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The LADD Look provides a platform to share the voices and creative spirit of LADD through the presentation of stunning photos and artistic expression.

Our fifth issue, ROOTED IN RESILIENCE, differs from past issues as we explore LADD's story of resilience 45 years in the making – from our founding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we generally spotlight people we support, we have chosen our cover to honor our staff and their tireless dedication to keeping our community safe. The resilience of this organization would not be possible without the strength of staff, families, supporters, board members, and, most importantly, individuals supported by LADD.

Mission Statement

Guided by the belief that every person has ability and value, we empower adults with developmental disabilities to live, work, and connect.

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Program Teaches Disabled Independent Living

An increasing number of clients and the uncertainty of government assistance has prompted Living Arrangements for the Developmentally Disabled (LADD) to have its first public fund-raising effort, beginning Nov. 1

its first public fund-tasing error ing Nov. 1.

Four years ago, non-profit LADD opened its doors at 3603 Victory Pky. It was founded to help disabled men and women become independent at home, work and play. LADD residents learn living skills and how to live outside of the Walnut Hills complex with little or no supervision.

According to Juanita S. Wynn, LADD executive director, it encourages its clients to care for themselves, to interact with others, and to value themselves as contributing members of the community.

Applicants for LADD's services must be 18 or older, developmentally disabled (cerebral palsy, mental retardation, epilepsy and other disabilities) and actively participate in a day work or training program at the time of application. Each must be free of severe emotional problems or neuroses that require asymbiatric setting. that require psychiatric setting.

APARTMENT AND group houses constitute LADD's plant. The staff includes co-ordinators and representatives of psychology, special education, therapeutic recreation and occupational therapy.

As a result of LADD's work, many graduate residents are now living in inte-

grated settings in Cincinnati, Wynn said. Through LADD, they have learned to be on their own, hold jobs and contribute to society. As it proclaims, "LADD is helping others to help themselves."

In its fund-raising effort, LADD terms it "an unusual giving opportunity because assistance today will help someone be free of assistance tomorrow."

Wynn said her organization is operating on a \$440,000 budget this year and she reported it will surpass \$500,000 in 1982. In 1981, \$227,000 came from the Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation levy and \$185,000 from Title 20 federal funds. About \$14,000 was received in unsolicited donations.

A REDUCTION in Title 20 monies is expected next year, according to Wynn. And the fees from LADD residents are expected to fall. Of LADD's 31 current residents, 29 are on public assistance. Each pays a fee toward room and board, based on income. Residents paid \$46,000 this year and reduced work and unemployment is expected to reduce that figure in '82. ed to reduce that figure in '82.

LADD formally opened its doors in August, 1977, but its seeds were planted in 1949. It was that year a local group of parents of disabled children banded together to fill the gap between nursing care and totally independent living for the hand-

-STEVE HOFFMAN



PAULA WILLIAMS, left, and Mitzi Murray fix dinner in the kitchen at Living Arrangements for the Developmentally Disabled on Victory Parkway.

Cincinnati Enquirer article published in 1981.

45 YEARS OF REMARKABLE RESILIENCE

Overcoming obstacles is part of LADD's DNA

The last time Sis Geier felt like she couldn't be as independent as her brothers was 45 years ago, right before she moved into Find-A-Way Apartments at LADD.

"Now I can take care of myself just as well as the boys," she said with pride.

But the journey from Sis' mother, Peggy Geier, co-founding LADD to Sis living her dream of independence was not without its challenges.

In fact, much of LADD's history, purpose and future is rooted in resilience. The resilience of adults with developmental disabilities, their families, LADD staff and our supporters. The challenges we face today in a global pandemic are undoubtedly unprecedented, but our community is no stranger to overcoming obstacles.

LADD's story of resilience began with the realization that society expected a lot less of Sis than what she could offer. At the time of LADD's founding, institutional living for adults with disabilities was increasing. It seemed like that was the only option for Sis and other adults with disabilities as they planned for their future.

"There were, at the time, state-operated...I'm going to call them storage spaces for people with disabilities," said Bob Goering, a founding board member. "They were very inadequate and it was pretty much a death sentence to go to those places."

This was years before the Americans with Disabilities Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act were signed into law, and it prompted Peggy to try and do something revolutionary.

"Everyone had always focused on what people with disabilities couldn't do, and my mother wanted to start focusing on what people with disabilities could do," said Rodney Geier, Peggy's son.

But to do that, something no one had done before, people with disabilities and their families had to shift

their mindsets and their lifestyles. Individuals had to learn what they were capable of in this new setting of independent living and how to accomplish their own goals, not those set by others. Families had to realize their potential and, while empowering their loved ones, take the difficult step to "let go."

"Mom and dad were thinking out of the box. They felt like if you could give people support to help with some of the small things, there could be an avenue for them to accomplish more by themselves," Rodney said. "But for anyone to be independent, you can't just say 'okay, go be independent.' All of us have to learn how to do that. I think that's what LADD is great at doing – empowering people to learn how to accomplish their own goals."

That's exactly what Sis has done over the past 45 years. She has lived in the same apartment – a "pink palace" as she calls it – at LADD throughout the years, but a lot has changed since moving in.



Peggy Geier, co-founder of LADD

Before making the move, Sis said daily life was tough – she didn't know what she could do on her own. But as she began settling into her new apartment, she learned daily tasks: putting together stylish outfits, tying her shoes, combing her hair, making her bed and doing her own laundry.

In the early days of living at LADD, staff helped her more often to ease the transition. Now, she has support when she needs it but is happy to do most things on her own.



"I do everything by myself now," she said.

"Like a rock star," said her niece Emily Vollmer, who is a LADD board member.

"Like a rock star!" Sis said in agreement.

She loves that she can be independent – like working at Stepping Stones and playing her favorite music whenever she wants – while living within a community, just a few steps away from friends.

"I think what Sis as an individual and LADD as an organization have accomplished definitely exceeded the expectations my mother had," Rodney said. "She was looking for a place for Sis to fulfill her dream of independence and being her own boss. Now, so many others have that same experience."

Today, LADD empowers more than 500 adults with developmental disabilities to pursue their best life. And we're setting our sights high on what's next: from smart homes to enhanced health and wellness, and coming out of a global pandemic stronger than ever. It's who we are and who we've always been: resilient.



From LADD direct support professionals (DSPs) to those we support working at essential businesses, our people have been stepping up as frontline heroes during the pandemic.

Just a few short months ago, if you had asked D Steele, a LADD assistant coordinator, what heroism looks like, he would have never mentioned

throwing a drive-by birthday parade or sewing masks. D certainly would not have pointed at himself.

But today, while still fighting a global pandemic that has ravaged communities and turned our world upside down, that is exactly what heroism looks like. LADD's frontline employees have stepped up with courage, led with compassion and innovated with creativity to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the people we support.

Their work caught the attention of Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine early on, who hailed DSPs for their commitment and critical role during the pandemic.

"They continue to show up," he said during a press briefing in March. "This is essential care... for people to be able to get through each and every day and have the best quality of life that is possible. Thank you, each and every one of you, for that work."

With data showing that people with developmental disabilities are contracting the virus at higher rates than the rest of the population, the role of a DSP is more crucial than ever, but it requires practicing rigorous protocols to keep everyone safe. And that is exactly what they have been doing for more than four months.

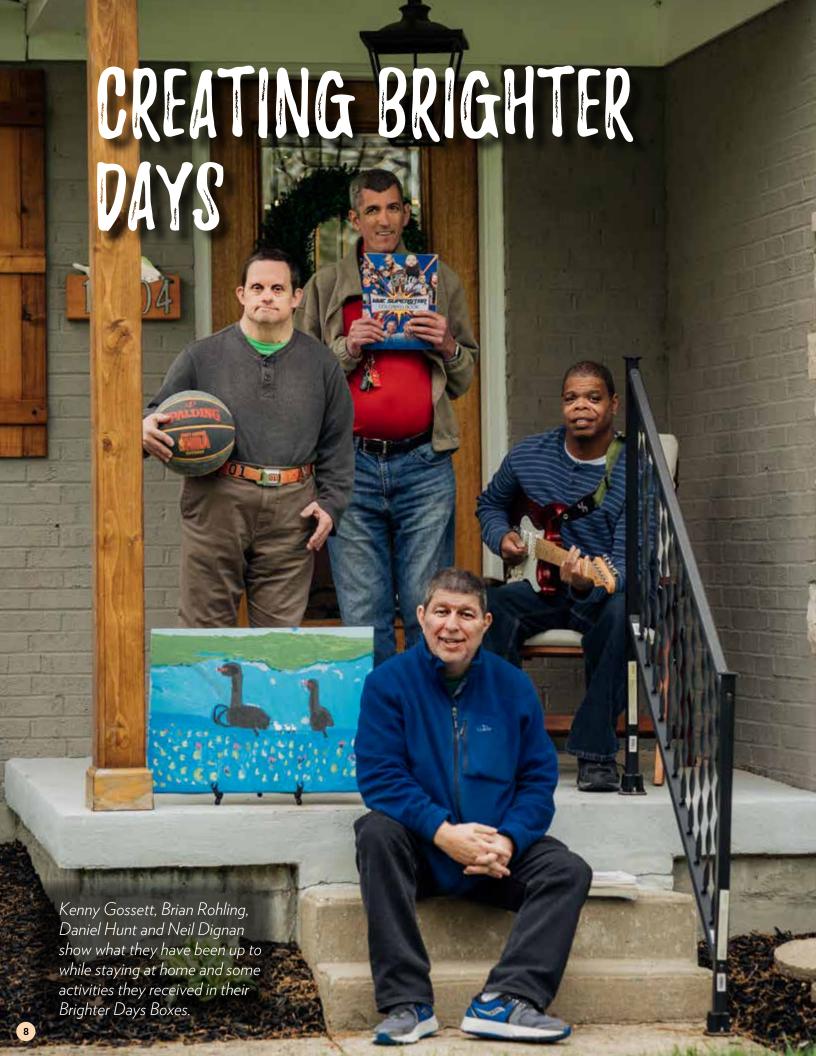
A constant cycle of handwashing and disinfecting has become part of their daily schedules. Wearing a mask for the entirety of their shifts, a requirement by LADD during the pandemic, is their new normal. Even outside of work and following much of society reopening, LADD DSPs understand how their individual actions impact the entire LADD community and the need to limit their own interactions in public.

As focused as they are on safety, DSPs remain dedicated to providing support and engagement opportunities to people at the same time. Pivoting quickly to develop new programming for people at home, staff launched gardens, crafting activities, book clubs and more. They learned new technology to connect virtually, ensuring that people stay in touch with other LADD staff, providers, family and friends. DSPs have also championed health and wellness – not only virus prevention, but also fitness and mental health – through daily walks, home workouts and more.

"Our DSPs have raised the bar for what it means to be a LADD employee," said LADD CEO Susan Brownknight. "They have demonstrated both grit and grace during these uncertain times that make us all proud to be part of this community."

LADD DSPs aren't the only heroes among us though. Several individuals supported by LADD work at businesses deemed essential and continued to show up and serve others when many across the nation worked from home or were forced to stop working altogether. At various Kroger locations, David Tripathy, Lisa Croog, Zach Leinbach and Katie Malott kept the Cincinnati community fed and stocked on other essentials. Austin Ross ensured vulnerable seniors stayed safe and nourished through his work with Meals on Wheels/Wesley Community Services. At Ohio Living Llanfair, Jerry Herman and Tina Bemerer also supported older adults. And Spencer Duncan served up hot coffee to essential workers at Dunkin Donuts. We are grateful to all frontline workers in our community for their perseverance and dedication through such challenging times.





Local volunteers launch effort to spread joy and remind adults with disabilities we're #InThis Together.

When a basket full of puzzles, games and craft supplies was delivered to Carrie on Easter weekend, she was overjoyed. Like all of us, she was used to engaging with so many in her community and was adjusting to a new normal. But that seemingly small gesture of kindness had a huge impact on Carrie. Knowing her community was missing her as much as she was missing them, plus new things to do at home, brought comfort and hope.

Soon after, her direct support staff were surprised with gift cards to local restaurants and rolls of scarce toilet paper to take home — a token of appreciation for their work on the frontlines of a global pandemic.

Those acts of generosity were spurred by LADD board members Kim Vincent and Terri Hogan, who understood how difficult this "new normal" could be for our community with broken routines,

upsetting news reports and little contact with friends, family and neighbors. So, they stepped up to say, "We're here for you." The two began raising money and donating supplies for wellbeing bundles, full of items that would bring joy and provide more interactive engagement at home. Soon, other board members, Facebook friends, neighbors and local community members were part of the Brighter Days Box campaign.

Just a week later, each person supported by LADD began receiving a Brighter Days Box. Depending on their interests, they received games, activity books, puzzles, crafting kits and gardening supplies from local businesses.

"LADD is and will always be about community," said LADD CEO Susan Brownknight. "Although we haven't been able to connect in person with the larger community like we're used to, we can still unite around efforts like this. Thank you to all those who have helped create brighter days for LADD."

Beth Wayman and Susie Prigan enjoy the games and activity books they received in a Brighter Days Box.





Volunteer Anna Sherwood delivers a Brighter Days Box.

LADD board member Kim Vincent after a shopping trip to Joseph-Beth Booksellers for Brighter Days Boxes.





The future of community living for people with disabilities. Forging ahead with a new model.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it challenges many of us have never faced before. It has certainly challenged the LADD team to rethink how we safely deliver support in an age of social distancing and virtual connection. Thankfully, we have been thinking along similar lines for some time, asking ourselves, "How do we provide an affordable service model to Ohio's middle-class families that is safe and empowers adults with developmental disabilities to live independently?" That question is perhaps even more timely today as COVID-19 threatens the health and safety of people living in congregate settings.

The answer: our Forever, Home initiative. It's a vision to improve the quality of life for adults with developmental disabilities and address the growing demand for resources in Ohio. Despite the many obstacles our community has faced over the last few months, **LADD** is making this vision a reality.

The Heidt Smart Living Home will be complete in September 2020, with four men moving in that month. This summer, the roommates are completing neighborhood mapping and technology training through virtual meetings. Their new home will be equipped with smart technology across the board – from smart kitchen appliances ensuring safe cooking and medicine administration to integrated video screens with verbal assistants.

In addition, LADD was invited to present this pilot before two (virtual) national audiences. The reception has been overwhelmingly positive. We received more than 200 inquiries from around the country asking to learn more and access Xavier University Occupational Therapy Program's research on the impact this technology has on people's lives.

The Heidt Smart Living Home will be the fourth home completed through LADD's Forever, Home initiative. Through the incredible support of the Greater Cincinnati community, LADD has raised over \$3.1 million toward the project goal of \$3.6 million and we continue to fundraise for the purchase of two additional homes. We are so grateful for your support and investment in this project. It is because of you that LADD is able to deliver impact, transform lives and empower those we support.



LADD is a Cincinnati Business Courier 2020 Innovation & Technology Award Winner "Best Device Application"



Matt Chaffin, Drew Jones, Jim Fox, Dan Jones

"I'm beyond excited to move into the smart home in September. I can't wait to see what the technology in the house can do. Plus, I'm super excited to be in that neighborhood, closer to mom and dad and my home church."

- Matt Chaffin, future resident of Heidt Smart Living Home

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY LIVING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Renderings of the Heidt Smart Living Home features, including cutting-edge technology in the kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms and sensory room.















People supported by LADD and employees show off their favorite hats on LADD Live, a virtual event taking place each weekday.

With innovation and determination, distance doesn't always mean disconnected

As with most gatherings, LADD events and programming were cancelled or postponed starting in mid-March due to COVID-19. As an organization that aims to connect adults with developmental disabilities to their community, this seemed almost antithetical to our mission. No more Fit For Life classes? What about Independent Resident Council meetings? No Taking Flight Awards Dinner or Flying Pig Marathon?

But thanks to an investment in technology, made possible by LADD supporters over several years, distance didn't necessarily mean we were disconnected. A new LADD Live event on Zoom, a virtual meeting platform, has brought dozens of individuals supported, staff members and community guests together. From painting tutorials to book clubs, a new activity or discussion takes place each week day and reminds us all we are just one click away from connecting with our community. The Independent Resident Council continues to meet virtually every week and helps decide activities for LADD Live.

When it comes to health and wellness, we're not only focused on keeping the virus out of our community. We're also working to bring fitness and healthy habits into the lives of each individual we support. LADD's Fit For Life classes moved to Zoom and have offered a much-needed opportunity to get up and moving in workouts tailored to

all abilities with minimal equipment.

During our recent Quaranteam Fitness Challenge, participants logged in to virtual classes, walked, ran, rolled, biked, balled and lifted every day. Around 100 individuals supported by LADD and employees completed 30 minutes of exercise each day or a 5K throughout a one-week period. While many completed the challenge alone or with roommates, working toward a collective goal and sharing our daily successes virtually provided a strong sense of unity across our entire community.

Beyond the numerous ways **LADD** has offering been virtual programming, individuals also have been worship livestreaming services, seeing family friends through and FaceTime and going on virtual tours and trips to landmarks around the world. While it's not the same as hosting in-person events, we're thankful for the sense of connection



Daniel Hunt and Brian Rohling

fostered through virtual experiences.





A Spring SPENT IN



It was not an easy spring for LADD community members spending their time at home with new routines and away from work, hobbies, friends and family. But this is what resilience looks like. Choosing to connect, get moving and spark creativity despite the uncertainty.







aurantine











A Spring SPENT IN Quarantime









Roommates from Zig Zag House and Edwards House





Don Cameron and Tracy Mosby





THE RULES HAVE CHANGED...



People with disabilities can now save and invest without losing government benefits such as Medicaid or SSI.





















While we couldn't participate in the Flying Pig Run, Walk and Roll this year, we had our own week-long health and wellness challenge with 100 people participating.











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