

Adair County SB40 Developmental Disability Board

Sean's Scoop!



Giving Thanks for a Community That Feels Like Family

As Thanksgiving approaches, I find myself reflecting on how fortunate we are to live in a community where people genuinely care for one another. Throughout Northeast Missouri, we see countless examples of neighbors, families, businesses, schools, and community organizations coming together to make a difference in the lives of others. At Adair County SB40, we are especially thankful for the individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who enrich our community through their friendships, talents, perspectives, and contributions. They remind us that everyone has something valuable to offer and that meaningful inclusion is about more than simply being present; it's about belonging. Some of the most meaningful examples of community aren't found in large programs or initiatives, but in simple acts of kindness and the relationships that grow from them. One wonderful example is a Thanksgiving tradition that began more than two decades ago.

Mike Hartman, Professional Development Coordinator with Chariton Valley Association/Center for Human Services, shared some about the origin and purpose of this annual tradition in our community:

“This year will be the 21st year of the Thanksgiving dinner. We will be expecting over 250 people to attend. A true representation of the entire community. The idea for this began with individuals who had no place to go for Thanksgiving. They had no family to be with. An LSP, Alicia Bass's daughter, who was at the Brashear schools at the time, thought that it was not fair that this occurred. She and her mom worked to get a few of the individuals we support to come together for Thanksgiving. The daughter, her friends and Alicia, prepared the meal. A few individuals came together and became each other's family for Thanksgiving. Every Thanksgiving after this, the group that came together got bigger. Each person that came would bring something, the ham, the turkey, noodles, pie, etc., to add to the meal. They were excited to have people taste what they cooked. The meal got to the point where they were not able to host it at one of the individuals homes. They moved to an apartment complex's multi-purpose room. When it moved to the complex, the group that got together decided to invite others in the complex, which opened it up to the community. It was amazing for the individual's to see others in the community, who were just like them. They mostly all didn't have family to be with during the Thanksgiving and just wanted to be around that family feeling. It was amazing to see people sitting around tables who were not related, eat, pray and tell stories like they were a family sitting around the Thanksgiving table. Eventually it outgrew the apartment complex and they moved to the CLC. It eventually outgrew that as well and they moved to Hamilton Street Baptist Church. Every year the students at Brashear school's student council come and serve the meal. Other partners

have include SB40, Colton's, Hopes Kitchen and Hy-Vee. There has also been help with serving over the years from fraternities, like Phi Beta Sigma, and members of churches. However, no matter how big it has gotten, the root of the dinner still revolve around people coming together to make one big community family.”

This Thanksgiving, I want to express my gratitude to the individuals and families we serve, our dedicated staff, provider partners, volunteers, and the many community members who continually demonstrate what inclusion and compassion look like in action. Our community is stronger because of the relationships we build, the opportunities we create for one another, and our willingness to make room for everyone.

Sometimes making a difference begins with something as simple as inviting someone to share a meal. Twenty-one years later, that invitation continues to remind us of something worth celebrating: when everyone has a place at the table, we all have something to be thankful for.

From all of us at Adair County SB40, Happy Thanksgiving!

Got Suggestions?

At Adair County SB40, we believe that listening is one of the most important ways we can continue to grow and improve. To help us better understand the needs of the people and families we serve, we have recently added a community suggestion box at our Community Learning Center at 1107 Country Club Drive and recently launched an online version through our Facebook page, which will be re-posted frequently. Whether you have an idea for a new program, feedback on existing services, suggestions for community partnerships, or ways we can better support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, we want to hear from you. Your feedback helps guide our efforts as we continue working to be a trusted resource and valued partner throughout Northeast Missouri.

Need Services?

Individuals with developmental disabilities may qualify for Targeted Case Management and other services. Our Service Coordinators help individuals identify needs, connect to resources, coordinate services, and monitor progress toward their goals.

To learn more, visit www.sb40life.org, call 660-665-9400, or scan the Intake Referral QR Code included with this article to get started.

