

### The Ashtabula Transformation

As we move into our 20<sup>th</sup> year of service to this community, After School Discovery is aiming higher. In the years ahead, we will work to help Ashtabula County pursue and attain distinction as one of the best places in the country to live, work, raise a family, and be engaged in a thriving community.

More specifically, After School Discovery seeks to distinguish Ashtabula County as one of the best working models of education and development in the United States – utilizing a Community Learning System to prepare individuals for sustained success through school and life. The measures we use to gauge success are:

1. Individuals in the County have each qualified for, enrolled in, and completed post-secondary education, training, and apprenticeships necessary for Individuals to become meaningfully and gainfully employed in a field of sustained interest, with promise of growth and advancement.

2. Individuals are fully integrated and positive contributors within their communities – their family, their neighborhoods, their circles of faith and friends, and all scales of sovereign municipalities – city, township, county, state, country.

Many of the elements and

commitments necessary to achieve these goals are already in place. After School Discovery is establishing a working collaboration that includes: agencies, businesses, school districts, and individual participants into a mutually-supportive and inter-connected Community Learning System.

In simpler terms, we believe education needs to address disciplines we know to be necessary to succeed and that the community has a responsibility and an incentive to assure that everyone has access to the learning they need.

Stay tuned!

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### In the Works - Ashtabula Showcase Theatre



Late in 2014, After School Discovery helped organize a community effort to save the Historic Shea's Theater from the wrecking ball. A new organization

was formed – the Ashtabula Cultural Trust – with the purpose of protecting, restoring, and sustainably re-purposing assets of historic and cultural importance for the benefit of all residents of Ashtabula County and our visitors.

The Ashtabula Cultural Trust will take deed to the Shea's Theater properties early this year, with plans to re-open in stages, beginning with some operations as early as September 2015. The Master Plan calls for the facility to be a showcase of the best that Ashtabula has to offer—and a gathering place to celebrate it. More specifically, the Ashtabula Showcase District will include:

- Three different places to learn about and sample NE Ohio Foods, Beverages and Spirits.
- A micro-Enterprise Center that hosts emerging organizations with missions to enhance the quality of life in

Ashtabula County and beyond - enabling cost-effective sharing of resources, expenses, and ideas - as each builds momentum to grow and expand in the years ahead.

- A Launch Site for Ashtabula Interpretive Adventures, by foot, bicycle, motorcycle, automobile, or RV.
- and An Adventure Planning Center enabling each adventure to be scouted in advance with the help of online tools and local volunteers.

In all aspects of re-imagining, design, construction and operation, we will integrate opportunities for learning - for students of all ages and backgrounds.

After School Discovery has a mission to promote Life-long Learning, and this creates an opportunity for people - at any stage of life - to learn.

If you are interested in more information or helping in this project, please contact Rich Recker at 440-993-1060.



My brother Mark died of brain cancer in July 2014. He was 57 years old and was the one who had lived the clean, healthy life my mother wanted of both of us. There have been other times and incidents in my life that caused profound reflection. My brother's fight and loss reinforced a common theme:

*Human life is short and can end with little or no warning. Have no fear of doing what you know to be right – and do it with a sense of urgency.*

I suggest that less than 5% of the

people in any community anywhere in the world are getting sufficient preparation for success through life. I know that number to be accurate in my home town of Portland, Oregon and the neighborhoods that feed into Ashtabula Area City Schools – where After School Discovery has concentrated efforts most recently.

That is precisely why – even knowing my brother had just a year to live – I moved to Ashtabula County. I saw that this place had the intuitive understanding, sense of urgency and talent to set a new standard for how a community prepares young people for adulthood. This issue of our newsletter, the mail you've recently received from After School Discovery, and mail you're likely to receive from us in the future - will carry an ongoing theme of TRANSFORMATION.

I know in my heart [and brain] that transforming the way Ashtabula

prepares our young people is overwhelmingly the best investment that can be made today. We'll make the case for that in greater detail in the coming months. It is exciting to have recruited and partnered with so many individuals and organizations over the past year – and to be ready to begin launching, testing, refining and expanding this new approach.

If you get a phone call, a letter or a strange look from me in public, you may as well respond with interest and support right away, because my big brother taught me a lesson last year. Life can end with little or no warning – and doing this work will enable us all to have no regrets whenever it arrives for us. I will be tenacious.

Thanks in advance for helping however, whenever, and wherever you can.

RR

## Ashtabula Works Partnership

Ashtabula Works is a county-wide initiative aimed to strengthen public education efforts with the direct and meaningful involvement from business and organizational professionals from the area. The Ashtabula Area City Schools Business Advisory Committee launched the effort in 2012 and participation has been substantial. Ashtabula Works is currently chaired by City Manager Jim Timonere and has active involvement from Ashtabula County Chambers of Commerce, Ashtabula County Growth Partnership, A-Tech, and LEADERShip Ashtabula.

After School Discovery has been involved with Ashtabula Works since its' inception, and has approached the Works group to embark on a pilot project for the County as a part of the Transformation Campaign. At the heart of our proposal is to add personnel to help coordinate the

interaction between the school staff and the volunteer professionals. A part of that work is speaking two languages – School Teacher and Business Person. Our approach helps assure the Business volunteer's work is aligned with specific and developmentally appropriate learning objectives for the educator – and to provide coordination support for the business volunteer to help at times or in the way that fits within their schedule. For some, that will mean producing their lesson plan on video and making it available to teachers to use whenever it is convenient to them – and as often as they like.

Ultimately, we hope to expand the level of volunteerism by an order of magnitude and make sure that the volunteer experience adds value and is meaningful to the students, the teachers and the volunteer.



Ashtabula Works is an open membership group. Meetings are held several times each year. For information about becoming involved, please contact Rich Recker at 440-993-1060.

Club 212 was originated through a grant from the US Department of Education as a part of their 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center Program. Partnering with Lakeside Junior High [AACS], Club 212 is mid-way through the 5<sup>th</sup> and final year of the initial grant. The experience has created momentum for hundreds of students who needed to gain traction in school in different ways and build momentum for success in high school and beyond.

Fittingly, the Fall Season was filled with programs [chosen by students] that have earned a reputation for quality, rigor and passion. Programs “kicked off” early this year, featuring Homework Club for Fall and Winter Athletes to pay extra attention to school work before their practice or games began.

The Showcase – a session-ending display of the work of students – was an excellent reflection of the program’s impact in many other disciplines:

Susan Powers, a nationally-recognized expert in fashion history, has been Fashion Club Program Advisor and worked with students to research,



design, fabricate – and then model clothes representing different eras and cultures. Her approach is indicative of After School Discovery’s method – providing experiences that blend a variety of disciplines, including: academics, arts, wellness and service learning. The results are improved focus during the school day, life-altering personal experiences, team-work, and – of course – FUN!

First year Club 212 Program Co-Directors, Debra VanGorder and Stacy Gancos expertly facilitated student clubs, *Cooking, Glee Club,*

*FUNDamentals of Art, Fashion Design, Discovery Strings, STEM Club, TECHNO Club, Recess Club, Yoga Club and Martial Arts Club.* Through the five year span at Lakeside, Club 212 helped to fill a need for more diverse after school options and helped refine the approach that enhanced core academics in the stride of the activities. This experience will form the way Ashtabula Area City School approaches after school enrichment programming in the years ahead.

## Strive for Success = Success!

Strive for Success expanded in 2014, creating opportunity for students to enhance their academic performance early in their school career, and experiencing enrichment activity options to expand their personal horizons and perspective.

Demand for the program was far higher than expected, an encouraging statement about what Ashtabula City School parents want for their kids development. Over 275 students participated in the Fall, and a second group will have their chance later this Winter – enabling all who expressed interest to get an opportunity to participate.



Martial Arts, Steel Drum, Drama, Basketball, and soccer were all popular with students – and created an opportunity for local experts to plug in to the schools and connect to the learning process as instructors.

Ashtabula Schools has valued the program highly, recognizing demonstrated improvement in school work and behavior from the students who have been participating.





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[www.afterschooldiscovery.com](http://www.afterschooldiscovery.com)

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## North Kingsville Library Program

After School Discovery's roots were county-wide programming for the Gifted & Talented students, and the coming era will see impacts throughout the County once again to the places that need it most.

The connection to Buckeye Schools in partnership with the North Kingsville Library and in support with the Oleta & Joel Swaney Learning Enrichment Fund is a model program for the next phase. The resources of Buckeye School District and the Kingsville Library enable a high-quality after-school program – concentrating on Enrichment Activities, and hosted by the Library facility.

Conversation is actively underway to build the Discovery presence in the

Buckeye District, building on our history of success with great partners.



*Jim Fuller leading a group of fourth and fifth grade students in learning how to master playing the steel drum.*

## New Board Members

After School Discovery welcomes three new Board Members in support of the NEXT 20 years\*:



**Bryce Heinbaugh** describes himself as 'Troublemaker' as a youngster and credits

enrichment programs – and the adults he connected with supporting after school programs as a key reason why he made good choices in tough times. Bryce operates several businesses, ranging from high-end audio equipment installations, outdoor equipment retail sales – and his [third] full-time gig is as an insurance broker, helping organizations provide excellent benefits to their staff as a part of maintaining a cost-effective operation.

Reverend **Michael Meranda** is a well-known face in Ashtabula and his record of activism is just as prominent. Pastor Meranda has been heading up the faith community at Messiah Lutheran since 2008. He's led flocks into acts



of goodness in Portland, OR, St. Paul, MN, Wassau, WI and Vancouver, WA. He holds other Board roles with Samaritan House Homeless Shelter, Ashtabula County Community Action, Goodwill Industries, Mental Health & Recovery Services and the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association. Quietly and modestly, he's also been a financial management rudder in many different organizations – strengthening and sometimes saving spreadsheets AND souls.

**Chris Seuffert** is also well-known in the community for her role as a teacher and past School Board Member with Ashtabula Area City Schools. She adds to the Academic IQ of After School Discovery – balanced with her own private sector experience. Chris is already playing key roles in assembling the multi-agency collaboration needed for the Transformation initiatives and positioning the work to build public interest, support – and ultimately – investment.



\*-Board Member terms are NOT 20 years, but the work our Board Members do during their term will impact Ashtabula for at least that long.

## Annual Appeal Update

NOW IS THE TIME & YOU can help!

The Robert S Morrison Foundation has given After School Discovery the opportunity to receive \$20,000 in a challenge match donation, for which we thank them for their belief in the future of ASD.

We have received \$10,000 in donations to date, so have

earned half of this challenge and need everyone's help to reach the goal of \$20,000 to maximize this opportunity. Donations can be sent to ASD, Post Office Box 113, Ashtabula, OH 44005-0113 or you can call the office and put the donation on your credit card.

Help us reach our goal!

## Kinder Cove + Kindergarten = A Full Day of Kindergarten

Kinder Cove continues to offer the opportunity for growth in our Kindergarten students. Kinder Cove offers academics, social skills, art, music, physical fitness and all the important skills of 5 and 6 year olds!

Last month Kinder Cove had several visitors to open some new windows of enrichment. Ms. Barb from the Ashtabula County Library visited, and then two college students visited to share their experiences in opera and piano performance. The girls read a book about "Opera Mouse", then gave a short performance of their skills, and ended with a sing along with the students.

Several visitors are expected with some new surprises for this next month.



## Discovery Cove



Discovery Cove has added enrichment to their mornings! This fall semester, Discovery Cove offered a variety of "specials" to their morning first through third grade students.

Students were offered Reader's Theater to sharpen their reading fluency in a fun and interactive way, soccer skills to get their blood flowing and channel early energy.

Art was also offered – using the medium of clay to make a Tea-set centered around the book Miss Spider's Tea Party. Later in the fall, additional activities were offered including CATCH (a fun

fitness program) and a creative drawing class. In December, the students were immersed in The Nutcracker and creating Matroscha dolls in the image of the characters.

No registration or extra fee for these classes is required, your Discovery Cove fee includes these additional enrichments!

Future classes will include a return of CATCH, soccer (indoor) and reader's theater, and an addition of keyboarding, steel drums and more visual art offerings. Please watch for announcements regarding dates and times in the New Year!

## Summer of Discovery

2014 River of Many Fish – A Summer of Discovery was a scaled [pun noted] approach to Summer Learning that Discovery is seeking to expand significantly in 2015.

Data is clear that summer learning is perhaps the single most important tactic we can use to improve student achievement. Students without strong summer program options experience two months of 'Learning Loss' for every three months out of school. This 'Loss' is aggregate, so pushes students being an additional two weeks each summer for many students. For many, this statistic is the clearest example of why students fall behind, get discouraged and fail to graduate or graduate on time.

Summer of Discovery also represents an opportunity to test nearly every aspect of what we envision to become **Ashtabula Assurance**, a multi-year curricular program that advances participants through according to their accomplishments in life experiences, skill development, community service, and work experience. A digital application connected to OhioMeansJobs and other educational resources enable learning to happen anytime, anywhere and according to student interests and career pathways.

Watch for updates about Summer of Discovery 2015 - we believe it will become an important part of Ashtabula culture, engaging many within the community in both teaching and learning.



*Students parading during the TABS festival during the 2014 Summer of Discovery Program.*



## Celebrating 20 years of service to Ashtabula County

After School Discovery, Inc.

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