

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



**People First
of Ohio**



March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

By Quinn Thomas

March has been the United States' National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month all the way back since 1987. This is a time for awareness, education, and compassion. You can connect with others and hear their stories using #DDAwareness2022, or even share your own. Your words are worth hearing.

How can you observe this month? You might want to advocate for yourself and tell others how you would like to be treated. You might want to learn more about developmental disabilities and the rights of people who have them. You might want to simply connect with and hear from others.

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One big concern during this month is accessibility and inclusion. There are lots of ways that everyone can be more inclusive. Many people think accessibility has to be big things like designing buildings, but it can be something as small as turning on subtitles, offering sound-cancelling headphones, or using a dyslexic-friendly font.

If you want to do something big for this month, you could learn a few signs from American Sign Language. Make sure events you have planned are wheelchair accessible and not overwhelming to the senses, or full of flashing lights and loud sounds. Talk to other people who have developmental disabilities. Ask what would be helpful to them.

PERSON FIRST	IDENTITY FIRST
A person with a disability	A disabled person
A man with dyslexia	A dyslexic man
A woman with autism	An autistic woman

Another big issue is person-first language. Not everyone within the community agrees on this. Person-first language is where you mention the person first and any details about their disability second. The opposite of this is called identity-first language. Identity-first language describes a person as disabled.

Person-first language tends to be preferred by people who don't want to be defined by their disability. Identity-first language is mostly used by people who want their disability acknowledged, or even take pride in it as part of their identity. Not everyone is or can be proud of their disability, though. Always ask someone how they would like to be referred to.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Join our People First meeting! It's open to everyone over Zoom on March 17th from 6:00-8:00 pm. This month will feature two guest speakers from the Special Olympics.

Another local advocacy organization is SALUTE, run by Lucas County. Separately, the monthly Super Saturday Dance will be on March 12th from 7:00-9:00 at Five Lakes Church.