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Thinking of Jim ...



The family of Jim Canney would like to thank the MCBMR/DD family for it's support during Jim's surgery and hospitalization. Jim experienced serious complications following surgery to treat a brain aneurysm. We are taking this journey one step at a time and have been blessed by your presence with us each day. Thank you for your visits, cards, e-mails, calls, gifts, food and most of all your prayers. We ask your continued prayers as Jim enters rehabilitation and works toward making a complete recovery.

With sincere appreciation,
Jim's family

Celebrating Awareness

March marks the beginning of MR/DD Awareness Month. Among the events scheduled are the traditional Proclamation signing with the Madison County Commissioners, a visit to the Kick-Off Rally at the Statehouse, and the yearly highlight — The Madison County Board of MR/DD's Appreciation Awards — recognizing the people in your community who truly know what MR/DD awareness is all about.



TIGERS SKIERS EXCEL AT WINTER GAMES

A Special Olympics winter wonderland.

In early February, four athletes from Madison County participated in the Special Olympics Ohio 2009 State Winter Games at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, just outside of Cleveland. Coached by Lexi Evans, the skiing Tigers came away with seven medals and a ribbon.

Leading the way was Thomas Cunningham, earning first place gold medals in both Downhill and Giant Slalom in the Alpine Intermediate Division.

First-time winter athlete Dustin Pruitt earned a gold medal by placing first in the Alpine Giant Slalom and a silver in the Alpine Downhill. Both races were run at the novice level.

Also in the novice level, Tiger skier Bryan Thompson gathered a bronze medal for his third place finish in the Alpine Novice Downhill as well as a fourth place ribbon for the Alpine Novice Slalom.

Also earning medals were two individuals who, according to MCBMR/DD Recreation Coordinator Lincoln Comer, have not participated in any Special Olympics sports until this year's Winter Games.

Rounding out the Madison County award winners was Jessica Wiggins, who earned a pair of silver medals. Wiggins finished in second place in both the Alpine Downhill and Alpine Giant Slalom in the 16-21 year-old Intermediate group..



This is just one of the many events Madison County's Special Olympics athletes participate in during the year. The Tigers also have competitive squads in volleyball, basketball, golf and softball, as well as individuals participating in a number of events in the Special Olympic Summer Games. In 2008 alone, Madison County won state championships in both basketball and softball.



HOOPIN' and SHAVIN'

Adam Campbell (left) and the D-IV Basketball Tigers (as well as the D-II squad) head into Special Olympics tournament time this weekend. Meanwhile, Fairhaven Preschooler Destiny McClain (right) and her friends enjoyed their annual Shaving Cream Day visit from the BOLD kids of London Junior High School.





Madison County Special Olympics Awards

Recently, the Madison County Special Olympics Program announced the winners of its annual recognition awards. The awards are voted on by the Special Olympics athletes themselves, as well as staff and community people who are involved with the program.

Waymond Harris showed in 2008 why he is called "Iceman." With several clutch performances in various sports, Harris proved he must have ice water in his veins. An outstanding 2008 earned Harris **Athlete of the Year** honors.

It was no coincidence that Harris was part of both the basketball and unified softball teams' success in capturing state titles. In softball, Harris played outfield while leading the Tigers in games played and walks. He was third in runs scored.

But it was on the basketball court that Harris' talents came through when they were needed most.

"During the 2008 State basketball finals, Waymond came off the bench in the second half to lead a banged up Tiger squad to the Division III State title in Bowling Green," said Lincoln Comer. "He displayed great maturity through the year and proved to his younger teammates though not as young as he once was, he still had plenty to offer."

Harris put in several timely baskets – subbing for the injured top scorer -- in the final two quarters of the championship game to clinch the title for the 18-1 Tigers.

In addition to running a quality Special Olympics program, Comer has also channeled his energies to coaching. It is that multi-faceted, teaching-first approach that has earned **Coach of the Year** honors for the second consecutive year.

During his eight years at the Special Olympics helm for Madison County, Comer has served as coach for many Tiger teams. Comer coached the Tigers squad that overcame injuries in the final game to capture the state basketball crown.

In 2008, Comer served as player-coach for the Tigers Unified softball team, which rallied to capture the Division I state title in dramatic style. After earning the title in 2007, the Tigers were moved up to Ohio's most competitive division. From officiating to coaching to playing, for several years Keith Hatem has been an integral part of Madison County Special Olympics. For those attributes – and many others – Hatem is being honored as the **Volunteer of the Year**.

Hatem has coached the Special Olympics golf team for several years. He's a partner on the state champion Unified softball team, and he's officiated many Tigers Special Olympics basketball games.

"Mr. Hatem has also worked in the field for many years, so our athletes have become quite keen of his likeable nature and positive attitude," Comer said. "There is no one more dependable than Keith, and our county's program ranks among the best in the state because of volunteers like him."

This year, for the first time, Madison County Special Olympics honored an organization which has offered support to enhance the program. The first recipient of the **Organization/Service of the Year** award is Buckeye Ford Mercury.

"Transportation is critical when making sure athletes are at their various venues of competition in a timely manner," Comer said. "Buckeye Ford has provided the athletes and coaches of Madison County that piece of mind."

For example, Buckeye Ford loaned Madison County Special Olympics extra vans to transport athletes to/from the Summer and Winter Special Olympics Games this past year.



**Madison County Board of
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**Madison County Board of MR/DD
Monthly Board Update**

by *Betsy Dodds*

- The Regular Monthly Board Meeting was held Thursday, January 15, 2009 at the Administrative Office. Board members attending were Tonya Keaton, Blaine Brockman, Julie Brand, Sue Mosier, and newly-appointed Board Member Mary Hopkins
 - The Board approved the existing slate of officers for 2009. The officers are — Tonya Keaton, Board President; Blaine Brockman, Board Vice-President, and Julie Brand, Board Recording Secretary.
 - The Board adapted the draft calendar for the 2009 Board Meetings (see below). The meetings will all be starting at 4pm at the Administrative Office.
 - The Board established Board Committees for 2009. The committees are — Personnel/Finance and Future Planning (Keaton, Brockman, Brand), Buildings/Grounds (Headings, Mosier, Hopkins), and Ethics (Mosier, Hopkins).
 - The Board approved the Family Resource allocation recommendation of \$500 per family for the first six months of calendar year 2009.
 - The Board authorized the Superintendent to sign off on the grants to apply for three vehicles and to pay 20 percent of the vehicles purchased through this grant.
 - The Board approved to continue participation in all applicable Federal State & Local programs for 2009.
 - The Board approved \$5,000 of MCBMRDD's 10th Annual Golf Scramble revenue be contributed to Madison County Special Olympics and the remaining \$2,600 be given to the future levy fund.
- The next Regular Monthly Board Meeting of the Madison County Board of MR/DD will be held Thurs, February 26, 2009 at the Administrative Office at 4pm.

Monthly Board Meeting Schedule Announced

February 26, March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18, July (no meeting),
August 20, September 17, October 15, November 19, December 17



**NEW BOARD MEMBER
APPOINTED**

The Madison County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities recently welcomed newest Board Member Mary Tier-Hopkins, as well as electing officers for 2009. Board Members include (from left) Blaine Brockman (Vice President), Julie Brand (Secretary), Tonya Keaton (President), Hopkins, Sue Mosier. Not pictured is Board Member Beverly Headings.