in collaboration with almost a dozen other local Intellectual Disability and Early Intervention-related organizations, hosted an evening of fun at the 1st Annual Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Carnival, held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at the former Faith Assembly of God gymnasium in Uniontown, PA.

Individuals, family members, and staff involved in the Intellectual Disability/Autism system were offered the opportunity to spend the evening playing games organized by each agency, win prizes, have their photos taken at the photo booth, have their faces painted, dance to music offered by local DJ Steve Barrett, eat food provided by Hartsek's Catering, and to socialize with peers, family, and agency staff.

Participants had the chance to play everything from ring toss and fish pond, to Plinko, baseball toss, and spin-to-win, amongst many others. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and attendees offered suggestions on how to make next year's event bigger and even better!

Participating agencies included: Family Ties, Special Olympics, Mental Health Association, Miracle League of PA's Laurel Highlands, Fayette Resources, Inc., Pathways, Laurel House, Inc., Parents as Teachers, Arc Fayette and Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration.







**Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration**  
**215 Jacob Murphy Lane**  
**Uniontown, PA 15401**

**24/7 Crisis Hotline**  
**(724) 437-1003**



**Fayette County  
Behavioral Health  
Administration**

(724) 430-1370

David W. Rider  
Administrator/CEO

[www.FCBHA.org](http://www.FCBHA.org)



**Fayette County  
Board of Commissioners**

Scott Dunn, Chairman  
Vincent A. Vicites, Vice-Chairman  
Dave Lohr, Secretary

**FCBHA Fraud and  
Abuse Hotline**  
**1-866-275-6467**



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***The ANSWER*** is a publication of the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration.  
Comments, questions or suggestions may be submitted to the Newsletter Editor at [www.fcbha.org](http://www.fcbha.org) or  
Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration, 215 Jacob Murphy Lane, Uniontown, PA 15401.