



APSI hio

2024 Annual Report

WHO WE ARE

For over 40 years, APSI has served adults with developmental disabilities across Ohio through guardianship and other decision-making supports.

Our Mission

Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, which advocates for outcomes that promote dignity, respect, and enhanced quality of life for individual persons with developmental disabilities. Serving critical needs, one person at a time.

Our Services

Guardianship

- County probate courts appoint APSI to serve as guardian of the person, which means APSI makes decisions about where the person lives, what medical care they receive, and who will provide services to them. The court must first find the person to be incompetent based on a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the person's capacity to make decisions.
- APSI is available 24/7 to provide informed consent to meet the person's needs. Because APSI is appointed as the guardian, staff members other than the person's Protective Services Representative can provide consent at any time.
- In addition to full guardianship of the person, APSI may be appointed as a limited guardian, interim guardian, or emergency guardian of the person. APSI does not serve as guardian of the estate.

Alternatives to Guardianship

- When a person needs assistance with making decisions but does not need a full guardian, the person can make a voluntary agreement with APSI to provide this assistance. These alternatives to guardianship may include supported decision-making or acting as a chosen representative as part of the person's team.

Technical Assistance

- APSI is available to serve as a resource on guardianship, alternatives to guardianship, and advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities. This assistance can be provided to family members, professionals, and self-advocates, or anyone else with these questions.

LETTER FROM APSI LEADERSHIP

As we look back on another year of significant achievements at APSI, we are filled with pride and gratitude. We marked 40 years of unwavering service to adults with developmental disabilities across Ohio. This year's milestone has deepened our connection with our clients and highlighted our role in the community to advocate for and empower our clients.

This year's report highlights the stories of Vickie, Lisa, and Brant. Each has utilized supported decision-making to reach greater independence and lead lives filled with purpose and fulfillment. We are excited to share their journeys with you, as their successes represent the impact of our mission in action.

Moving forward, we are deeply committed to expanding awareness and education about supported decision-making across Ohio. This work involves engaging people with developmental disabilities, families, and a wide range of professionals to ensure they have the knowledge and tools to support autonomy and self-determination. We are dedicated to continuing our advocacy for APSI clients and others throughout the state so that each individual can live their best life and be empowered to pursue what truly matters to them.

The artist for this year's cover is Blaine Brockman, who led APSI's Board of Trustees for the past four years. We are grateful for Blaine's guidance, vision, and many other contributions to APSI throughout his board tenure.

Thank you for being a part of our community. Your support has made these achievements possible. We look forward to all we will accomplish together in the years ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Henry".

Kristen Henry,
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bradley Eberhard".

Bradley Eberhard,
Board President

VICKIE



In the 25 years that Vickie has been a client with APSI, her life has blossomed. According to her Protective Services Representative (PSR) Brad, she has grown into a vibrant, happy individual full of life and positivity. Brad, who has supported Vickie throughout her journey, shared, "She's always bubbly, always happy. She puts you in a good mood just by being around." Vickie's former PSRs, Jill and Kati, also remember her as someone with a big heart who is always willing to help others.

Her transformation hasn't been easy. Vickie faced difficulties with boundaries and independence in her previous residence, which was not a good fit for her. "She didn't get the opportunities she should have," Kati said. However, once Vickie moved into her current home, her life dramatically improved. "Now, she's dressing nicely, she's more independent, and she's taking better care of herself," Brad shared.



Living in a close-knit, supportive home environment has played a key role in Vickie's transformation. She started to take pride in her appearance and her home, often cooking and baking, helping around the house, and taking care of her roommates. "She loves helping her roommates and makes sure everything in the house is just right," Kati said.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Vickie's progress is

VICKIE

her newfound love for travel. Before moving into her current home, she had never flown on a plane or taken a vacation. Now, she's visited places like Nashville and Disney World and frequently talks about her trips. Vickie fondly remembers a trip to Myrtle Beach, "I love the water and walking on the beach," she said. "She's always talking about her trips and planning the next one," Brad added, highlighting just how much these new experiences mean to her.



Vickie's growing independence is a testament to her progress. As Kati noted, Vickie used to rely heavily on her support system for even the most basic decisions, but now she confidently advocates for herself. Vickie herself expressed how important it is to stand up for what she wants, saying, "You've got to do it yourself. No one else can do it for you." This confidence is a striking difference from her earlier years when she felt voiceless.

Thanks to the enduring support from APSI, her home staff, and most importantly, her own determination, Vickie has shown resilience, independence, and personal growth. "She's come a long way," Brad remarked. "Without APSI, she might not be where she is today. Now, she's in the best place she could be." Vickie agrees, stating how much she loves her home and the life she has built. "I'm glad I found my home," she said.



LISA

APSI client Lisa is known for two things: her art and her kindness. These qualities blend as she creates bespoke paintings and cards for the people she loves, for birthdays, holidays or simply just because.

"If you tell her a birthday or anything like that she immediately wants to know, 'what can I do to make your day more special?' So, that just kind of puts a smile on everybody's face," Lisa's Protective Services Representative (PSR) Keshia said.

After meeting Keshia just once, Lisa painted a portrait of her. The painting now hangs in Keshia's office as a constant reminder of why she advocates for her clients.

"But that right there, like I said, that did something to me, simply because we had only met once," Keshia explained.

Whether she's painting a portrait of her friend's dog, or a sparkling landscape featuring her day program staff, Lisa is always thinking about others. At her day program,



Lisa's art in APSI's Columbus office

ARC Bixby Center, her work is displayed nearly everywhere: in the halls, in staff's offices, and in activity rooms.

Lisa's art also adorns the walls of APSI's central office; in celebration of our 40th anniversary we purchased a painting from Lisa. She gladly used the funds from the sale to buy new art supplies.

"She's always looking to create something for someone... It's just her thing," Keshia said.

Keshia describes Lisa as a "natural leader" at Bixby, the Special Olympics, and throughout her whole life. At Bixby she uses her artistic know-how to help her peers during art activities, and during the Special Olympics she pairs up with newcomers to show them the ropes.



LISA

"She's very outgoing. Easy to chat with and in my opinion just awesome to be around," Keshia said.

Lisa has always supported others but struggled to advocate for herself in the past, until she met her prior PSR who encouraged her to voice her opinions with her team. And when Keshia became Lisa's rep, she inspired Lisa to further grow in her self-advocacy.

"Lisa had a lot of struggling with advocating for herself. She just kind of by default... felt like decisions were made for her," Keshia said. "She's very vocal now."

Keshia made herself available for regular phone calls so Lisa could really get to know her. Often, Lisa would call just to check that Keshia was doing well.



Lisa (right) with APSI representative Keshia (left)

"It's always for Lisa, about the other person. So, I always try to reassure her like 'I'm your person'," Keshia said.

As Lisa advocated for herself more, she set and achieved some amazing goals. She wanted to learn water aerobics, so she joined a class at her local recreation center. She wanted to attend a concert, so she saw Barry Manilow live. She wanted to go on vacation, so she took a trip to Hersheypark and Philadelphia with her long-time roommate and home staff.

"I see her being more fulfilled in her personal life, because she's accomplishing things that she always kind of felt like she couldn't do," Keshia said.

With the unwavering support of her staff and APSI reps, Lisa has built a fulfilling life of her own and APSI cannot wait to see what she does next!



BRANT

APSI client Brant is determined—determined to be as independent as possible. That is why he is working toward restoration, so he no longer needs a guardian to help him make decisions.

"I just want to be my own guardian, 'cause I know I can do it. I know there's gonna be obstacles, but still, nothing's got me down so far. Even in situations, I still get away from it, go through it, and still stay strong," Brant said.



When Brant first became an APSI client, he perceived guardianship as controlling and thought he had to get approval to live his life. But his Protective Services Representative (PSR) Gabby helped him understand that she is here to support him in reaching his goals, not to limit him.

"He was like, 'I need to ask your permission for everything.' I was like, 'Brant, the only thing I have to give you consent for is medical treatment and your services. You want to have a girl over, and I can't tell you no, that's your right,'" Gabby said.

With this support, Brant leads the full life he chooses; he enjoys bike riding, fishing with his friends, playing video games, and playing guitar. Living in his own apartment, Brant only needs minimal staffing, mainly to provide transportation for errands.

"He's as unique as everyone else, he's very independent," Gabby said.

Brant works at a Vocational Habilitation Program doing community service projects. A leader in his community, he was elected to be the president of the Membership Committee at a local social club for people with disabilities called Make A Way.

Ever since restoration was mentioned as a possibility, Brant has been making significant changes to work toward it. He can struggle with his mental health, but since he set his mind on restoration, Brant has taken full control, changing his medications to "as needed" or monthly injections, with Gabby's help.

"He's really been dedicated to this mission of being his own guardian. And you know, he's been

BRANT

making all of his appointments. He's been keeping all of his appointments. He's been taking his medications as prescribed. He's been going to work," Gabby said.

Brant and Gabby are also finding financial literacy resources and courses to equip Brant with the skills he needs to one day end his payee services.

His staff currently transports him where he wants to go, but Brant hopes to earn his driver's license to gain even more independence. However, on Brant's journey to drive, there was a roadblock: he had unaffordable court fines that inhibited him from getting his license.

Brant did not give up; he went to the courthouse, met with the judge, and they agreed to replace the fines with community service hours. He continues to complete his service hours, and once he does, he can get his license.

"He's a very strong self-advocate, but also a very strong advocate for others as well," Gabby said.

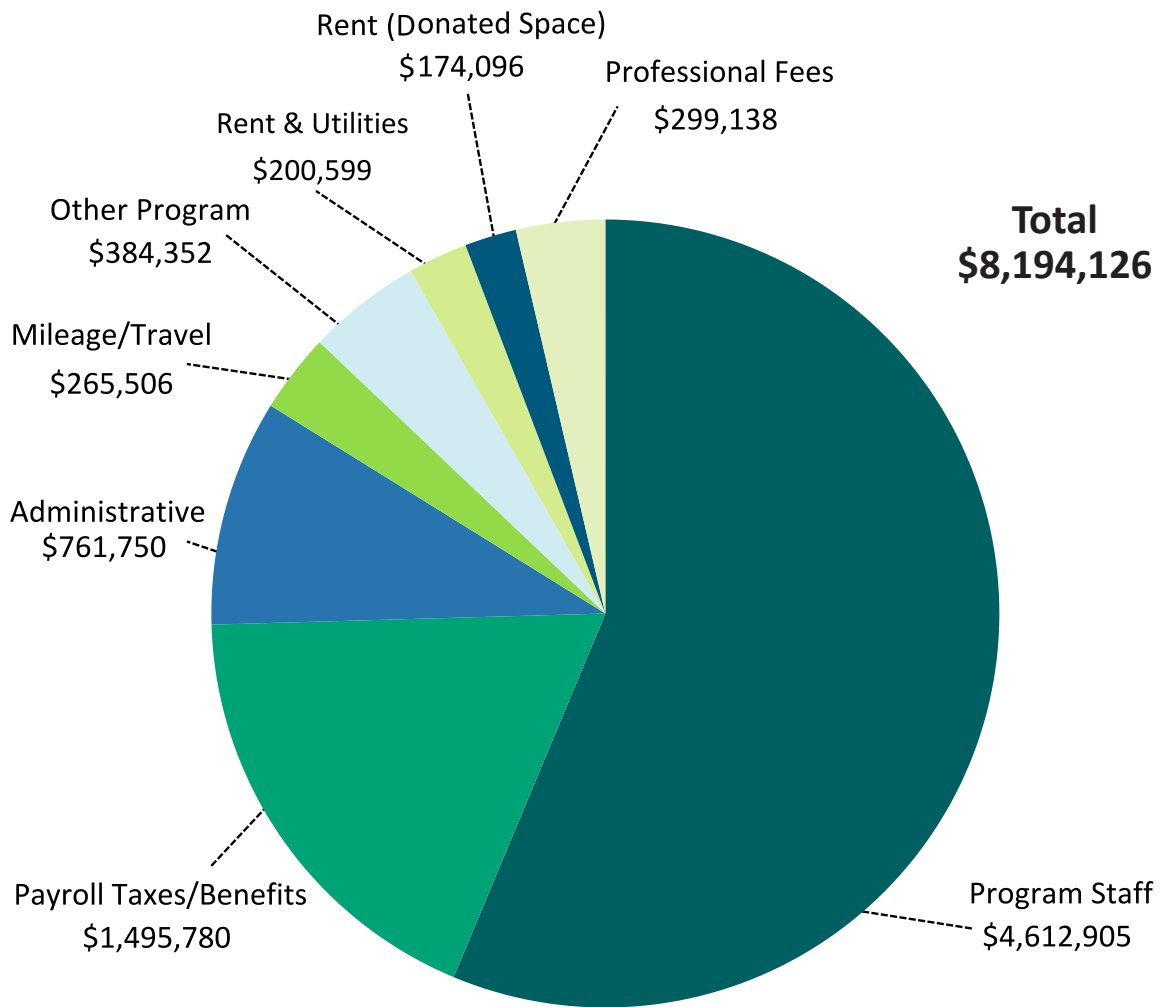
Through all his struggles and triumphs, Gabby has stood by Brant as a listening ear and a helpful hand. "She's always been there for me when I needed someone. If I needed some advice, she gave me advice. And she has just been a good friend to me," Brant said.

"My goal is to have power with you, not power over you. And so that's been my mantra since I started at APSI, and I've even had individuals recite it back to me," Gabby said.

With support from APSI, Brant continues his journey to restoration, and we cannot wait to see where it takes him.



EXPENSES



Our Board

Blaine Brockman,
Outgoing President

Bradley Eberhard,
Outgoing Vice President,
Incoming President

Alice Pavey,
Outgoing Treasurer,
Incoming Vice President

Nathan Griffin,
Secretary

Tonya Whitsett,
Incoming Treasurer

Erin Barker-Brown

Nancy Banks

John Cohen

Rebecca Dean

Sandy Dirkman

Tonnisha English-Amamoo

John Hauser

Margaret Hutzel

Darrion Mitchell

Roberta Montenegro

Marci Straughter

Rachel Ulbrich

Incoming Board Members:
Michael Denlinger II,
Jessica Roshon

LOOKING FORWARD

Focusing on Supported Decision-Making & Restoration

In November of 2023, APSI Protective Services Representative (PSR) Shirella, became the first to take on a brand-new role at APSI as the Intake and Services Coordinator. Shirella is dedicated to her role, helping clients navigate complex transitions with care and professionalism. "I love every part of what I do," Shirella shares. From the moment she receives a referral, she works diligently to understand each individual's needs. "What can APSI do to increase their satisfaction with life?" she reflects, highlighting her goal of making a meaningful impact and considering differences from person to person.

A significant part of Shirella's role is guiding clients through the restoration process—helping them regain independence due to no longer needing a legal guardian. This includes building the necessary skills and supports for them to eventually make decisions on their own. "We encourage self-determination by allowing clients to make as many decisions as possible while balancing dignity of risk," she explains. Whether it's discussing where a client wants to live or ensuring they feel heard about relationships, APSI is there to provide support every step of the way.

Even after the formal process ends, APSI remains a resource. "We're still just a phone call away," Shirella says, underscoring APSI's long-term commitment to clients. Her approach extends beyond paperwork—it's about building relationships and ensuring that every individual is treated with dignity.

Feedback from families and colleagues shows APSI's impact on communities and Shirella's role in getting people the right services for them. "When I send an acceptance letter, and I get a response like, 'Thank God,' it reminds me why this work is so important," she says. Through Shirella's thoughtful guidance, APSI clients in every stage of their journeys are shown respect and care for who they are and who they want to become.



2024 BY THE NUMBERS

3,175

Clients Served

9 Successor
Guardianships

456

Client Moves

20,590

Client Visits

Average
Caseload

47

136

Appointments to
Serve as Guardian

8,215

After-Hours Calls
Responded To

8 Clients Restored
to Competency

19,533 Consents

8,210

Service Consents

11,323

Medical Consents