

Many services being offered to disabled people

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March 19, 2008

FAIRFIELD COUNTY - Diane Lamb works for an organization that helps people with disabilities, but she never knew of all the services other agencies offered for that same group.

Lamb, who works as an outreach coordinator for Southeastern Ohio Center for Individual Living, was one of about 50 people who attended a buffet and panel discussion Tuesday to learn more about county organizations that help people with physical and developmental disabilities.

"There are a lot of agencies out there that help people, and I found that there were still some things I didn't know about organizations like MRDD, such as the services they provide," Lamb said. Knowledge was the goal behind the Adult Disabilities Services Buffet hosted by the Fairfield County MRDD and the Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children First Council.

Twelve organizations throughout the county that serve individuals with disabilities set up information booths in the lobby of the Liberty Center in Lancaster for visitors to gather information and ask questions.

Attendees to the free event later dined on food prepared by The Zone and listened to a panel of nine representatives from organizations such as Meals on Wheels, New Horizons Youth and Family Center, and Fairfield County Job & Family Services discuss the services they provide.

"It was nice to come out and get information for people who are physically handicapped," said Sandra Springer, a Lancaster resident who has used a wheelchair for five years. "I didn't have all the numbers I needed for people I could call, but now I do."

The panel discussed services for adults that range from programs that rent wheelchairs, lift chairs and hospital beds to equipment loan programs and transportation services.

John Bosser, community outreach director for Fairfield County MRDD, said Tuesday was the first event of its kind that the agency has co-hosted. His hope is to have four of these events a year for the community.

"We wanted to create a panel that could bring all these different agencies together to help inform the public about what they do," Bosser said.

The event was first discussed by a disabilities committee that was formed through the Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children First Council. The committee was formed in the fall to discuss ways to share information with the community about organizations that can aid adults with disabilities.

"Our goal was to create a network to share information about resources and identify what is not there," said Becky Edwards, executive director of the Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children First Council.

"And one of the things we noticed was, once a child with a disability leaves high school, the school isn't there to help them transition and they suddenly find themselves without those services they relied on."