

STAR BEACON

Ashtabula, Ohio

Dragon Empowerment Center receives state award

- From staff reports

Feb 9, 2020



Members of the Dragon Empowerment Center Advisory Committee and community partners received an Exemplary Program Award for the success of the Dragon Empowerment Center, which serves students from the Ashtabula Area City Schools. From left: Laura Jones, executive director of Leadership Ashtabula County; State Rep. John Patterson; Janice Warner, president of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies; Judith Barris, executive director of Ashtabula County Community Action; Carmen Kuula, director of Community Development Services for Ashtabula County Community Action; Superintendent Mark Potts and Paul Bolino, chief executive officer of Community Counseling.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

SAYBROOK TOWNSHIP — The Ashtabula County Community Action Agency received the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs Exemplary Program Award at Jan. 30 for the Dragon Empowerment Center (at the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies Legislative Conference).

The Dragon Empowerment Center, located in Huron Primary School, serves Ashtabula Area City school children and is a partnership of the Ashtabula Area City Schools, Community Action and host of other community organizations.

An “Exemplary Program” is a designation awarded to programs operated within Ohio’s Community Action Network that have been expertly evaluated and determined to be innovative and creative anti-poverty programs and initiatives. Each awardee is recognized for successful development and implementation of the program or initiative, and for demonstrating outstanding results and outcomes.

The DEC has served 156 students since opening late last year. Many of the students increased their attendance, increased their reading scores and increased their scores in math. In addition, students received vision services, dental exams and fillings and clothing from donations.

Superintendent Mark Potts thanked Community Action, as well as to Community Counseling, Cleveland Dental Institute, Ashtabula County Medical Center, Wal-Mart, Care Source, After School Discovery, the Community Development Corporation, local churches and others for their support.

“The biggest thank you should probably go to Jennifer Bunnell for her efforts to coordinate the services and make it all work, and I would be remiss not to mention April Tapper from AACCS who has been integral to this project from its inception,” Potts said.

Ashtabula County Community Action Agency program awarded by Community Action Association and Ohio University's Voinovich School

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Feb. 12, 2020) – The Dragon Empowerment Center program, coordinated by the Ashtabula County Community Action Agency, was honored by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies as an exemplary program at the 2020 Winter Legislative Conference on Jan. 30 in Columbus.

"All children should have the chance to come to school ready-to-learn," said Judith Barris, Executive Director, ACCAA. "We know that sometimes families need a little help meeting their basic needs. The Dragon Empowerment Center provides wrap around supports and connections to resources that help meet those needs, so that all students, families and the community can be more successful."

The Dragon Empowerment Center connects schools with communities to provide valuable services to students, parents and teachers. In addition to traditional educational services, the schools provide food distributions, basic healthcare provision, tutoring, mental health services and a variety of workshops. All services are located on school grounds, removing barriers to resource access faced by struggling families in the school district.

"Community Action Agencies throughout Ohio are developing programs that help their entire communities," said Philip E. Cole, executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. "We are proud to work with Ohio University to evaluate the best of the best and qualify them as 'exemplary.' The programs selected for this award truly shine and can serve as a model for other agencies who may face similar challenges in their communities."

The Dragon Empowerment Center was one of three honorees awarded during the conference, with nearly 300 Community Action partners, professionals, vendors, and elected officials in attendance. The OACAA works with over 1,000 agencies across the country in order to strengthen a unified Community Action presence in Ohio. The OACAA and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs collaborated to determine the winners, as they work to strengthen community action presence in Ohio.

###

PHOTO: Ashtabula CCAA_Exemplary 2019.jpg - "Representatives from the Ashtabula County Community Action Agency accept their top program award from the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies and Ohio University's Voinovich School on Jan. 30 in Columbus."