

ladder Look

Top 10 Moments of 2020



JENNY CROWE CATALYZES A
GARDENING MOVEMENT



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LADD Board Officers

Board Chair

Robert F. Jung, CFA

President

Robert M. Zimmerman

Vice Presidents

Will Goering

Kush V. Kotecha

Secretary

Shelley F. Goering

Treasurer

Barry S. Weinstein, CPA

Assistant Treasurer

Patrick J. Mathews, CPA

Directors

Kathleen Lamping-Arar, M.D.

Robert H. Anning, III

Andrew J.R. Brennan

Mark Clippinger

Jane E. Gerhardt

Susan Cutler Harris

Aaron Haslam

Michael A. Head

Robert "Chip" Heidt, III

Arlene Koth

David G. Krall

Christy McCarthy

Maggie Palazzolo

Robb Stein

Kim Vincent

Emily Geier Vollmer

Michael A. Weber

Advisory Board

Phyllis Breen

Christopher A. Carlson

Anthony G. Esposito

Vallie Geier

Gary J. Gruber

Karri Haffner

Poppy Hawkins

Francie Hiltz

Mary G. Hobson

Marie Huenefeld

John Lanier

Kate Lawrence

Michael S. McGraw

Donald L. Mellott, Jr.

Esther Lee Pederson

Charles A. Pettengill

Jeremy F. Simpson

Alison Zimmerman

Chief Executive Officer

Susan Brownknight

LADD Look

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

This issue, *Top 10 Moments of 2020*, features the top 10 moments of the year through the lens of people supported by LADD. As we close out 2020, we look back on all that people have accomplished and experienced throughout a year unlike any other. While we continue to fight COVID-19 and life has yet to return to "normal," this issue celebrates that people supported by LADD keep achieving their goals, making a difference in their community and building their best lives.

Mission Statement

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

EDITOR:

Whitney Siddiqi

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Susan Harris Betsy Mullin

COVER PHOTO:

Phyllis Thomas and Jenny Crowe

PHOTOGRAPHY:


Jake Dressman, Matt Dunn

For more information about LADD, contact
Whitney Siddiqi at wsiddiqi@laddinc.org



Art by Neil Dignan,
supported by LADD

#1



Drew Jones, Daniel Jones, Matt Chaffin, Jim Fox

DREW, DAN, MATT AND JIM LAUNCHED THE SMART LIVING PILOT

Drew, Dan, Matt and Jim are calling a brand new, state-of-the-art smart house in Anderson Township home. As the first to participate in our Smart Living Pilot, the four men are pioneering a new model of community living for adults with developmental disabilities.

The developmental disabilities field is facing a crisis with staffing shortages, the rising cost of services and an increasing number of people needing services, according to the Case for Inclusion 2020 Report. The result: tens of thousands of Ohioans with disabilities are unable to receive the supports they need. LADD has launched a first of its kind in the nation Smart Living Pilot to meet this challenge.

The pilot utilizes smart home technologies, including virtual remote supports, and wearables to further independence while keeping people safe. The technology and supports are designed to anticipate challenges and threats to safety and resolve them before they happen, allowing staff to intervene only when needed instead of being present 24/7, which is, for many, the current service model.

Ohio currently spends more than \$4 billion on services based on 2018 levy totals, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities FY 2020 budget and Medicaid matching funds. Yet, thousands are still left without services. The efficiencies realized through technology could be life changing for people with disabilities and their families.

“To our knowledge, no other organization in the country has set down this path,” said LADD Chief Strategy Office Brian Hart. “We’re accomplishing transformative results for independence, safety and affordability.”

As part of the Smart Living Pilot, the Heidt Smart Living Home in Anderson Township was completed at the end of September, with Drew, Jim, Matt and



Jim Fox

Daniel moving in soon after and demonstrating immense courage to be the first – to do something that’s never been done before.

“I don’t know the words to say it, I’m just...I’m finally home,” said Matt Chaffin, one of the residents.

The home is the fourth in LADD’s Forever, Home initiative and is named in honor of the Heidt Family Foundation, which contributed the lead gift.

The Heidt Smart Living Home is just the beginning. In order to scale this model of community living, LADD is working with Xavier University’s Department of Occupational Therapy on research to determine the technology’s impact on independence and affordability.

“We have thought for so long what it would take for us to provide Drew a situation like this and the cost, the right supports, the right environment,” said Drew Jones’ father Steve Jones. “We didn’t imagine that that was going to happen for so long or if it could happen at all.”

“This project is a rare chance to create systemic change in how we empower people with disabilities to live their best lives and widen access to essential support services,” said Chip Heidt of the Heidt Family Foundation and LADD board member. “Two years ago, I talked about the future of community living for people with developmental disabilities; I’m proud to say today that future is here.”



Matt Chaffin

#2

JENNY
LAUNCHED HER
GARDENING
CLASS,
CATALYZING
A MOVEMENT
ACROSS LADD



Every week, Jenny Crowe signs on to Zoom, checks her audio and camera angle, and heads to the garden. Around 20 others join her virtually to immerse themselves in the world of horticulture – learning about her plants, tips and tricks to grow them and healthy garden-to-table recipes. Jenny, who is supported by LADD, has always had a knack for gardening, but now she's a certified master with skills sought after by many during the pandemic.

"When I'm gardening, I have so much connection to the world," she said. "It has a calming effect and creates a sense of awe and wonder. That's especially important right now because certain things in our world are causing a panic."

Jenny traces her love of gardening back to her childhood thanks to community gardens and church initiatives. Last December, she invested in learning more and became a master gardener through Ohio State University Extension's Master Gardener Volunteer Program. Five months later, she saw an opportunity to use her certification at home and get people engaged in a healthy hobby during a stressful time.

Since her "Gardening 1-2-3" class began on Zoom, nine urban gardens grown by people supported by LADD have sprouted. While Wendy grew tomatoes, Neil was harvesting cucumbers. Some people planted fragrant flowers to enjoy when sitting outside while others picked their own herbs to use in recipes. Each of the gardens different, but providing many of the same benefits.

Gardening has long been associated with living a healthy lifestyle. If you've spent a day (or even an hour) planting or harvesting, you know the effort certainly gets you moving and breaks a sweat. It can increase your exposure to natural Vitamin D and improve dexterity. Homegrown fruits and vegetables can be richer in nutrients compared to store-bought and mass-produced vegetables, according to some research. And people who grow their own food have more control over the kinds of fertilizers and pesticides that come into contact with the food.

But gardening has come into the spotlight as a popular pandemic hobby not only for its physical health benefits but also its impact on mental health and wellbeing.

"During a pandemic, when so many of the people we serve are confined to their homes, these gardens are even more important for daily mental health and give people the opportunity to benefit from the fruits (and vegetables) of their labors," said LADD Health and Wellness Coordinator Kristin Harmeyer.

Continued on page 13



SPEAKING OUT

DON VOICED HIS
PERSPECTIVE IN A LETTER
TO HIS REPRESENTATIVES

In June, as the nation's reckoning with racism was felt in nearly every community, every (virtual) boardroom and at every dinner table, Don Cameron felt the need to speak out. Following the death of George Floyd and protests in Cincinnati and elsewhere, Don felt angry, sad and scared. He put pen to paper and sent a letter to his representatives, voicing his opinion and important perspective as a Black man with a disability. He wrote:

Hello,

My name is Don Lee Cameron Jr, and I'm a 45-year-old Black man, who has Down Syndrome. I live at a licensed group home ran by LADD, Inc. in Cincinnati Ohio. I'm a very nice person. Sometimes, I get very upset, and angry and mad when the riots and the protests happen. I don't like what's happening, or how people are acting up downtown.

I'm upset with the police officer that put his knee on Floyd's neck, and I don't like it when people are prejudiced or act in that nature. I hate it when people fight, and light cars on fire and stuff like that in Cincinnati. I don't like when people break windows of stores and restaurants. I want to be, and feel safe.

When the protests and riots happen, I feel unsafe because they are doing crazy stuff down there, like throwing bricks and police using pepper spray and rubber bullets and arresting people.

I hope that in the future police will be nice and happy. I want the police to start loving and supporting my brothers and sisters instead of hating and being prejudice. I want the world to be a better place- if we can. God wants us to change our ways, and love each other.

I urge you to support legislation that promotes police reform, and building a stronger community.

Please do better. Please.

Don Cameron

#3



Don Cameron

MY NAME IS DON LEE CAMERON
TR, AND I'M A 45-YEAR-OLD
BLACK MAN, WHO HAS DOWN
SYNDROME. I LIVE AT A LICENSED
GROUP HOME RAN BY LADD,
INC. IN CINCINNATI OHIO. I'M A
VERY NICE PERSON. SOMETIMES,
GET VERY UPSET, AND ANGRY
AND MAD WHEN THE RIOTS AND
THE PROTESTS HAPPEN. I DON'T
LIKE WHAT'S HAPPENING, OR
HOW PEOPLE ARE ACTING UP
DOWNTOWN.

I'M UPSET WITH THE POLICE
OFFICER THAT PUT HIS KNEE ON
FLOYDS NECK, AND I DON'T LIKE
WHEN PEOPLE ARE PREJUDICED
TO ACT IN THAT NATURE. I HATE IT
WHEN PEOPLE FIGHT, AND LIGHT
S ON FIRE AND STUFF LIKE
IN CINCINNATI. I DON'T LIKE
WHEN PEOPLE BREAK WINDOWS
STORES AND RESTAURANTS. I
WANT TO BE, AND FEEL SAFE.

WHEN THE PROTESTS AND RIOTS
HAPPEN, I FEEL UNSAFE BECAUSE
THEY ARE DOING CRAZY STUFF
DOWN THERE, LIKE THROWING
BRICKS AND POLICE USING PEPPER
SPRAY AND RUBBER BULLETS AND
ARRESTING PEOPLE

ladd



OVER-THE-RHINE
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
organized by ladd

A statement from LADD and the OTR International Film Festival

AT LADD WE ARE GUIDED BY THE BELIEF THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE ABILITY AND VALUE.

Through our work to empower adults with developmental disabilities we see the damaging effects of systemic discrimination and oppression. Disability transcends race, gender, faith, class, and sexuality and has the power to unite us through our shared humanity. As such, we are building a world where dignity, respect, and equal opportunity prevail. And so it is that we must speak up and speak out as our black neighbors, friends, families, employees, and communities are devalued and victimized by deadly violence.

It took people without disabilities to stop the horrors of forced institutionalization of people with disabilities. It will take all of us to help stop the racial injustices being experienced today. LADD and the OTR International Film Festival vow to work against racism and bigotry and stand with all those demanding a more just and equitable world across our nation. The pathway to a brighter, more just tomorrow must be fully accessible and wide enough to include us all.

We have a long way to go, but as we strive to live our values, here are some things we are doing to become a more inclusive and equitable organization:

1. We continue to foster empathy, understanding and connection across difference by hosting the OTR International Film Festival with a mission to provide a platform for stories left unseen in mainstream media.
2. We continue to talk to our teams about race and the impact racism has on their daily lives. We are asking our employees of color how we can support and validate their life experiences. We are providing free counseling should that be requested.
3. Last year we formed a board-level Equity & Inclusion Committee to develop goals around equity and inclusion. The committee is currently establishing benchmarks. LADD's CEO will report directly to the committee and board on progress towards those goals and will keep our entire community informed.
4. LADD hired an outside cultural and inclusion consultant in January to oversee an assessment of our policies and practices and assess how inclusive our culture is. This consultant will work with us to not only make recommendations related to a more inclusive culture, but will also assist the CEO in executing on those recommendations and creating tools to measure progress.
5. LADD continues to work closely with police departments across the state of Ohio to provide training around safe policing of people with developmental disabilities.

#4

RESIDENTS MOVED INTO LADD'S THIRD FOREVER HOME, COMPLETING THE BLUE ASH CLUSTER

In January, Daniel, Brian, Kenny and Neil moved into their Forever Home on Zig Zag Road, completing the first cluster of homes in Blue Ash.

"A beautiful house in a beautiful neighborhood," said resident Neil Dignan. "There is a lot more room there and the staff is real good to us. I'm happy where I'm at."

"For me this is the answer to a lifelong prayer," said Peggy Marsh, Brian Rohling's mother.

Two other homes complete the cluster – the Edwards Home with Matthew, Kathleen, Marc and Margot, and the Cooper Road Home with Zachary, Sam and David.

Each remodeled home is just a few minutes away from each other and residents receive support services while living independent lives, fully integrated in their neighborhoods.

forever, home. 

Kenny Gossett, Daniel Hunt, Brian Rohling, Neil Dignan

EDDIE LANDED A NEW JOB AND MOVED INTO HIS OWN PLACE

This year has been dubbed "the year of the pivot" with so many unexpected changes and the world spinning every which way around us. It was certainly that way for Eddie Gregory, but he used it to his advantage and embraced a new start.

Eddie had just started a new job in March when most of the economy shut down. He finally returned to work in the summer, but he wasn't working as many hours as he wanted. Plus, he was now looking for work closer to home.

After several years of participating in LADD's shared living program HLADD, Eddie signed a lease for his own apartment in June.

"It's been a big year of change for Eddie and he has navigated it well," said LADD Supported Employment Program Manager Laura Grimes.

With the support of Laura and his job coach Vickie Ridgeway, Eddie landed a dishwashing job at the nearby Red Robin just a few months after his big move.

"I manage loading and washing dishes, emptying trash, cleaning and other things," he said.

Eddie quickly learned the ropes thanks to another Supported Employment Program participant, Paul Makin, who started at Red Robin this time last year and is already in a position to train others.

When asked what advice he would give to others trying to accomplish their goals, especially during the pandemic, Eddie said to put yourself out there and stay positive.

"Don't be scared and just be yourself," he said. "Just focus on what you can do and don't let everything going on in the world get to you."

#5



Eddie Gregory

VOTERS MADE THEIR VOICES HEARD LIKE NEVER BEFORE

This year's election marked the highest voting turnout in over a century and voters with disabilities made their voices heard at the ballot box like never before. For some, exercising this fundamental American right was made easier by mail-in and early voting. For others, many barriers still remained.

At LADD, a significant get out the vote effort – including personal calls to all residential

and day program participants and education on the rights of voters with disabilities – resulted in many newly registered voters. Around 94 percent of people surveyed were registered to vote as of early October.

"Voting is a way to

speak up for what you believe is right," said Kathleen Sheil, who is supported by LADD. "It's important because you're finding your voice."

In the month leading up to Election Day, people supported by LADD and staff were busy requesting mail-in ballots, making safe plans for in-person voting, researching issues, viewing sample ballots and learning about their rights.

Housemates Sarran Hoffman, Annie Callan, Jenny Crowe and Ashley Miller all voted by mail-in ballot because of the pandemic.

"I felt happy and proud to vote in this election," Annie said. "It is important to vote for the person and government that you think will do the better job for the people."

Annie noted that the economy, jobs, health care and structure of government were her top voting issues. She also spoke of the pandemic, saying, "I want someone to work with the scientists to find a cure. My vote is not just about the virus but also about the services for people with disabilities."



Ashley Miller, Annie Callan,
Sarran Hoffman, Jenny Crowe

#6

David Calhoun was one month into his classes at Bick's Driving School when the pandemic brought that to a screeching halt. He started studying for his driver's license test several months before, and was worried this bump in the road meant he would eventually fail his test.

"I'm just used to doubting myself," he said.

"I told him, 'it's okay to be nervous, but we'll go back again until you pass it,'" said David's HLADD Provider Leslie Choate. "You can do anything you want if you work hard enough."

After returning to class a few months later and practicing with Leslie, David's hard work paid off. He passed the test in August and immediately felt a sense of independence.

"I was very excited and shocked because I doubted myself, but I did it," he said. Not long after passing the test, he secured a job at Kroger.

A goal setter and go-getter, David is now saving to buy his own car (he's looking at a Nissan 300ZX or an '03 Ford Mustang) and pay for his own insurance.

"I'll have the freedom to go wherever I want to, to work, restaurants, vacations, to places I've never been," David said. "I don't have to rely on other people."

DAVID PAVED A PATH TO INDEPENDENCE



#7

David Calhoun

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PARTICIPANTS VOLUNTEERED AT TRANSFORM

#8

J. R. Rosenfeld

Volunteering has always been a huge part of Community Connections, a program at LADD that provides opportunities for participants to learn and strengthen life and communication skills, build confidence through decision making, and explore their own likes and dislikes.

Unfortunately, the pandemic put the brakes on volunteer involvement for most organizations. From the Cincinnati Nature Center to Matthew 25, an international humanitarian aid and disaster relief organization, Community Connections Program (CCP) participants could no longer serve at local nonprofits.

Until they found Transform, an organization that provides a new wardrobe, free of charge, to transgender and gender non-conforming youth.

"A board member at Transform became aware of Community Connections and reached out to share their need," said CCP Manager Faith Maynard.

With every jab and alternating hook, Daniel Hunt is boxing his way to a healthier, happier life. He started the cardio boxing workouts – a mix of boxing training and aerobic moves – in August and has been hitting the punching bag every week since.

"It gets me exercising and it's been going really good so far," he said.

Daniel originally bought the punching bag as a way to relieve stress and get any anger or frustration out in a healthy way.

"Staff talked to me about a plan to use my punching bag and found videos for me to follow."

Now, it's also become a fun and safe way to stay fit. Cardio boxing is known for conditioning the total body and building both cardiovascular stamina and muscular endurance. And with the pandemic limiting everyone's ability to use gyms and other facilities, Daniel was able to transform an empty space in his basement into his own personal boxing studio – complete with his hanging punching bag, workout mat and boxing gloves.

He's still early in his cardio boxing journey, but Daniel is excited to keep learning, having fun and breaking a sweat.

"They had moved into a new space just days before the pandemic and were feeling overwhelmed with the work of setting up their new space and organizing their inventory."

Working together, CCP and Transform created a contact-free way for volunteers to assist.

Every Wednesday and Thursday, when the shop is closed and they are the only volunteers on site, small groups of CCP participants are folding clothes and organizing shelves at Transform.

Tristan Vaught, co-founder of Transform, said every week they get excited to see the work and care CCP volunteers put into Transform. "We feel like this partnership is building community in a unique way given the current climate of a global pandemic; a safe and thoughtful connection."

"I enjoy the chance to be an ally to the transgender community," said CCP Social Guide Francis Pospisil. "The people in my groups really like volunteering and missed the opportunities we had with Matthew 25 and The Nature Center."

DANIEL BEGAN HIS BOXING JOURNEY

#9

Daniel Hunt

GARDENING CLASS

CONTINUED



People of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, professions and yard sizes are giving it a go and finding that tending to these living organisms can provide purpose and promote mindfulness.

“I’m highly anxious but it especially magnifies being indoors, so I really like being outside,” Jenny said. “Taking care of the earth makes you have a love for all creation, even if there are some moles that are a nuisance.”

This fall, Jenny and other gardeners harvested fall gardens with kale, broccoli, lettuce and green beans.

Their efforts were supported by a \$7,000 Health and Wellness Through Gardening Grant from the Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation. The funds were used to expand the gardens, provide supplies and transform some of Jenny’s virtual gardening classes into shareable video resources for the entire community.

If you haven’t quite developed your green thumb yet, Jenny recommends you start small and simple, maybe with a container garden or house plants. Then work your way into the ground, but not before conducting a soil test, she warns.

“Practice makes perfect; you just have to experiment.”

With every new sprout, perhaps you’ll find yourself growing too.



Top: Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation Trustee Ruth Klette and Program Officer Jordan Klette-Cusher

Left: Volunteers from Xavier University helped build planters this fall

EVERYONE PERSEVERING THROUGH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

We can't close out the year

without acknowledging the momentous effort each person supported by LADD has made to stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The toll it has taken has also been significant – the disruption of routines, interaction, fear of getting sick and constant changes in how we stay safe. But the LADD community enters 2021 conquering things they never imagined just a year ago; persisting during a crisis none of us have ever experienced; and still celebrating the daily wins.

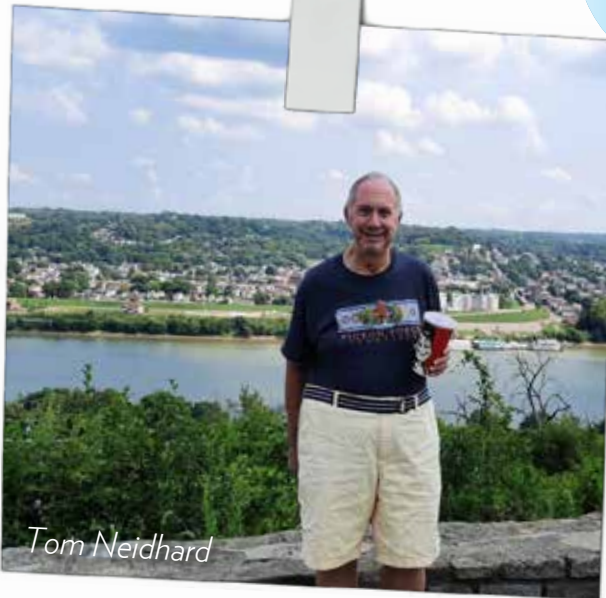


Pam Riley, Ramona Jones, Roger Ballew, Lori Brannon

People supported by LADD have made masks a part of their daily wardrobe, learned new technology to stay connected, and stayed creative with safe activities, like outdoor movie nights and socially-distanced outdoor family visits.

The year brought so much change to everyone's lives. It also brought lessons learned.

#10



Tom Neidhard

Hold tight the things that
bring you joy



Toni Alten-Crowe and Gargi Patel

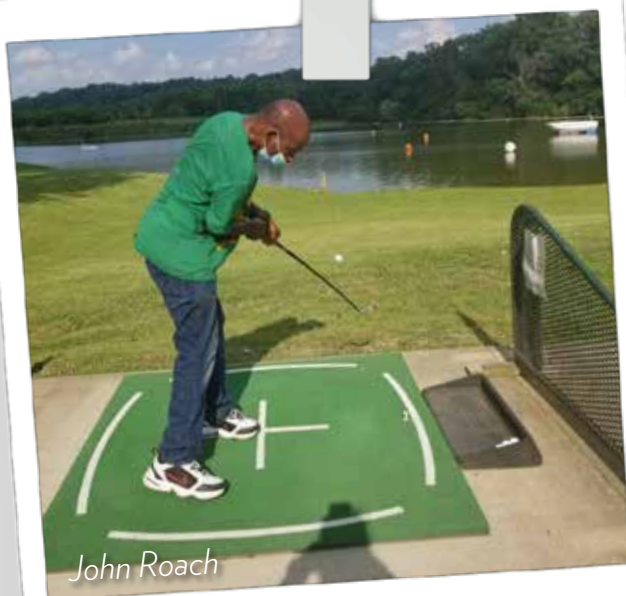
Prioritize your health

**WHILE MANY HOPE FOR A "RETURN TO NORMAL" IN 2021,
WE HOPE FOR SOMETHING BETTER.**



Tina Duwel and Ramona Jones

Stand up for what's right



John Roach

stay creative with safe activities



Jenny Crowe, Michael Weber, Amy Krieg

Don't take the
small things
for granted.



Lisa Boeckmann

Never underestimate the *strength*
of a community, even when we can't
all meet face to face.

*We hope for a world that recognizes every person's ability and value.
A world where all can boldly pursue their best life.*



Kim Vincent

Sales Vice President • Proud LADD Volunteer

(513) 739-0493

kimvincent@sibcycline.com

Download my Home Search app!
app.sibcycline.com/sckimvincent

*Helping turn your real estate dreams
into reality. Call Kim today!*



THE RULES HAVE CHANGED...



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

- » Nationwide enrollment for individuals with disabilities
- » Tax-free savings plan for disability-related expenses
- » Save and invest without losing needs-based benefits



stableaccount.com



OVER-THE-RHINE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

organized by ladd 

JULY 8-11, 2021

Save the new date to attend the nation's
only diversity film festival led by people in the
disability community!

www.otrfilmfest.org

@otrfilmfest



founded by



Saul Schottenstein
FOUNDATION B

presented by



ladd STRONG

Empowering adults with disabilities for 45 years



Sis Geier



Braxton Thomas



Barbara Taylor

2020 Annual Campaign

visit laddinc.org/donate/annual-campaign to give online

THANK YOU LADD SPONSORS



**SHOWE
MANAGEMENT
CORPORATION**

**HGC
CONSTRUCTION**



Taft/



Thank you to our sponsors

who supported LADD's

QUARANTEAM FITNESS CHALLENGE

in the spring and continue to support
our wellness activities throughout the year.

To promote health and wellness this winter,
LADD will be launching a

WINTER WALK AND ROLL CHALLENGE

beginning in January. For more information, contact
Kristin Harmeyer at kharmeyer@laddinc.org.



3603 Victory Parkway Cincinnati, OH 45229

www.laddinc.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
US Postage
PAID
Cincinnati, OH
Permit No. 5471



CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF
EMPOWERING ADULTS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES TO
live, work and connect.