

# 377 BOARD'S NEWSLETTER

FROM THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

July 2023 Edition



McLean County Health Department  
Behavioral Health (BH) Program  
200 West Front Street,  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
[amy.hopper@mcleancountyil.gov](mailto:amy.hopper@mcleancountyil.gov)  
[selena.nolan@mcleancountyil.gov](mailto:selena.nolan@mcleancountyil.gov)  
[shannon.garlock@mcleancountyil.gov](mailto:shannon.garlock@mcleancountyil.gov)

## THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM'S UPDATED WEBPAGE

- The BH Program has an updated webpage on the MCHD website! We are continuing to work with MCHD's Graphic Designer to add more graphics and creative ways to better share information. Our goal is to review the webpage quarterly for needed updates. Links for quick access:
- Information about the Behavioral Health Program and IDDC (Intellectual and Developmental Disability Collaborative)  
[Behavioral Health | McLean County, IL - Official Website \(mcleancountyil.gov\)](https://www.mcleancountyil.gov/1655/Boards-Committees)
- Information about the 377 Board and CY22 and CY23 Grant Funding  
<https://www.mcleancountyil.gov/1655/Boards-Committees>

## COMMUNITY EVENT

In April 2023, MCHD staff attended the Transition Fair held at Heartland Community College. The Transition Fair was a free event for students, and parents of students with disabilities, who are high school juniors and seniors (through age 22) with disabilities. There were many vendors at the fair ready to answer questions about community resources!



*Picture: BH Program Manager, Amy Hopper, and BH Specialist, Selena Nolan, at the Transition Fair*

## EDUCATION CORNER

### The CDC's SEED study and 2023 ADDM Community Report on Autism

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to be at the forefront of research studies and data collection for understanding the causal factors and healthcare needs of individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The Study to Explore Early Development (SEED) is one of the largest studies on ASD that focuses on risk factors and developmental characteristics in youth between the ages of 2-5 (CDC, 2022). Important to note is that this study was recently expanded in 2021 to include teens and a COVID-19 impact assessment (CDC, 2021). Although the analysis of the COVID-19 Impact Assessment data is ongoing, preliminary findings are already the effects of change (Figure 1).



**COVID-19 Impact Assessment**

- In 2021, CDC's Study to Explore Early Development (SEED) assessed the impact of COVID-19 on children's behaviors and health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from this study will help inform public health strategies for how to support young children and their families during public health emergencies.
- **Preliminary findings:**
  - » Compared to children without Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), children with ASD were more likely to experience delays in receiving specialty health services in 2020. This indicates children with ASD need greater support to access services during public health emergencies.

\*Analyses of SEED data are ongoing, and we will continue to learn more from this important study. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/research>.

Figure 1



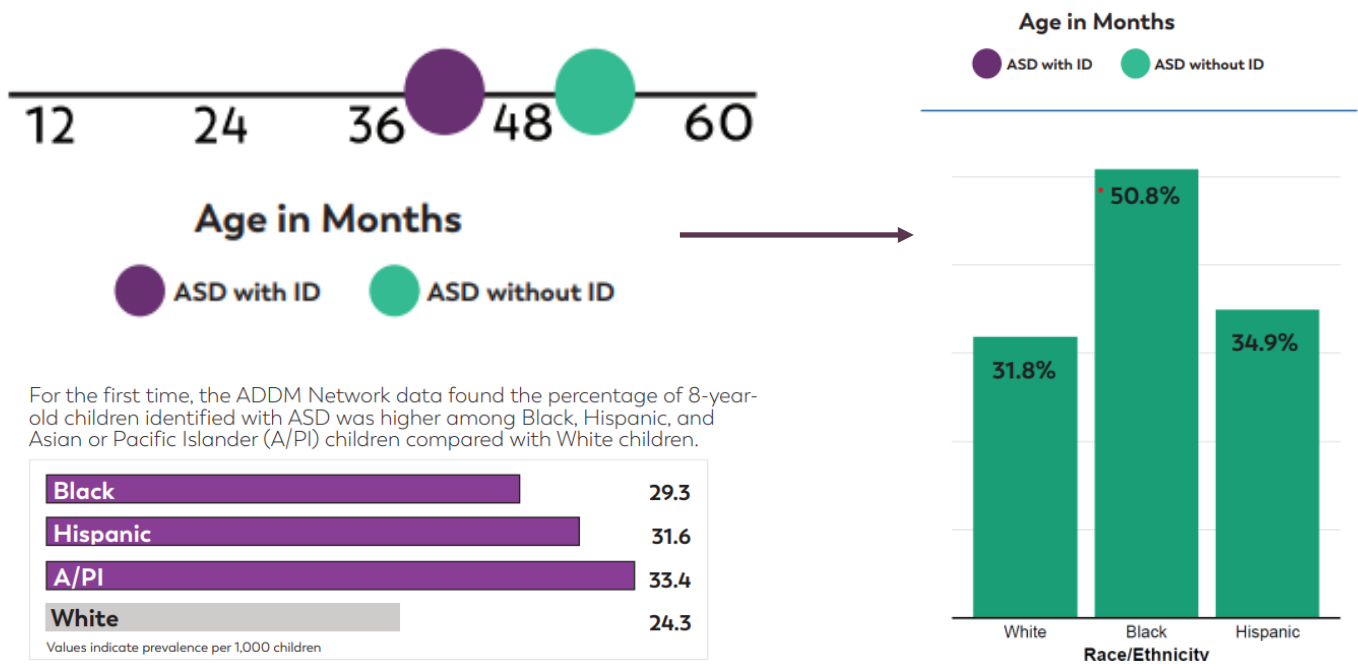
Additionally, last month, the CDC released the 2023 Community Report on Autism (CDC, 2023). This is a joint effort between the CDC and the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to summarize the most recent published reports on early identification, characteristics, and prevalence of ASD among 4-year-old and 8-year-olds, and overall findings from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (ADDM). Overall research also reflects the disparities in early diagnosis among Black, Asian, and Hispanic compared to their Caucasian counterparts. The 2023 ADDM report also reveals approximately 38% of 8-year-olds involved in research studies have an intellectual disability along with ASD.

Combined with SEED, the 2023 ADDM Network report further emphasizes the public health impacts of early diagnosis and intervention in preventing and treating future comorbidities (see Figure 1). These results contribute to the continued need for early identification of ASD and evidenced-based intervention for children with ASD. The ADDM report brings new insight into social determinants of health impacts in previous oversight

of diagnosis in disparate race and ethnicities. Data supports ASD diagnosis programs such as the [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#) program (CDC, 2023).

**Data elements and background from 2023 ADDM Community Report on Autism**

- Survey data from 11 states (Illinois was not included in this study)
- Result raises awareness and concern for Black children identified as having both ASD and an Intellectual Disability (ID) (50.8% among 8 year-olds)
- On average, 8 year-old children with ID were diagnosed with ASD earlier than those without ID



For the first time, the ADDM Network data found the percentage of 8-year-old children identified with ASD was higher among Black, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander (A/PI) children compared with White children.

**References:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2022). Study to explore early development. *National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities*. [Research on Autism Spectrum Disorder | CDC](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2023). Community report on autism 2023: The latest ADDM Network data. *National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm-community-report/index.html>

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual McLean County Behavioral Health Community Forum is **Thursday, October 19, 2023!** This year the Forum will be held on the Illinois State University campus. Each year, the MCHD's BH Program participates in the Forum Planning Committee. Our program coordinated Dr. Chuck Hartseil, retired Special Education Coordinator and Autism McLean Board Member, to facilitate a session on 504 and IEP (individualized educational plan) accommodations and interventions and Dr. Burgundy Johnson, Child Psychiatrist at Carle, to facilitate a session on parenting and self-care.

## **CY23: 377 BOARD MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS**

- Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 to 10:30am: Easterseals at Timber Pointe Camp
  - 20 Timber Pointe Drive, Hudson, IL
- Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 to 11:30am: Marcfirst (home office)
  - 2000 Jacobssen Drive, Normal, IL
- Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:30am to 10:30am: The Baby Fold (meeting at home office and ability for two board members at one given time relocate to Fairview Elementary School for a tour)
  - 108 East Willow Street, Normal, IL
- Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>: McLean County Health Department (remaining Board meetings for the year will be held at McLean County Health Department)
- Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> (PM)
- Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup> (Hold entire day for presentations)
- Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

## **NEW 377 BOARD MEMBER: ROBERT FREITAG**

Bob Freitag was born and raised in Worth, Illinois, a town near the southwest suburbs of Chicago. He attended Alan B. Shepard High School in Palos Heights, Illinois, and then received an associate degree from Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC).

Freitag then transferred to Illinois State University (ISU) in 1982. He became an active leader in student government while attending ISU and completing an undergraduate degree in the Department of Politics and Government. He served as president of his class leadership council and was chosen as a guide for Preview, the University's freshman orientation program.

He pursued a legal career after graduating magna cum laude from ISU, earning his juris doctorate at the University of Illinois College of Law in Urbana. After working in private practice in Champaign for two years, he served as the first full-time assistant public defender in McLean County before joining the McLean County State's Attorney's Office.

As a McLean County prosecutor, Freitag partnered for a decade with undercover police officers to combat drug trafficking and illegal gang activity. He was chosen in 2000 to serve as an associate judge in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit and eight years later, won election to become a full circuit judge. As a circuit judge, he served as the presiding judge of

the criminal division in McLean County. He held that role until his retirement from the bench in July 2018. He was honored by the McLean County Bar Association with the Lincoln Award, presented annually to a McLean County Bar Association attorney for outstanding legal and community service.

A commitment to serve led to a commission in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General's Corps. During Freitag's 21-year military career, he served in various assignments throughout the United States, including in Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Washington state, as well as a combat service deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005-2006. He reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before retiring in 2017.

Bob demonstrates an equal commitment to serving his community and has done so as a volunteer firefighter and EMT, as well as former mayor of the Village of Carlock. Historically he's supported ISU through membership on the Alumni Association Board, Foundation Board, Attorney's Advisory Board, and the Student Government Association.

In retirement, Bob remains active in community service. He is a long-time member of the Bloomington Kiwanis Club, volunteer for Faith In Action, and serves on several boards, including the Unit 5 Educational Foundation Board of Directors and the Lake Bloomington Association Board of Directors. He is also active in his parish community at St. Patrick's Catholic Church of Merna, serving on the Parish Stewardship Council and the RCIA Team, as well as regularly serving as a Eucharistic Minister and a Minister of Hospitality at the church. Currently, Freitag works for his beloved alma mater, Illinois State University, as an adjunct professor. He teaches Introduction to Law and Litigation in the Legal Studies Program.

His efforts have been recognized by both MVCC and ISU. Accolades include: the Distinguished Alumni Award from MVCC, the ISU Alumni Association Outstanding Young Alumni Award, the E. Burton Mercier Service Award, membership with the Steve and Sandi Adams Legacy Hall of Fame, as well as induction into the ISU College of Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame.

Bob currently resides at Lake Bloomington with his wife of nearly 37 years, Traci, a retired Unit 5 teacher. They have 2 adult children, including a daughter with developmental disabilities due to a traumatic brain injury as an infant. Bob recalls the years when, as parents, he and his wife truly needed to stand up and advocate for his daughter's needs. That experience has given him a passion for supporting services for the intellectually and developmentally disabled in our community.

Welcome Bob!

## **AGENCY SUCCESS STORY**

### **Submitted by Bridgeway: Transforming Lives through Work:**

Jackie (name changed to provide confidentiality) entered Bridgeway's Community Employment Services program in August of 2021 for vocational support. She has a diagnosis of Fragile X and Social Anxiety Disorder. Jackie's most challenging barrier was her social anxiety.

In high school, Jackie worked in her school's coffee shop and really enjoyed making drinks but had difficulty at the register because she was not confident talking to people who came to the shop. After high school, at Bridgeway, Jackie worked with her Employment Specialist (ES) to create a resume and began applying for jobs at different coffee shops in the community. While waiting for a job offer Jackie and her ES worked on applications, identifying references, and practicing interview skills. Soon, she began to feel the weight of applying to many places without a return phone call or having a successful interview without a job offer and became discouraged. During this phase, Jackie's ES told her about a connection she made at Chick-Fil-A and encouraged her to apply. Jackie had a successful interview and was offered a job working as a Dining Room Attendant.

In July of 2022 she started part-time, and quickly began working independently, cleaning tables and emptying the trash bins. With this job she was able to do the type of work she preferred, but without the added pressure of working at the cash register. Jackie did not let her social anxiety stand in her way, and within a week was approaching guests to ask if they were in need of any condiments or refills.

Jackie's mother says her daughter is a much happier person and is often seen smiling for no particular reason around their home. Jackie's supervisors say she is an amazing addition to the team, and they are so thankful to have her help in the dining room. She has even expanded her job duties since she started to help with delivering meals to guests when they are very busy and in need of an extra set of hands! Jackie is so thankful to be working and earning her own money and has gained confidence in her ability to achieve her vocational goal of working in the community.

