

New DD firm opens in Sidney

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Gives Shelby County residents a choice for services

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Renea McClosky, left, of Ansonia, helps Brooke Hudson, of Sidney, stir batter for a batch of cookies Wednesday, Jan. 17, during morning activities at Person Centered Services in Sidney. The firm opened Tuesday to provide day services to Shelby County residents with developmental disabilities.

SIDNEY — People with developmental disabilities now have a choice of day-service providers in Shelby County.

Person Centered Services, whose home office is in Millersport, opened for business in Sidney, Tuesday, Jan. 16. The firm has temporary space in the same building that houses the Shelby County Board of Developmental Disabilities at 1200 S. Children's Home Road.

"There are five tracks (for services)," said PCS Communications Director Mike Ramsey, Monday. Those tracks are career development, pre-vocational training, volunteering, community integration and daily living skills.

"The three that are more prevalent in Shelby County are daily living, volunteering and community integration," Ramsey said.

According to Michelle McCracken, the director of the local operation, nine individuals had been referred by SCDD to PCS as possible program participants. Three had contracted for services at press time, and PCS staff had arranged interviews with the others.

The firm came to Shelby County at the request of Laura Zureich, superintendent of the Shelby County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Ramsey said, because Zureich was familiar with PCS's work in Champaign County.

PCS has operations in Urbana, Wilmington, Greenville, Defiance, Pickerington, Coal Grove, Circleville, New Philadelphia, Marysville and Perrysburg and offers transportation services in Trumbull County.

"We provide transportation to and from home to individuals who choose us," Ramsey said.

"PCS is not connected to the county board," Zureich said. "It is utilizing space in one of our buildings. We have a population of people in Shelby County that have a hard time finding a provider match. PCS often works with people with more significant support needs."

The for-profit company uses small group sessions to help individuals develop skills. In Sidney, those individuals will volunteer at the animal shelter and help to serve meals at the Alpha Community Center. McCracken has plans for them to go to the movies and to go bowling. Today, they will visit the library to participate in Cover to Cover, a book club for people with developmental disabilities.

A typical day would start with coffee and a look at the day's news, an exercise program and perhaps lessons in how to read recipes, going shopping for ingredients and then preparing and serving a meal.

"We try to encourage community employment," Ramsey added. "In Champaign County, they work with the city on beautification projects. In Marysville, individuals spend two days a week at a therapeutic horse farm.

Before accepting the Sidney position, McCracken, who hails from the Ashland area, was a special education physical education teacher for the Ashland City Board of Developmental Disabilities, a preschool assistant for the Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center and, most recently, a school psychology assistant in the Mansfield City Schools. She has 21 years of experience in the special education field and has worked with people aged 3 to 21.

"We're excited to be there," Ramsey said of the Sidney opening. "We do what we can to improve quality of life of the individuals."

McCracken looks forward to increasing the number of participating individuals in Shelby County to the point where PCS will need its own building, "because we've outgrown the space," she said.

PCS is "just the second provider in our county," Zureich said. S&H Products is the other provider.

Several local people have been going to other counties to get the services they need, and the funding by the SCDD follows the person.

"I'm glad that another provider has come into Shelby County. It gives people another local option," Zureich said.