



STARLIGHT

APRIL
2020

Kenny and Shane Loving Their Independent Lives

Kenny Livingston is no stranger to hard work and independence. He grew up working on a farm. He likes a big breakfast, his job, and the ability to come and go as he pleases.

This was in direct conflict with his previous living situation. Livingston, 54, who receives supports from Blanchard Valley Center, had moved in with housemates whose personalities were not a good match.

"Kenny didn't want people in his business," said his SSA, Terra Richarson. "He was adamant about his independence."

Kenny's sister purchased a Findlay home for him to help secure his independence. About a month after he moved in, he learned another man receiving supports from Blanchard Valley Center, Shane Picklesimer, 37, also was in a situation with a roommate that was not a good match.

Shane had 24-7 supports in the house and a roommate who required restrictive measures, which also restricted Shane's independence.

The two men met and a friendship was born.

"I don't know if we could have found a better match for

Shane," said Nicole Gunka, who is his SSA. "They have become fast friends."

The men have been a positive influence on each other. Shane had not previously worked. Kenny, however, was going off to his job at Texstone Industries four days a week. Shane now works three days a week at KanDu Production.

Both men had 24-7 support in their previous living situations. That is 336 hours of support a week. In their current home, support is provided just 39 hours a week.

"This is the picture-perfect situation," said Superintendent Kelli Grisham said. "You have two men living largely independent lives with minimal supports. They're happy and active in the community in which they live and work. That's what we want."



Shane, left, and Kenny on the porch of their home.

Voting Extended to April 28; Here's How to Vote Absentee

Because of the Covid-19 outbreak, the March 17 primary was delayed, with a deadline of April 28. The application deadline is April 25. You must have an application to vote.

You can vote at the Hancock County Board of Elections on April 28. However, the preferred method of voting for the Blanchard Valley Center renewal levy is by mail. You can request an absentee application at hancockcountyohioelections.gov. If you do not have a computer or cannot access an application, Blanchard Valley Center can supply you with one. To obtain an application, contact Nadine Weinger at 419.422.6387, ext. 1014.

To request an absentee application online, go to hancockcountyohioelections.gov:

- On the cover page, click on "Absentee Application"
- Print out the application to vote by mail and return it to the Hancock County Board of Elections, 201 E. Lincoln St. – Rear, Findlay, OH 45840.
- The Board of Elections will mail you a ballot with a prepaid envelope.

DATES TO REMEMBER | VISIT WWW.BLANCHARDVALLEY.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS

April 15 – 10 a.m.-noon
SSA & Provider Training

April 27 – 5:30 p.m.
Board Meeting

*All rec activities have been
canceled until further notice.*

NOTES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Working Together to Deliver Supports



Suffice it to say, these are extraordinary times.

In spite of the challenges we are all facing, our mission has not been diminished by COVID-19. We still have the responsibility of providing supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. We are using the resources that we have available and being as creative as possible, utilizing technology to work and support remotely.

Using resources to help providers stay on their feet.

I wanted to give a shout out to providers for their amazing collaboration and the unwavering care they provide to the people we support in Hancock County. We are proud of the comradery, but that is surpassed by their dedication to the people we support.

Our recognition of DD Awareness Month in March was cut short due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We had to cancel our annual Celebrity Basketball Game, the hot chocolate bars we had scheduled around town, and our reading of *Susan Laughs* to area schools. All Special Olympics events and activities have been suspended through April 30.

Blanchard Valley School will continue to follow Findlay City Schools' calendar for the remainder of the school year.

We will continue to provide updates and COVID-19 guidance on our website: www.blanchardvalley.org. Click on the "About" page.

Also, see the story on page one for information on how to register to vote. The Blanchard Valley Center renewal levy is on the ballot. You have until April 28 to vote.

Kelli Grisham, Superintendent



Addie Moothart and Lisa Oglesbee read *Susan Laughs* at Northview School.



Duo Graduate from Project STIR

Ben Wochele and Matthew LaFontaine recently graduated from Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility - Project STIR - following a three-day training in Athens. Project STIR provides the tools that allows individuals to advocate for themselves, mobilize others in advocacy, and gain leadership experience. Matthew and Ben learned to communicate assertively, solve problems, negotiate, and better understand their rights. Ben and Matthew are shown in the photo with Ali Weising-Pike, BVC's quality assurance manager, and Danielle Collins, BVC's community support coordinator.

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
 1700 E. Sandusky Street, Findlay, OH 45840
blanchardvalley.org

**Administration
 Number**
 419-422-6387

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