



## SIGN OF THE TIME

NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF TRANSITION DEPARTMENT

The Ohio School for the Deaf  
500 Morse Road, Columbus, Ohio 43214

### The 4PLUS Team



**Nancy Swisher,  
4PLUS Coordinator**

Hello, my name is Nancy Swisher and I am the 4PLUS Coordinator at the Ohio School for the Deaf. I would like to take this opportunity to share some information about myself and my job.

I have had the pleasure of

teaching Culinary Arts for the first 20 years of my employment at the Ohio School for the Deaf. I have been given the opportunity to coordinate the 4PLUS program and administer vocational assessments to students for the past 3 years. Often times, I am asked to give advice to other professionals in other school districts on assessments/placement of their deaf/hard of hearing students.

One of the components of my job is collaboration. I enjoy networking with other professionals in the field and sharing ideas. Partnering with dynamic people in specialized education is inspiring and their passion is magnetic. Exchanging ideas and expertise with other professionals is critical in validating that 4PLUS is providing the best services and best options for our students.

One of the biggest and most important factor that impact our students is selecting a career or a path out of high school. Helping students discover their interest and matching their abilities is challenging. The majority of students upon entering 4PLUS cannot describe who they are or their best skills and qualities. Teaching students to recognize their talents and skills leads to their self empowerment. It is exciting assisting students research a career, technical education or college.

Another component of the 4PLUS Coordinator's duty is observing students working on the job, either evaluating or job coaching, establishing job sites, interpreting, problem solving with the employer or just supporting the student. Teaching businesses

how to interact appropriately with people with disabilities is essential for a win-win scenario for the student and the business partnership. Working one on one with a student on independent living skills and teaching self-advocacy skills to 4PLUS students is our priority. Our independent living portion of our curriculum helps students become more familiar with vocabulary, resources and provides authentic living in our apartments on campus.

The State of Ohio and The Ohio School for the Deaf/4PLUS program is fortunate to offer real-world opportunities for those deaf and hard of hearing students who choose to postpone graduation to further their education and opportunities with a supportive environment. In reality, they are taking advantage of a great opportunity, utilizing resources and support services to assist them in achieving their potential for success.

The 4PLUS team consists of a few other members. I would like to introduce:



**Cindy Watt,  
Delaware Area Career  
Center Coordinator and  
4PLUS Transition Teacher**

I have been a teacher at the Ohio School for the Deaf in the Vocational/Career Technical Education area for 33 years. I served as

Vocational Department Chairperson during many of those. In that time, I have worked with high school students in Business Office Education, Yearbook and Work Experience and students of all grade

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levels in Technology Education. I have also been the coordinator/liaison for our students who attend Delaware Area Career Center.

This is my first year working with the 4Plus program. I have been working with the 4Plus students new to OSD, helping with their orientation to OSD, bus training, assisting in setting up internship placements, job coaching and career/work related education. I also am the teacher for the Level P students that participate in the work experience program.



**Sheri Uhrin,**  
Transition Services  
Coordinator

Hi Folks – I am the Transition Services Coordinator at the Ohio School for the Deaf. I work with those students who are 14 years and older in preparation for life after high school. I am a member of the

IEP team that helps create the transition plan for each and every student who is 14+ at OSD. I coordinate the transition activities on each of their plans. My hopes are to better prepare each and every student so they can lead a successful, productive life. I work very closely with the 4Plus program and am so excited about the opportunities it allows for our students who opt to utilize their educational rights in postponing their exit from secondary education. I assist with such things as referrals to adult agencies (BVR), planning or attending college while in HS or post HS. I plan the community awareness tours so that students learn about community resources that are available. I encourage self advocacy, decision making and real world experiences.

### The Ohio School for the Deaf Counseling Department

The Counseling Department is available to provide individual, group, and family counseling, as well as provide linkage with community resources when needed.



**4Plus  
Can  
Help!**

## Current Students

The 4 PLUS program added four students new to OSD this year. These students completed high school academic requirements in their home schools, and then joined OSD to further their training and experiences before accepting a diploma. Two of the new students applied to Delaware Area Career Center and were accepted in the Equine and Auto Essentials programs half day. The other two new students attend OSD during that time to improve their skills in English and Math.

The new students joined the regular dorm program at the beginning of the year. This placement allowed them time to successfully transition into OSD and learn school and dorm rules and various contact personnel. After successful observation, the students were moved to the independent 4Plus dorm.

The second half of the day, these students are involved in the intern work experience program at Ohio School for the Deaf. Students were trained on the COTA (public bus transportation) to go to work in a variety of placements in their individual career interest areas. Intern placements this year include Ohio School for the Deaf's cafeteria and Student Health Services and Ohio State School for Blind landscaping department. Off-campus placements include OhioHealth/Riverside Hospital, Pets Without Parents, Cat Welfare, Knapp Vet Hospital and Midwest Photo Exchange.

These students have had a very successful year and gained valuable experience with the support of the 4 PLUS program. Below are some of their comments on the program.

### Brian Ebie

I wanted to come to OSD and join 4 Plus to see how it felt to be out of my home town world. I have learned a lot of independent living skills like the COTA bus and different work experiences. I like being busy learning new things. I worked at OSD and also at Riverside Hospital. I will work at Wesley Glen soon. I learned cooking and making a menu and living myself on my own independently. I am learning about feeling safe out in the world. I feel more mature since I joined 4Plus. I am learning about how to make and achieve goals.



### Cody Hull

4Plus is a lot of fun. In the dorm I have fun playing games with friends, talking and using the VRS. I am

independent in the 4Plus dorm, so I can take a nap or watch TV or just rest. I have responsibilities like



clean the 4Plus room. The furniture is nice.

I attend Delaware Area Career Center half day. I am in Auto Essentials and learning auto skills such as changing oil, brakes, repairing the engine and changing a flat tire. I hope to work in the future

repairing autos.

I learned independent skills like riding the COTA bus and cooking. I learned that taking the bus means being prepared for rain and snow. I am learning how to cook healthy food.

After eating, we clean the kitchen, tables, and floor. We can also make snacks like pizza, which is fun. I feel more mature since being in 4Plus. I wake up early on my own and go to the cafeteria to wait for DACC transportation. When I return, I have lunch and then academic class to learn about English. Then I go to transition with the teachers to help get ready for work. It's important to have everything you need. I am learning how to keep a time sheet for my pay check every two weeks. This will help me in the future.

### Felix Rivera

I am learning about jobs in 4Plus. I also am learning skills like healthy food and cooking.

I have worked at Ohio School for the Deaf in the Clinic. I am also working at Riverside Hospital.

I am attending Delaware Area Career Center in the Auto Essentials program. I learning to fix cars. I like going to DACC. I learned to use the COTA bus and use it when I work off campus. I have learned a lot in 4Plus.



### Justin McCune

My goal for 4Plus is to continue to get the best of education for my future. I want to learn to be active and responsible about my career, job and future. I want to become a photographer, so I applied to Delaware Area Career Center. I hope to learn more in depth about the culture of photography. I



want to learn about photographing sports, weddings, etc.

I have learned independent living skills like taking the bus and making appointments on my own. One thing I realize is important is being responsible with my key. 4Plus has helped teach me about developing independence and maturity. I have learned a lot not only from my teachers here, but also from my deaf peers.

### Noelle Henricks

I wanted to join OSD 4Plus to take classes part time and work part time. I wanted to learn how to live independently and take care of myself.

I go half day to Delaware Area Career Center in the Equine Science program. I also have an English class at OSD and work part time. I like animals, so I am working at Cat Welfare and Knapp Veterinary Hospital. I also work at the Karl Road Library. I have learned a lot from work experience, cooking and living on my own. I live independently in the 4Plus dorm. I am responsible to wake myself up, follow my schedule for school and work, do some cooking and help with cleaning. 4Plus has helped me a lot with working, school, homework and being independent. I feel more mature since I have been in 4Plus.



## Alumni News . . .

### Duane Davis (4Plus 2009)

I think that Sheri U. teach me how to get ride of cota bus on right way.. and Nancy Swisher help me how I become independent apt.. like foods, doing something in the apt like clean living room and whatever in the apt... Beside I almost forget about Emily M. help me how budget for apt and bills too.. I think thats it..

OSD did help me with find a job. I did work at Best Buy three years ago but now I work at Ohio Valley Cable Services through BVR.



**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:****4 PLUS and the College Route:****Ariel Leavitt**

Ariel completed her high school graduation requirements in June 2010. As a first year 4Plus student, she immediately chose to enroll in Columbus State Community College (CSCC). In the Autumn Qtr; she took classes to meet the prerequisites to join the Nurse Aide Training Program. By the Winter Qtr, she had completed her prerequisites and started her Nurse Aide Training Program. As of Mid February, with assistance and support of BVR and 4Plus, Ariel has now completed the Nurse Aide Training program and is currently working with her team to assist her in obtaining work experience, and register for the STNA exam. Ariel has maintained her own apartment for the past year. Ariel receives personalized services to assist her with continuing to work on her goals to become a Nurse Aide. Other areas where the 4Plus program has assisted Ariel are: budgeting, i-transition workshops, work internships, guidance on how to obtain a drivers license, interpersonal communications with peers, adults and professionals. Applying, registering for college, and obtaining financial aid resources, filing taxes, and obtaining assistive devices/equipment.

**Ariel Leavitt . . .**

I joined the 4Plus program to learn more about life, real things that I would face and need to know how to handle in the future.

I joined CSCC to get the training I need to achieve my employment goal of a nurses aid. I really love it

and I am excited to learn more and I continue in the field.

4plus also helped me develop my independent living skills, how to take Public transportation, live on my own, waking myself up in the morning, filing out job applications, using the VP and communicating with others, assistance with taxes and learning how to work with adult services.

Before I came to OSD, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my life. After I went to OSD I learned that I like helping people and taking care of patients,

communicating and advising people. After I started going to college at CSCC, in my chosen field, I fell in love with the program, the people were amazing and friendly, my teacher taught me so much I didn't want the semester to end. I want to thank Nancy Swisher and Sheri Uhrin for helping me reach my first goal in my life. I've never been this happy before. I love my life!

**Nebeyat Mamay**

I have been in the 4PLUS program for two years now and I have learned so much overall the years such as living on my own as an independent woman away from my family. I have also learned

how to manage my money and save up for college or whatsoever for the future. I took a driving lesson and I PASSED! I have done made an appointment for myself often and request an interpreter if need without reliable on my parents.

My major is becoming an elementary instructor so I took the internship at Alice Cogswell Center for a year studying the preschool students how to develop their social, motor and communication language and how to connect with the students. I love instructing the students and I couldn't stop instruct! I have represented COSI for the high school students from OSD who wanted to volunteer there to develop their work skills and to instruct them about the work rules. COSI has awarded me to represent them. I am right now taking other internships at North Broadway Children's Center and Bright Horizons at Riverside. I also observe at the boys' dorm every morning and works in the middle school afterward observe the children at OSD. I am also CPR and First Aid certified. Those internships I have taken helped me to know which education I want to instruct.

I took some classes at OSD to improve my education and determined to drop all the classes go on Columbus State Community College for the spring quarter and I am so beyond excited.

The 4Plus program is just simply awesome; the program has helped me to develop my independence life and my maturity. They also reminded me that I have a support system outside

the world for my deaf rights before I leave the program to be on my own. I got to say I have grown a lot ever since joined the program. The 4Plus program is growing each day. The teachers are simply AWESOME. I don't regret joining the program.

**Kelsey Ramey**

I have been in the 4PLUS program starting the beginning of this year. Being in the 4PLUS program I live independently in the apartment for the girls. In the apartment I am responsible for myself. I cook and clean after myself and I help my roommates if needed. I do not have staff around me at all times so that gives me a little bit of freedom, however if I need staff for help or a problem then they are always there. Every day I wake myself up and get ready for my class at Delaware Area Career Center (DACC). I am in the Teacher Academy program, this is one of their toughest programs and it takes a lot of my time. I also work as a teacher's assistant for Jeff Jones and in the print shop for Jenni Cole every day. When the school day is over I go to my sports practice: volleyball, basketball and softball. The 4PLUS group has weekly meetings on Tuesdays. During those meetings we learn new things that have to deal with life. Also we make menus that we shop for the food Monday night at Kroger's and then on Tuesday night we cook and eat as a group. As part of my 4PLUS goals, I will learn how to use the COTA bus system this spring. Also I have learned how to register and withdraw from college classes.

I also am American Red Cross certified for Lifeguarding, CPR, First Aid and Water Safety. I have worked near my home, at the local YMCA as a lifeguard since I was 16. I am responsible to keep my certifications up to date. 4PLUS has really improved my life skills and I am glad that I joined. This fall I will be moving on to college, hopefully I will get accepted to the college that I want to go to. I plan on majoring in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. Then get a job at a hospital or a clinic doing ultrasounds.

**Suede Shannon**

I have experienced from 4PLUS everything from cooking and cleaning in the dorm. I feel proud about my job in the mailroom at the Ohio State University. In the mailroom, I work alone. I match the names to the different

departments. At OSU there are many, many names and departments.

**Daniel Crow**

I am learning about Delaware Area Career Center Auto Essential program and I learning about how to fix car. It fun to learning about fix car program.

I am work hard at Meijer utility person since 4 years and I work Meijer cleaning area and collect carts, empty trash, helping customer. I am want join 4+plus work part-time for internship for work it a lot of money it fun to earned money every two week help me in the future.

I have my own 2002 Ford Taurus SE color is Red since 2 year and now I got a 2006 Chevy Trailblazer 4x4 LS since 1 year then I buy a Dodge Ram 4x4 in this spring 2011!

I am cook with 4+Plus students independent about cook and drive go to work.





OHIO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF  
CENTER FOR OUTREACH SERVICES

My name is Tammy Wilcox and I am the Statewide Parent Mentor for the Center for Outreach Services at the Ohio School for the Deaf. I am pleased to have the opportunity to support the families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing across Ohio. I provide support and information to families regardless of choice of communication mode, including both visual and auditory methods.

Twenty-six years ago, I sat in the office of an Audiologist who delivered the news, "Your daughter has a profound sensorineural bilateral hearing loss. She will need to see an Otolaryngologist and we will need to get impressions to make ear molds for the hearing aids she will need. There are significant educational considerations as you raise this child. I suggest you speak to..."

This was certainly one of the moments of my life I will never forget. As the Audiologist spoke, his words began fading into the distance as I tried to absorb and understand what he was saying. I was in shock and my thoughts began racing. I suspected my daughter had a hearing loss, but I had no idea what any of this information meant. Who or what is an Otolaryngologist? Profound, sensorineural, significant educational considerations, what did this mean?

After the meeting, I went home and shared the news with my husband. I remember the emotional roller coaster we were on the days, weeks, and months following as we went through all of the steps of the grieving process. We were terrified! The only thing we knew for sure: we had a beautiful one-year old little girl who was depending on us to provide her with the best education and best life possible. Where did we begin?

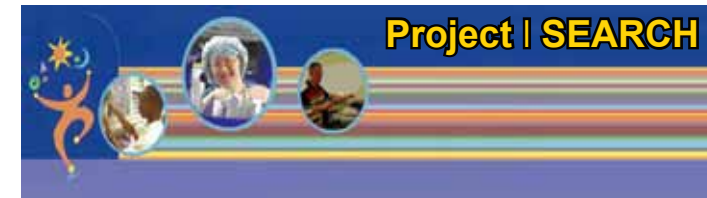
Parents and family members of deaf or hard of hearing children can certainly relate to how my personal journey began. Twenty-six years after I learned my daughter is deaf, I can tell them I understand what they are going through. Their journey may not always be easy, but with support and resources, families do get through the tough times. They can experience the journey with the knowledge and the tools to promote success for their child. Today, my daughter is married, has a job, and she is raising three beautiful children of her own; two of her children are deaf and hard of hearing.

As the Statewide Parent Mentor, my goal is to provide support as families navigate their child's education; to help them learn more about hearing loss and deafness, and to become a resource for their family. I can assist with the IEP (Individualized Education Plan), by explaining the IEP process and the parent's role in developing it. I can also provide support by attending IEP meetings upon request, recommending books and other resources, or listening when they need to talk. These are just a few of the ways I can support the families of deaf or hard of hearing children throughout Ohio.

For more information about Parent Mentor assistance, please feel free to contact me. Parent Mentor assistance can be provided on-site, by phone, email or videoconference. Services are provided at no cost to school districts or families.

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## News Briefs . . .



### Project SEARCH Program

4PLUS has also tapped into a program called Project Search. Project SEARCH provides employment and education opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community and workplace. One 4PLUS student participates in this program at The Ohio State University. This is in collaboration with the Educational Service Center of Ohio. The student works in a mailroom under the support of a Project Search teacher, job coach and an OSU mentor, along with their 4PLUS team. The ultimate goal for this 4PLUS student will be fulltime employment at The Ohio State University. The student will also seek assistance from 4PLUS in setting up and maintaining an apartment and independent living. Another Project Search program was recently developed through Delaware Area Career Center. DACC is working with Grady Hospital in providing actual work experiences for students.

### 4Plus Enrollment Update

The 2010-2011 Ohio School for the Deaf (OSD) 4PLUS program has increased its number of students from 9 of last year to 12. Seven students from the 2009/2010 school year exited the 4PLUS program in June 2010. Those students are successfully working, attending classes, or working with their area BVR counselors for employment. If you have any further questions about the 4PLUS program, please feel free to send us an email or phone via VP or voice.

Is **4**Plus **4u**?



The Ohio School for the Deaf 4 PLUS program has developed a cohesive foundation of partnerships in the community. Through these partnerships, the 4PLUS students are able to experience work, internships, enhance communication skills and develop a better understanding of work relationships. Here are some of our newest collaborations . . .



#### Riverside Methodist Hospital/Ohio Health

Marilyn Perrin, Coordinator, Disability Intern Programs  
Kudos to Marilyn and her team of professionals!

#### Pets without Parents

A nonprofit, no kill shelter for dogs and cats located in north Columbus



#### Bright Horizons Child Care Center

At Riverside Hospital in north Columbus

#### North Broadway Children's Center

At the North Broadway United Methodist Church in north Columbus



#### Midwest Photo Exchange

At 3313 N High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43202  
www.mpex.com

**There are many other businesses that continue to support the 4Plus program:**

#### Best Buy



#### COSI (Center of Science and Industry)



#### Ohio State University



#### Otterbein University

#### OVCS (Ohio Valley Cable Services)



#### Columbus Colony

#### DACC (Delaware Area Career Center)



#### CSCC (Columbus State Community College)



#### Wesley Glen Retirement Community



## Support Services

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Support services help our 4PLUS students in many ways. Listed below are some examples of the agencies and their benefits:

- Social Security: Government agency that has information about disability benefits:

[Website: www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

- Deaf Services: DSC is a central source of community services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing living in Ohio.

[Website: http://www.dsc.org/](http://www.dsc.org/)

- BVR:(Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation) is a state agency that works with people with disabilities in obtaining employment, the OSD transition department refers students to BVR the summer before their senior year.

[Website: http://www.rsc.state.oh.us/default.aspx](http://www.rsc.state.oh.us/default.aspx)

- COVA (Central Ohio Vocational Alternatives): A non-profit agency providing vocational rehabilitation and programs to assist disabled adults to become successful in the workplace.

[Website: http://www.cova.org/index.asp](http://www.cova.org/index.asp)

- MOBILE: Mid-Ohio Board for Independent Living: advocates for individuals with disabilities regarding accessibility issues.

[Website: www.mobileonline.org](http://www.mobileonline.org)

### Contact us . . .

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