



JEFFERSON COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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OhioRISE offers resources at OUE job fair

ST. CLAIRSVILLE – OhioRISE can help young people get where they want to go, and the program got the word out to Belmont County’s high school students during the first Roadmap to Transition Fair at Ohio University Eastern Oct. 8.

Jefferson County Educational Service Center (JCESC) OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence) is a Medicaid managed care program for children and youth with complex behavioral health and multisystem needs in Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Jefferson, Monroe, Stark and Tuscarawas Counties and operated by the Jefferson County Educational Service Center. OhioRISE was formed to coordinate resources and put families in touch with what is available.

According to organizers with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, about 400 students with individualized education plans from every district in Belmont County attended. OhioRISE care coordinator Vicky Filtz was on-hand to speak with teachers and students. Some students also took the lead, spoke to Filtz about their needs and took information to show their families.

“It was a great opportunity to expose the students to what OhioRISE has to offer them if they have behavioral health needs. I even spoke to some about career options and working with their communities and helping folks in the capacity of a care coordinator and what that looks like, so they can think about that as an option as they move forward with their post-secondary education plans,” she said, adding OhioRISE care coordinators make an impression.

“There were a couple kiddos who said they would like to do that because they at one point had needed help and they had that person to support them, and they would like to turn that around and bring that full circle and be the support for someone else.”

Word is spreading about the two-year-old program.

“A lot of the intervention folks that I spoke to here were familiar with OhioRISE, which is really encouraging to know that we’re getting our name out. We’re available to them. They know how to reach us, and they are reaching us whenever they have students in need.”

Intervention Specialist Johanna Vincenzo of Bridgeport Exempted Village School District had a productive conversation with OhioRISE.

“It’s really good to know we have those resources here in our backyard here in the Valley. That way we’re able as a school to direct kids as they’re coming through our transition program to the right resources that they might need.” The Bridgeport district is now hosting an OhioRISE office on campus. Fred Ray, another intervention specialist, praised OhioRISE and the partnership.

“OhioRISE is a great program, especially for our district. Sometimes we have kids in need and families in need and OhioRISE is able to provide,” he said.

“Our connection with OhioRISE and them actually being in our district in Bridgeport is very beneficial to lots of intervention specialists in our district, and definitely to our students and our families,” Ray said. He recalled one example when families had lost employment and OhioRISE assisted with finding funding for utility bills or school supplies.

“Especially if a kid is struggling,” he said. “Whatever they need, OhioRISE just provides for our district and it’s really helpful for us and our district for them actually to be in our building.”

Union Local Middle School paraprofessional Mickie Fluharty was also interested.

“There’s probably a big need for this in the community. Anything to help take down barriers that children or young adults have, that’s very much needed in the area,” she said. “There’s a lot of resources here.”

Shadyside Local Schools Intervention Specialist Michelle Sheets said the program sounded like an important source of support.

“I want to look at some of their paperwork and figure out what they do and help with the community and help our students.”

Special Education Director Bethany Lucas of Martins Ferry City Schools District also spoke with OhioRISE. “I definitely think they would benefit our students,” she said. “We do have some students already who have been involved in this, and I’ve worked with them in the past.”

OhioRISE was invited by the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. Ohio Transition Support Partnership Counselor Kiersten Mitchell with OOD became familiar with OhioRISE as they worked together on individualized education plans and talked about different resources they could provide. Mitchell has met with OhioRISE staff to strengthen community contacts and raise awareness of the program and what it can offer. Mitchell also had some prior experience with OhioRISE through her background in children’s services. She said the program impressed. “OhioRISE, they really stepped up to the plate in helping with that case management or coordination of services on families,” she said.

“It’s beneficial to bring them to the conversation. That’s half the battle of working in the community with resources: knowing what all exists and the benefit of using all of these resources. The more people we can invite, the better, and I’m happy they can make it today.”

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Sean Ragsdale said participants like OhioRISE make an impact on students’ lives.

“We appreciate OhioRISE participating in the provider fair this year. The goal is to help the students to be able to see what services are here in the community,” he said. “What that does is help them to develop their self-advocacy skills. They know that there’s other players like OhioRISE that can be there in their court.”

Superintendent and CEO Gloria Llewellyn of the Belmont, Harrison and Noble County Boards of Developmental Disabilities said it is critical for students to know what is available as they transition to adulthood.

“We wanted students to be able to have connections with all available services and supports in our community. OhioRISE was a natural fit, because they offer connections to behavioral health services and all of our other service providers.”

To learn more about OhioRISE, call 740-792-4011, email ohiorise.info@jcsc.org or visit OhioRISE online at <https://www.jcsc.k12.oh.us/CareManagementEntity.aspx>

Photo Cutline:

OhioRISE care coordinator Vicky Filtz shares what the program has to offer in connecting young people with the resources they need during the Roadmap to Transition Fair at Ohio University Eastern. High school students with individualized education plans came from across Belmont County to learn about opportunities on offer.

