



# STARLIGHT

SEPTEMBER  
2023

## Sitting Down for a Q&A with BVC Superintendent Kelli Grisham



Kelli Grisham  
Superintendent

Kelli Grisham is the superintendent at Blanchard Valley Center/ Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Kelli joined the staff in 2015 as assistant superintendent, and was promoted to superintendent in 2016. We sat down with Kelli for a Q&A to talk about her role, Blanchard Valley Center, and the ever-changing challenges of supporting people with developmental disabilities.

### **Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your role as superintendent?**

**A:** As the superintendent, I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the county board. My long-range responsibilities include establishing and overseeing the agency's strategic planning and organizational goals. The annual budget also is my responsibility, along with ensuring the passage of levies.

### **Q: All 88 counties have a County Board of DD, but what does a County Board do?**

**A:** A county board of DD is the local agency that provides case management services and service coordination for

individuals with developmental disabilities. If a person is eligible for county board services, it is our responsibility to link people to employment opportunities, educational services, residential services, and habilitation programs. The Hancock County Board of DD also provides Early Childhood Intervention, recreational opportunities, Special Olympics, an advocacy program, and a transitional employment program designed for recent high school graduates.

### **Q: You've been in the DD field for about 30 years. What drives you to continue working toward the mission of the Hancock County Board?**

**A:** When I started working in the field of DD in 1995, the county board programs were much different. Most children with disabilities were enrolled in segregated schools and were not served by their local school districts. Most adults with disabilities were served in segregated workshops and made less than minimum wage. Very few of those people were ever employed outside of the sheltered workshop. Today, all school-aged children with disabilities in Hancock County are served by their local school districts and more adults with disabilities are employed in our community. Removing segregation and practicing inclusivity is a huge accomplishment for people with disabilities in Hancock County.

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DATES TO REMEMBER | VISIT [WWW.BLANCHARDVALLEY.ORG](http://WWW.BLANCHARDVALLEY.ORG) FOR MORE DETAILS

September 16 – 10am  
**Community Health Resource Fair at the  
University of Findlay**

September 16  
**Special Olympics State Softball Tournament  
in Oregon, Ohio**

September 18 – 4:30pm  
**Game Night at Stevi B's**

September 23 – 2pm  
**Oktoberfest in Downtown Findlay**

September 25  
**Board Meeting at University of Findlay**

CONTINUED "SITTING DOWN WITH SUPERINTENDENT KELLI GRISHAM"

**Q: What is the most difficult part of your job as superintendent?**

**A:** Good question. I love my job, but the most difficult aspect is that the job is never done. There's never a day when my desk is clear, and I can go home knowing I can start fresh tomorrow. There's always more we can do and more we can offer to the people we support so they can live their lives with meaning and purpose.

**Q: What would you like people who are not connected with the County Board to know about the DD field or Blanchard Valley Center?**

**A:** I'd want them to know about all of the wonderful things that happen at BVC. I'd want them to see people becoming more independent and realizing their full potential. It's life-changing for them and for me. I'd want people to see that folks with disabilities are no different than anyone else. They're just ordinary people living ordinary lives.

**Q: What are you hoping to accomplish in the next five years?**

**A:** I would like to continue to increase the inclusivity of people with disabilities in our community and to continue to grow the number of people with disabilities that are employed in our community – but mostly I would just like to continue to support people with DD and empower them to live their best lives.



## DSP Week is Sept. 10-16

Direct Support Professional Week runs Sept. 10-16.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are the people who work directly with people with a developmental disability. They work closely with the person, assisting them in realizing their strengths and assisting them in reaching their full potential. DSPs also help people become integrated into their community.

While similar to caregivers, DSPs focus more on teaching individuals with developmental disabilities how to do things for themselves, helping to create a greater sense of independence. If you're interested in a rewarding position, I encourage you to consider becoming a DSP or an independent provider. Contact our office and our team will connect you with the resources needed.



## That's a Lot of Popcorn!

We once again reached our annual mark of 8,000 bags of popcorn distributed at the Hancock County Fair.

Most shifts were working hard to keep up with the demand, but our volunteers were loving it! We love when we have the opportunity to connect with our neighbors! We're already looking forward to doing it again next year!

BVC provides resources and supports that empower people with DD to live lives with meaning and purpose.



**Blanchard Valley Center**  
Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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**Service & Support  
Emergency Number**  
419-722-9262

