

ALLIES

FALL 2016

A MAGAZINE FROM THE BHN ALLIANCE



Turning Struggle Into Strength

Tommie Lindell

Dan Lenhart
Gets It Done

Grants Support
BHN Partners

Belco Works
Celebrates 50th

What's Inside



Turning Struggle Into Strength



Partnership Grants



A Conversation with...ResCare



Belco Works Marks 50th Year

ON THE COVER: When Tommie Lindell moved back to Barnesville after many years, she re-connected with her former classmate and friend, Ed Eberhart, pastor of the First Christian Church. Tommie is part of the “beautiful mosaic” of people in the church and she has found acceptance and understanding there. Read more of Tommie’s story on page 4 of this issue.

BHN Alliance 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
740-695-0233

**Harrison County
Board of DD**
www.hcbdd.org
740-942-2158

**Noble County
Board of DD**
www.ncbdd.org
740-732-7144

The More Things Change...

By Stephen L. Williams
BHN Alliance Superintendent

It's fall and everything is changing - again. A seasonal change is relatively easy to accept while others are not. There is one truth in every change, though. Those who accept inevitable changes have an easier time with them.

Transition is what is happening in Ohio as new federal and state rules have changed how County Boards operate. This change was inevitable. We are transitioning to a model where private providers are delivering the supports and we are funding them.

What this means is that people with disabilities are being presented with opportunities they haven't had before. The community is opening up. People are finding the job they want and becoming more independent. Their self-esteem is rising along with their income. They are meeting new people and making friends. In short, lives are improving and that's the kind of change everyone can get behind.

These opportunities are being explored, discovered and developed by our provider partners and we support their efforts in a variety of ways. In this issue, you'll read about our Partnership Grants, a creative way we use our financial resources to support our partners and their ideas. These grants are producing real results for people and are now being imitated across the state.

You'll read about STABLE Accounts, the outcome of another rule change that is giving people the chance to save money without risking a loss of government benefits like Medicaid and SSI.

There have been many changes in the 50 years since Belco Works, (then known as Belco Crafts) was founded, yet the fundamental principles remain the same. Parents who founded Belco in 1966 wanted their children to reach their full potential and to have opportunities to learn and grow. Belco Works remains focused on that goal for every person it supports in this anniversary year and beyond.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same" does not apply anymore. The Belmont, Harrison and Noble county boards and our provider partners are helping people achieve what matters the most to them. We have changed and it shows, in the lives of the people we support, who are doing more, having more and being more satisfied with their lives.

I guess the more things change, the better life gets.

In Service to Others

They serve without financial compensation, yet what they give is priceless. They commit to supporting the work of others, without expecting anything in return.

They are the men and women who serve on the Belmont, Harrison and Noble county boards of developmental disabilities.

We take this time to thank them for their leadership and guidance. By their service, they encourage, support and respect people with disabilities and everyone whose job it is to help them achieve all they want out of life.

Thank you!



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Tommie pauses in front of the sunny kitchen window in her apartment.

Turning Struggle into Strength

Once upon a time there lived a young girl. Some described her as fierce and frightening while others called her deadpan and droll. All agreed that she was complicated.

This could be the start, but certainly not the ending, of a story about Tommie Lindell, a misunderstood child who has become a capable and confident woman.

Tommie was not always appropriate in the things she said or did as a child and young adult. She was prone to outbursts and became overwhelmed and frustrated when she tried to communicate with other people. Tommie was regarded as someone who needed constant supervision.

"I had a difficult childhood," Tommie said, recalling how bouts of anxiety would keep her from getting things done, like homework. Teachers would then scold her, which only increased her anxiety.

"I would hit myself when things didn't go my way," she said.

Tommie said she was diagnosed as "mentally disabled" when she was a child. This label landed her in special education in public school where she was teased and made fun of by some of her peers. After graduation, she simply stayed

home where her anxiety and outbursts continued. When her mother's health failed some years later, Tommie was placed in a nursing home.

She was just 26 years old.

Time passed and in 2002 Tommie learned that she had Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism. People with Asperger's have normal or even above average intelligence, but experience anxiety and have significant trouble in social situations. Tommie now understood herself and with supports, learned how to live beyond her disability. It didn't change how people saw her, however.

"People thought I was weird and didn't respect me," Tommie said.

When Tommie moved from the nursing home to a separate cottage on its grounds, five elderly women took her under their wings. In that cottage, she had a sense of belonging at last.

"They gave me advice on how to care for myself and how to be a better person," Tommie said. "They took care of me through thick and thin."

She was attending Belco Works when she met and became friends with Darlene Pempek, who works for the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Darlene said that Tommie came to her office every morning where they would talk extensively. Darlene learned a lot about her new friend.

"Tommie helped me realize that so many people have an idea of what they want to do in their lives, but have never been given the opportunity to try new things," Darlene said.

Darlene saw Tommie's potential and encouraged her to do more. About this time, Darlene was helping form the Self-Determination Leadership team of the BHN Alliance to provide life experiences for people with disabilities. Tommie was one of the first members.

Tommie's self-esteem began to grow, yet Darlene was troubled by where Tommie lived.

"Dar thought I shouldn't be in a nursing home, Tommie said. "But I told her I was happy there."

Darlene gives Tommie credit for helping her see things differently.

"Tommie has taught me that we professionals don't always know what is best and we must listen closely to hear what each person wants," Darlene said. "Although I thought Tommie should be living somewhere else and have more freedom, Tommie knew what was best for her."

Tommie continued to research Asperger's Syndrome on the internet and Darlene found opportunities for her to share what she knew with staff, service providers and others. Tommie also joined People First, an advocacy organization, and she got a job.

As her life became fuller, Tommie began to see herself differently. In 2009, after seven years of living in a nursing home, she told Darlene she was ready to move.

Darlene thought Tommie would want to live close to her. She was wrong. Tommie wanted to return to her hometown. Darlene and others who cared about Tommie coordinated supports and in 2009, Tommie moved back to Barnesville.

Today, Tommie lives a typical single-girl life in her own apartment. She has a boyfriend, a cat and connections in the community.

"I like everything about this house," Tommie said. "I have good neighbors and we talk every day."

Paramount provides Tommie with minimal support at home and she keeps a daily To Do list on a whiteboard in her kitchen. She works at McDonald's in a job she loves and attends the First Christian Church, where she is a member of the Women's Fellowship group.

Ed Eberhart, the church pastor, has known Tommie since they were children and they often walked home from school together.

"Tommie has always been very outgoing," Ed said. "People in the church quickly took to her and she felt right at home."

Ed said that Tommie has changed tremendously since childhood and that her struggles don't matter to those who know her.

"The church in general is a beautiful mosaic of different people from different walks and places in life and it's gratifying to see that Tommie is a part of that," Ed said.

Tommie continues to educate others about disability issues. In 2013, she was recognized by the Village of Barnesville for her efforts to promote community awareness of persons with developmental disabilities. Tommie has served as a state officer on the People First of Ohio Board. She was also on the Self-Determination Leadership Team that gave a presentation at the Ohio Statehouse during the 2009 Developmental Disabilities Awareness event.

Because Tommie was misunderstood as a child, she knows the importance of awareness and acceptance of people with disabilities.



Members of the Christian Women's Fellowship of the First Christian Church are pictured at a recent meeting. Tommie is a member of this group that offers women the opportunity to come together and contribute to the church and community.

"We do everything other people do, just differently sometimes," she said. "Treat us like any other person. Disability is just part of who we are."

Today, people who know Tommie describe her as capable, caring and fun. Perhaps the most important thing, however, is how Tommie describes herself.

"I'm a typical nice girl," she said.

Partnership Grants

It was an idea whose time had come and it promised to deliver what people with disabilities wanted.

In every survey done by the BHN Alliance, the answers were the same. People wanted more – more choices and more opportunities to work, learn, and live in their community.



Dale works on alternating Fridays at The Paisley Umbrella, a gift shop in downtown St. Clairsville. He is thrilled to be earning a paycheck.

“In short, they wanted us to pay attention to the things that mattered the most to them,” said Darlene Pempek, Director of Community Supports for the BHN Alliance.

It was obvious that what mattered was not going to be found in a new “program.” That’s when the Belmont County Board turned to its partners - the provider network – with a simple idea. Design a grant that would encourage opportunities in the community and make it available to certified adult service providers.

“Providers had great ideas, expertise and flexibility to get things done, all they needed was funding to get their ideas off the ground,” said BHN Alliance Superintendent Stephen Williams.

The Belmont County Board set funding aside in 2010 and “Partnership Grants” were launched. Harrison and Noble followed with their own grants soon after.

Providers applying for a partnership grant must develop a business plan that demonstrates how the funding will be used to create or locate competitive jobs, meaningful educational experiences and other community opportunities.

Equipped with a partnership grant in 2012, Paramount

Support Services developed a document scanning business that helps local businesses go paperless by providing secure document scanning and digital storage. Ann, one of two employees in its St. Clairsville office, has gained independence through her job.

“I hope I stay working here for a long time, and maybe in the future I will be a job coach,” Ann said.

A partnership grant helped launch The New Corner Store, which now operates as The Paisley Umbrella, in St. Clairsville. This unique gift shop, a subsidiary of Tomorrow’s Corner, sells creations made by artists and members of TC. It also employs some of those artists in the shop.

Lisa Kazmirski, founder and CEO, said the community has responded positively to The Paisley Umbrella.

“More and more of our members are benefiting from its existence and we are grateful that the County Board helped us provide this opportunity,” Kazmirski said.

A partnership grant also funded the purchase of ADA-compliant modifications and equipment and two people are now employed as kennel technicians at the Dog Wash and Grooming, a Paramount-affiliated business that opened in 2015.

Grants are also available to public school districts across the BHN Alliance. The schools have received funding for a variety of supports that directly benefit students with disabilities, including adaptive equipment, accessibility projects, computer technology, and classroom assistants.

“Our provider partners are using these grants to improve the quality of people’s lives, and that’s exactly what they were designed to do,” Williams said.



Ann scans documents and files them electronically at Paramount Digital Imaging. She is more independent and has set even higher goals for herself because of this job.

Dan Lenhart Gets Things Done



Dan Lenhart and Friends are pictured at a recent highway litter pickup on Route 147 in Noble County. Shown from left are Ashley and Andrew Lenhart, Dan Lenhart and Susan Lenhart.

With a slow, measured gait, Dan Lenhart, 51, walks a two-mile stretch of Rt 147 in Noble County. It's not a leisurely stroll. He's stooping and reaching for cans, bottles, and trash that thoughtless travelers have tossed from their vehicles.

This is neither a punishment nor an obligation. Dan picks up litter because he doesn't like it.

"There was too much garbage and I wanted to get rid of it," Dan said.

Dan started by himself and then joined Ohio's Adopt-A-Highway program. He and his family and friends clean up the two-mile stretch of road four times a year. Signs at each end designate the highway's adopters as "Dan Lenhart and Friends."

Dan stands out from the other people and groups who have adopted a highway because this volunteer effort is not always as easy for him as others.

When Dan was 19 he lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and worked at a local plant. While on the job, he

suffered a brain aneurysm. Soon after, he had three strokes that left him with paralysis on his right side.

Life suddenly changed. Dan couldn't do much. He had to re-learn how to walk and talk as well as the everyday activities of eating and getting dressed.

Dan was persistent, though, and over time and with therapy, he regained the use of his right hand and leg. He has lingering issues, including some paralysis, but that has not stopped him from doing good and challenging himself to do more.

"I keep on trying and I'm happy when I look at what I've done," Dan said.

Dan is employed at the I-70 rest area in Guernsey County under an ODOT contract held by Belco Works. When at home with his brother and sister-in-law, Curt and Susan Lenhart, Dan mows the lawn, swims, rides ATVs and lifts weights.

What people might be surprised to learn is that Dan knows how to use nunchuks, the martial arts' fighting tool made popular by actor and martial artist Bruce Lee. This was a hobby he had before the strokes and one he continues to enjoy.

Curt calls his brother "Ninja Dan," and he's earned the name. Horizontal, vertical, upward and downward spins of the nunchuk look easy as Dan takes a stance and performs this ancient art that demands concentration and skill.

It's been decades since a random health crisis brought disability into Dan's life. It does not define him, though, and it does not stop him from making a difference in the world.

Perhaps Curt sums it up best: "Dan's a good man."

We couldn't agree more.

(Editor's Note: If you would like to join Dan as one of the more than 1500 groups and individuals who have adopted a highway in Ohio, log onto www.dot.state.oh.us and click on the Adopt-A-Highway button to learn how.)



Dan's interest in nunchuks began when he was young and he continues to perfect his skill with the martial arts fighting tool.

A Conversation with... Gloria Llewellyn of ResCare Ohio



Gloria Llewellyn

Editor's Note: ResCare is one of the BHN Alliance's valued provider partners. ResCare provides assistance to people with disabilities in 18 homes in Belmont County and one in Harrison County. Founded in 1974 and headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, ResCare is the country's largest provider of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and is also the largest privately-held home care provider to seniors. ResCare offers residential and support services, education, vocational training and job placement for people of all ages and skill levels. Gloria Llewellyn is the Executive Director of the Ohio-St. Clairsville operation. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Penn State and a Master of Education, Community Counseling from Youngstown State University.

Allies: *There are many private providers of services from which people with disabilities can choose. What are the services that ResCare offers in Belmont, Harrison and Noble counties?*

GL: ResCare provides support to adults and children who need assistance with daily living. In addition, ResCare Homecare provides customized, hands-on assistance with day-to-day activities so your loved one can stay at home.

ResCare has almost 40 years of experience in the disabilities services field and is the country's leading provider of services to people with developmental disabilities and children with special needs. We help individuals achieve their highest level of independence at home and in the community. These services are typically funded by Medicaid or other funding sources. We offer a comprehensive range of services through Community Living, In Home Services, Respite Services, Homecare and Rest Assured Telecare.

The variety of community living options offered to adults and children are as follows:

- Adult and Youth Family Living/Host Homes — We find people with disabilities a home with a family to live in their community.
- Residential Living — We provide residential services and supports under the various funding sources (home and community-based waiver, ICF, etc.) allowing people the opportunity to live in the community in a home.
- Waiver Services – We provide in-home supports based on the needs of the person. These services are specially tailored to what the person wants and needs. A caregiver helps the person take care of his/her home, attend doctor's appointments, go shopping, help with personal care, etc.
- Homecare Services - Our full range of daily personal care services includes daily meal preparation,

housekeeping and maintenance, in addition to assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, hygiene support, eating, using the restroom, transferring and ambulation, etc.

- Rest Assured Telecare offers care to adults with cognitive, intellectual and developmental disabilities and senior citizens who want alternatives to having a staff person in their homes. Rest Assured provides the help people need, when they need it – without the intrusion or expense of full-time care. Rest Assured uses the latest technology with a secure Internet connection to bring clients face-to-face with Telecaregivers, offering:

- Real-time support and response services
- Customized care to fit specific client needs
- Increased independence without sacrificing safety
- Service up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Family access to visually and verbally communicate with a loved one via computer
- Privacy where people want it

Allies: *ResCare's purpose is Respect and Care – assisting people to reach their highest level of independence. What does that look like for a person who has ResCare as his provider?*

GL: We are a dedicated and caring people who form a company providing excellent human services that enhance the lives of individuals. With efficiency and effectiveness, we strive to provide the highest measurable quality support for the people and organizations we serve, our employees, our shareholders and our communities. We serve with skill, compassion, respect and care. That's our mission.

The ResCare Quality Way is the ideological backbone of the company. Its five principles specify the level of service

we commit to provide in our relationship with the world. These principles are:

- Creating direction
- Customer focus
- Employee focus
- Face-to-face communication
- Managing for outcomes

We at ResCare create direction by envisioning the kind of company we want to be and make that vision a reality by promoting high quality services and enjoying the work we do. We focus on our customers – the people we serve – and also focus on our employees, ensuring that both have their needs met. We use technology to help us in our work, but we believe the best way to talk to someone is the old-fashioned way – real human contact.

ResCare is a national human services company providing services in 42 states. We believe in long-term partnerships with stakeholders that are committed to quality care.

Allies: Many of the residential supports ResCare provides are performed in an ICF/DD, or a “group home.” What is an ICF/DD and how is it different from other residential settings in the way it is structured?

GL: An ICF/DD (Intermediate Care Facility/ Developmentally Disabled), commonly referred to as a “group home,” is a house that can be in any neighborhood. The ICFs in Belmont County are small and look like any typical house. Inside the house is a home for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who are provided with caregivers to help

them live their lives. The caregiver is there to help the person be as independent as possible. The assistance they offer may include daily personal care services, meal preparation, housekeeping and maintenance in addition to assistance with bathing, hygiene, eating, using the restroom, transferring and ambulation, transportation, etc.

Caregivers form wonderful relationships with the people they support and focus on creating a warm and comforting environment. The caregivers become a second -- and sometimes only -- family for some people. Caregivers also help people obtain their hopes and dreams. You will find them accompanying people as they go out to the movies, restaurants, fairs, festivals, sporting events, vacations, and everywhere else.

Allies: There is a growing need for people to work in direct support. What type of person do you look for when hiring someone to work for ResCare? What type of credentials does one need to work in direct support?

GL: ResCare looks for kind, caring and compassionate people who are dependable. We look for someone who wants to play a vital and positive role in helping people with intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disabilities achieve their fullest potential. We want someone with passion and we want someone who wants to help people reach their highest level of independence! Finally, we want someone who is willing to be a part of a dynamic team and learn new and fantastic skills.

While experience in providing services and support to people with intellectual, cognitive, and developmental disabilities is helpful, it is not required; ResCare will provide training. Specific requirements are:

- 18 years of age or older
- High school degree/GED
- Valid driver’s license (in most cases)
- Ability to work in home-like settings
- Ability to communicate (verbally and written) with all levels of personnel, internal and external to the company
- Ability to handle physical aspects of job, including bending, stooping, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, and walking for periods of time



Dallas Boylen (right) is a Direct Support Professional employed by ResCare. He is pictured with Bill at an ANCOR gathering that recognized Dallas for the support he provides to Bill.

To learn more about ResCare or the job opportunities available, go to www.rescare.com or call 740-695-4221.

STABLE Accounts Offer Savings for People with Disabilities

For the first time ever, people with disabilities can now save and invest in their futures without losing government benefits.

For Lorri and John Phillips of Scio, that means being able to put money aside for their daughter Staci's future with confidence.

This ability to save is offered through STABLE Accounts, made possible by the federal ABE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Act and administered in Ohio by State Treasurer Josh Mandel.

A STABLE Account is an investment account that allows people to put their money in up to five different saving and investment options. Balances and distributions do not affect needs-based benefits such as Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The maximum yearly contribution limit is currently \$14,000 with a maximum lifetime contribution of \$414,000.

Staci's STABLE account is an investment in her future, yet it is so much more.

"(STABLE) is not just for the future, it can be used for education and other things Staci wants and needs now," Lorri said.

She's right.

The money can be used when needed and the investment earnings are tax-free when used to pay for qualified expenses like housing, transportation, employment training, health and wellness, and others.

Account set up and enrollment is done online and participants can monitor their investments, make contributions and request withdrawals, all online.

Lorri learned about STABLE accounts more than a year ago and was ready to go once they opened on June 1, 2016, making Staci the first person served by the BHN Alliance (Belmont-Harrison-Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities) to open a STABLE Account.

Lorri said the process was easy. When she made an error in the application, she called the toll-free number and a representative helped her correct it.

Staci's parents considered a trust, but they felt more secure with a STABLE account.

"We are not going to be around forever and we want things to be available for Staci when she gets older," Lorri said.

Eric Ochmanek, Deputy Chief of Staff for Treasurer Josh Mandel, paid a visit to Belmont County in August to talk about the benefits.

"We think it's a great program and that's why we're doing outreach to all 88 counties by Thanksgiving," Ochmanek said. He noted there is a team in the treasurer's office dedicated to the STABLE Account and can answer questions people have.

Staci Phillips (left) is the first person in the BHN Alliance to open a STABLE Account and she is already reaping the rewards of saving money. Her mom, Lorri, said this opportunity to save gives her and Staci's father peace of mind knowing their daughter will have what she needs in the future.

The investment option was the appeal of a STABLE account for Lorri and John.

"Stocks and bonds are really exciting to me and since we are investing long-term, her money will hopefully grow," Lorri said.

To learn how a STABLE Account might benefit you or someone you know, call 1-800-439-1653 or email team@stableaccount.com

To enroll, go to www.stableaccount.com

Belco Works Marks 50th Year



Bill Berisford and his wife Helen (center) attended Belco's 50th Anniversary Celebration. Bill's mother Dorothy was one of those who founded Belco Crafts in 1966. Also pictured is Yvette Gray, a former member of the board of directors.

Belco Works is observing its 50th year of providing supports to adults with disabilities and marked this milestone with a celebration on August 18th.

John S. Marshall, president of the Belco Board of Directors, welcomed the crowd that gathered at Friends Church Reception Hall. He recognized the founders and partners who continue to help Belco achieve its mission to bring meaningful jobs and community opportunities to those it serves.

Dorothy Berisford was a leader of the "pioneer" families that started Belco Works, then called Belco Crafts. They carved a path to a way of thinking that is similar to the philosophy in 2016. Then and now, Belco Works focuses on identifying and developing people's interests, abilities, skills and potential.

Parents of a child born with a developmental delay or disability today expect a public school education for that child. In 1945, the year Mrs. Berisford's son, Jefferson, was born, that was not the case. Before the Education for All Handicapped Children Act became law in 1974, many states had laws that explicitly excluded children with disabilities from attending school. That meant Jefferson watched his siblings go off

to a school he could not attend. According to his brother, Bill, one day Jeff asked his mother, "Why can't I go to school?" That question moved his mother to action.

Mrs. Berisford organized other parents of children with disabilities in Belmont County and they spearheaded efforts that created the School of Hope in 1959. Another void was identified when Jeff and other children began to age out of the school system.

Adults with disabilities were not usually considered for jobs in the community, so in 1966, these families and others founded Belco Crafts, a non-profit, sheltered workshop. Ceramic wind chimes and other crafts provided daily activities and some packaging and assembly work for their adult children.

County boards of developmental disabilities were created in 1967 and the boards assumed the operation of sheltered workshops across Ohio.

Belco Works and other providers are now required by law to offer community-based supports. Anne Haning, Executive Director of Belco Works, said supports today are tailored to help people connect to all the community has to offer in employment and other opportunities.

"Our job is to make sure people can experience what employment can do for them," Haning said. "With our support, they are excelling at jobs that pay competitive wages in the community."

Belco Works employs 60 staff in the support of more than 150 adults with disabilities. It is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Accreditation means Belco Works is committed to quality improvement and focused on the unique needs of each person supported.



Belmont County Commissioner Ginny Favade is pictured with Belco Works board member, Mike Parkinson, at the provider's 50th anniversary celebration in August.



BHN Alliance
Belmont-Harrison-Noble County
Boards of Developmental Disabilities
330 Fox-Shannon Place
St. Clairsville, OH 43950

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Walmart General Manager Chastity Lehw, second from left, accepted the St. Clairsville Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Employer Award on October 13th. She is pictured with Chamber president Ed Mowrer (left); Belco board member Kirke Porterfield, and Anne Haning, Executive Director of Belco Works, the award sponsor.



Congratulations
Walmart

St. Clairsville Area Chamber of Commerce
2016 DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER AWARD

The **DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER AWARD** recognizes a Chamber member who demonstrates business practices that result in improved employment opportunities and working conditions for people with disabilities. *Walmart* has been hiring employees of all abilities for years. We thank them for understanding that a diversified workforce is good for business!



Belmont-Harrison-Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities