

**APSI (Advocacy & Protective Services Inc.) Annual Report 2023**

Front cover page

40

YEARS

Serving critical needs,  
one person at a time.

APSI Ohio

2023 Annual Report

## **Who We Are**

Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc. (APSI) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the rights of Ohioans with developmental disabilities. We advocate for the people we serve by helping to make their desires and needs known, especially when they cannot speak for themselves or if they have no other advocate. We do this by providing a full array of guardianship and protective services to individuals age 18 or older. Although APSI provides advocacy and protective services to assist individuals with minimal, moderate, and intensive needs, APSI specializes in serving clients with the highest level of needs, primarily through guardianship.

## **Our Mission**

Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc. is an independent organization, which advocates for outcomes that promote dignity, respect, and enhanced quality of life for individual persons with developmental disabilities.

## **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.

### **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 on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities. This assistance can be

provided to family members, professionals, self-advocates, or anyone else with these questions.

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## **Letter from APSI Leadership**

For the past 40 years, APSI has advocated for individuals with developmental disabilities throughout Ohio to ensure that they have the support they need to live their best lives. APSI has been a constant for our clients for these 40 years, serving their critical needs, one person at a time.

This report encapsulates not only APSI's impact this year, but also over the past four decades as we have served thousands of Ohioans with developmental disabilities. These accomplishments have been achieved through a partnership with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, county probate courts, county boards of developmental disabilities, providers, families, advocates, our board of trustees, and the many other supporters who share our goal of enhancing the quality of life of each individual we serve.

With your support, the future is bright as we serve our clients for the next 40 years and beyond!

Begin image

Photo of APSI Executive Director Kristen Henry smiling at the camera, a green and blue gradient behind her.

End image

Kristen Henry

Executive Director

Begin image

Photo of APSI Board President Blaine Brockman smiling at the camera, a green and blue gradient behind him.

End image

Blaine Brockman

Board President

## Ralph

Ralph has been with APSI since the organization was founded in 1983, 40 years ago. Then, Ralph was 30 years old, today he is a retiree of 70, looking forward to his 71st birthday in January. As we ring in APSI's 40th anniversary we also ring in Ralph's. Just like APSI, Ralph has changed over the years.

Angie, one of Ralph's four APSI Protective Services Representatives (PSRs) from over the years says he "has never met a stranger—he's a real delight to be around." Proof of this are the many persistent relationships he's formed. Ralph is surrounded by friendship whether it be his girlfriend of 18 years who he loves to go out to dinner with, his roommate Tim, friends he plays cards with at his day program or his long-standing house manager, Carol. Free, Ralph's current PSR, met him at the beginning of this year and was charmed from the start;

"He just enjoys life. And I think that's a great motto that I kind of took, life is short, enjoy the small blessings that you have. And I think that's what he does."

With his APSI PSRs and his devoted team, Ralph has set and completed many goals over the years. He wanted to interact with the community, and he does. He wanted to join a bowling league, so he did. He wanted more unsupervised time, so he worked toward it.

Ralph is now retired but has always been a hard worker. He worked as a dedicated custodian for many years prior to retirement. Emily, another of Ralph's past PSRs says, "He is very proud of the work that he does... earning his own money has been something that is very important to him." Ralph still has his work ethic and helps his day program with waste management and pitches in with his staff at home when he can.

Although he's retired, Ralph's not slowing down. He goes on trips with his day program often and recently went to a glass blowing class where he made his own art piece. Ralph is a big Ohio sports fan; the Guardians and the Buckeyes are his favorites. His house manager's husband prints off the teams' schedules for him, so he never misses a game. Recently Ralph got to attend a Toledo Mud Hens baseball game and enjoy some snacks at the stadium.

Ralph's behavior in the past led to restrictions, but through APSI's consistent presence, he was able to overcome them. "He's been somebody who's worked very hard to get where he is today. And that really shows great motivation and determination," Emily says. APSI's continued role with Ralph has allowed him to find a home that is right for him, as he had less than ideal housing in the past. Angie, Ralph's former PSR, says, "Longevity can just be such a positive thing in somebody's life. It doesn't mean that he's been restricted for 40 years, it means he's been

supported for 40 years in reaching the goals that he wanted to get to be the person he is today.”

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## **Disability Milestones**

### **1980s**

**In the 190s, there were four critical developments in the public understanding of developmental disabilities:**

1. Recognition that the lack of accessibility in public spaces keeps people with disabilities from being a part of society.
2. A change in the understanding of what people with more significant needs can do.
3. People with developmental disabilities often need and have an inherent right to support plans and services.
4. The developmental period is extended back to conception and forward to age 22.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

APSI currently serves 409 people who have been clients since 1983!

### **1990**

#### **Passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA extended civil rights protections to people with disabilities, including the right to accommodations and modifications, and protection from discrimination in employment and services in the public and private sectors. The ADA’s definition of disability built on the definition used for developmental disabilities, but applied it more broadly.

### **1999**

#### **Olmstead v. L.C. and E.W.**

The most important civil rights decision for people with disabilities in U.S. history. Olmstead requires states to provide services in the most integrated setting and reinforced the right of people with disabilities to live in the community.

Begin image

Photo of APSI client Ralph framed in a green ellipse looking toward the camera, an Ohio State Buckeye flag hangs on the wall behind him.

End image

## Ralph

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## Jonni

“Now I’m the one that controls my behavior,” says Jonni, who has been an APSI client for over a decade. With APSI’s help, Jonni has reached a place in life where she independently flew to Florida to visit family. To Jonni, “family is all that matters,” so this trip is close to her heart. For past trips, someone had to fly with Jonni because she fears flying. But now, she faces the flight independently, though she still fears the takeoff and landing. Jonni’s confidence and independence grew to this point thanks to the continued support from her team and her family. Jonni also conquered her fear of water and took a dip in the pool with her father’s encouragement. Jonni loves spending time with her sister and watching her parenting style. Before getting involved with APSI, Jonni says she was “raised by her sister” and appreciates their relationship. She knows her family has her back and prides herself on having theirs. Being able to fly solo to visit them has boosted her confidence, but it was a long road to get here.

Cammie, Jonni’s Protective Services Representative (PSR) who’s been with her for over a decade, notes that she has “come a very long way” in the time that she has known her. Cammie is proud that “Jonni is very good at articulating her needs and wants.” It wasn’t always this way. Jonni used to struggle with her past behavior and inflexibility in her life. Jonni thrives in her own apartment which she decorates with art she, her friends, and her family have made. Jonni’s team works diligently so she is able to pick her own schedule and “do her own thing,” while still giving her boundaries. She is an active member of her team, directing her team meetings and preparing the agenda beforehand. Cammie says Jonni is extremely capable and that “she has started to understand that there’s more than one way to solve a problem.” Jonni says that her staff respects her autonomy and allows her to do things independently, unless she needs help.

Begin image

Photo of APSI client Jonni smiling in front of her apartment building.

End image

## Jonni

Jonni’s advocacy extends to others; she often finds herself sticking up for the people in her community. “I self-advocate for myself and others,” she says. She really knows how to connect with people, “I like listening and understanding. If I don’t understand I’m going to ask

questions.” Jonni feels like she is teaching other members of her community how to stand up for themselves.

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“Jonni is a caretaker...she has a strong streak of fighting for the underdog and wanting to make sure that people get what they need.” - Cammie, APSI PSR

Jonni is a member of APSI’s Advocacy Ambassadors, a group of clients that meet monthly to discuss self-advocacy. Cammie recommended Jonni for the group because she feels that Jonni has really “shown that she cares about other people. She’s a good advocate, not only for herself, but for others.” In the past decade, Jonni has become incredibly independent, advocated for her needs, and built up her confidence to be an independent problem-solver. “It’s a learning process,” Jonni stated, but she takes these skills and shares them with as many people as possible.

Jonni is looking forward to her next solo trip at the end of the year to spend the holidays with her Florida family.

Begin image

Photo of Jonni, in her apartment, presenting a statue of praying hands that she made.

End image

Begin image

Photo of Jonni sitting in her apartment, art she and loved ones made and pictures of family hang on the wall behind her.

End image

## **Disability Milestones**

### **2008**

ADA Amendments Act strengthens ADA protections by broadening the definition of disability to refocus on accommodations to support individuals with disabilities.

### **2016**

At the urging of self-advocates, the Ohio legislature removes the “r” word from state and county titles, renaming the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and county boards of developmental disabilities, following similar changes in federal law in 2009.

## Keith

Changing guardians can be difficult, but Keith has adjusted and found a world of opportunity ahead of him. Through his journey, Keith has become active in his community and built a more involved and independent life.

Jennifer, an APSI Protective Services Representative, has worked as Keith's guardian for about three years. Keith is soft-spoken and warm-hearted, "He's quiet but happy. He's very low-key, but when you talk to him, and you ask the questions, he lights up."

Before Keith and Jennifer formed an amicable relationship, having a new guardian was difficult for Keith. However, the APSI team was there every step of the way to ensure he was better off and more in charge of his life.

Begin image

Photo of Keith smiling while wearing a sheriff hat at a picnic.

End image

## Keith

Growing up, Keith's father was friends with a sheriff, and this became a dream profession of Keith's. His father got a retired cruiser that didn't run, and the sheriff's friend even gifted him his own radar gun that the station no longer needed. The idea of being a sheriff inspired Keith, and he became a vigilante, using the radar to track the speeds of cars that passed his house, even sporting his own badge and sheriff hat.

Over the years, Keith has come a long way. Despite the hardships that change can bring, Keith has come to find that there is a world out there he hasn't experienced, "He is loving it, and each day he keeps getting better and better," says Jennifer.

"His world just blossomed."

Since being with APSI, Keith has found freedom he's never known. "He didn't realize, 'Oh, I can do that,' and 'I don't need someone to tell me 'no.' You know, those kinds of things. So yes, he's just flourished," says Jennifer.



Keith's day program connects him with opportunities that make him a part of his community. Keith is slowly immersing himself in his community by helping clean the fire station, attending parades, enjoying the fair, and even sharing his bongo talents at local concerts. Keith also sees his father weekly and gets to enjoy other fun activities with family, such as going out to eat.

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We're slowly getting him acclimated to the idea that 'you can do this, this is totally in your power, and you can do this.' Jennifer emphasized the importance of new opportunities for Keith, expressing the difference involvement can make, "It gives them life. It gives them quality of life."

"It really gives them an opportunity to have a quality life and live it to the best of their ability."

Keith's story has shown Jennifer that no matter how hard things get, change can always be made. She is impressed by Keith's growth, and proud of how open his world has become. Jennifer seeing this change in him has made every step of the way worth it, and today, "he's all smiles."

Today, Keith is starting to feel comfortable with his own place in the world, "He's able to breathe. He's able to live. He can do what he wants," says Jennifer.

After seeing how far Keith has come, Jennifer mentioned how proud she is to be a part of the team that inspired him to grow. Without APSI, Jennifer wonders who would be there to help individuals like Keith reach their full potential.

"The future looks awesome. It looks fabulous, because we're only going to be able to do more for our individuals."

Begin image

A green, square QR code that links to a video about Keith.

End image

**Scan to see Keith's life in video.**

**From the APSI History Vault**

Begin image

Black and white photo of three APSI Staff members getting into a car.

End image

APSI Staff attend a ball for clients in the Belmont County area, 1992

Begin image

Black and white photo of two APSI staff looking at landscaping.

End image

APSI Staff participate in a group home landscaping contest, 1998

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## **Mark**

Mark, APSI's South Central Regional Program Director (RPD), is currently APSI's longest-serving employee. In April of 1987, Mark joined the APSI team as a Protective Services Representative (PSR) for the first time. He moved on to a new job in 1990 but came back after a short four months away. In November 1995, Mark was promoted to his current RPD position, where he has been ever since.

Begin image

Photo of Mark smiling with window behind him.

End image

In 1999, APSI created the East Central region, which holds our Mt. Vernon and Cambridge offices. For a time, Mark directed this area as well as Columbus and Gallipolis, which he says was challenging at times. Only a few years later, Mark also began working in Southwest Ohio, traveling to Dayton to see clients and staff. During such a significant time of change in APSI's history, programming and staffing discrepancies abounded, making it difficult for staff like Mark to keep up, especially when all documentation was hand-written.

During this time, APSI's Columbus staff worked around the clock, doing rotations for on-call during nights and weekends, and learning a lot about the medical side of the job as they went — responsibilities now designated explicitly to our Medical Specialists. "I think bringing on regional Medical Specialists has been huge," Mark says. "Each region has a Medical Specialist to go to to help them navigate through all the medical issues."

"The biggest [change] was when we sat down to select... the database that we use," Mark says. He was on the committee to select the program, and in August 2012, APSI moved to its current system for documentation. "It made a huge difference as far as medical information," Mark says. "The way we follow up on medical things, being able to go back and look at historical notes... it just made a humongous difference in how we do things. It's clearly working."

In the last five years, Mark feels there has been more emphasis on employee opinions at APSI, which has been a positive change. "Our leadership is a huge asset," he says, talking about the ability of staff to give input. "You don't find that everywhere."

APSI has also become more well-known, Mark says. "I think our reputation has continued to be excellent through the years, and I think a huge part of that is our rapport with DODD... thanks to our leadership." APSI has made many strides in recent years, but Mark "hope[s] that our fundraising will continue to expand... and explore other funding streams."

"I think APSI will continue on and continue to evolve... I can't imagine there would be a time when we're not around."

Over the years, these changes allowed APSI to create the structure we have today. "APSI's 40th anniversary means that we are a respected force that has a very specific purpose, and we do a very good job at it," Mark says.

## Nevalyn

Nevalyn, a former board member and avid APSI supporter, has worked in the developmental disabilities field since before APSI was formed in 1983. She started as a research assistant for The Ohio State University, conducting research at the Columbus Developmental Center where she fell in love with her work. “And once I did that work, which was the hardest I’ve ever done, then, you know, that was my life commitment.” She has since started her own practice as a Clinical Counselor for individuals with developmental disabilities.

She recalls how alone individuals at the Developmental Center (DC) were before APSI; some would end up homeless after leaving the DC due to a lack of support, she says. “None of those residents had guardians; very few had family. They just didn’t have any independent advocates to help them, and they needed a lot of help. So, I was thrilled with APSI.”

Begin image

Photo of Nevalyn smiling with window behind her.

End image

In 1995 Nevalyn joined APSI’s Board of Trustees and has supported APSI since. In her decade tenure on the Board, she served as Secretary, Vice President, and President.

Nevalyn has witnessed APSI evolve greatly over the years. She says APSI was a leader in changing the culture from controlling individuals to encouraging their independence. “It’s pretty exciting to me that they have actually helped a number of consumers regain their own guardianship. And that’s something that years ago, you know, was not happening.”

In recent years, Nevalyn says, she’s seen APSI not only improve the lives of its clients, but inform the community about guardianship. She says APSI leadership has built relationships with the legislature, even taking individuals APSI serves to testify to the lawmakers. “I really, really

respect the management team here at APSI. I trust them. I see them as extremely professional, extremely caring about their roles and what they do.”

APSI has focused on how to make its PSRs even more available to the people they serve, she says. Remote work flexibility has increased since the pandemic. “They want them out and about they want them, you know, visiting their clients and being more available.”

“I’ve stayed with APSI for all these years, because I highly respect the mission and the goals of the organization. And I continue to see tremendous need out in the community.”

Nevalyn now lends her expertise to the Community Leadership Council and APSI’s Development Committee, and she has no plans of stopping anytime soon.

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## **2023 by the Numbers**

3,228 clients served

15 successor guardianships

46 average caseload

478 client moves

111 appointments to serve as guardian

20,796 client visits

8,122 after-hours calls responded to

7,557 service consents

19,618 consents

12,061 medical consents

23 clients restored to competency

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## **Moving Forward**

### **2023 Rebranding**

APSI got a new look this year, including new logos to better convey APSI's mission. The circle emblem symbolizes the teams that APSI works with to ensure the best lives for our clients. The entire logo represents our commitment to being a statewide leader in guardianship and advocacy.

Begin image

Dark green APSI Ohio logo.

End image

### **The Next 40 Years**

APSI strives to do even more for those we serve in the next four decades: Improve more lives, provide more opportunities, restore more people, build better relationships with the community, and grow just like we have for the last 40 years. APSI wants to see more people face their fears like Jonni has. APSI hopes to continue to support individuals through different phases of life like Ralph's been supported. APSI sees a future where people's eyes are opened to possibilities they never imagined just as Keith's eyes have been opened.

### **Next Steps**

As APSI celebrates our 40 years of service, we continue to execute our 2022-2025 strategic plan. Over the next year, we will continue to strengthen our services by:

- Promoting our clients' quality of life through best practices that focus on individual service needs and meaningful interactions with each person

- Leading a dialogue on the policies that impact APSI’s services and clients, including alternatives to guardianship like supported decision-making
- Supporting APSI staff to work efficiently and effectively with the right tools, structure, and opportunities for growth
- Updating and enhancing communication tools to share our message and be a resource to families, advocates, and professionals
- Exploring new and additional funding opportunities, including engaging events to connect with current supporters and community members

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## **Involvement Opportunities**

### **Board of Trustees**

APSI’s board brings together people from across Ohio who have an interest in guiding and furthering our mission. Our board members are professionals from a variety of backgrounds, family members, and advocates with lived experience who support APSI as we fulfill our role in advocating for our clients.

### **Advocacy Ambassadors**

Advocacy Ambassadors is APSI’s client council including members from each of APSI’s five regions. The council meets monthly to discuss their quality of life across different facets like healthcare, careers, social life, and housing. Advocacy Ambassadors come from diverse advocacy backgrounds, from little experience to leading groups like People First.

In June 2023, two members attended APSI’s Summer All Staff Meeting and shared why self advocacy is important to them. One member, Trevor, coined the phrase, “Navigate and advocate!” In a recent meeting two Ambassadors rekindled an old friendship through the group; they had lost contact years ago but Advocacy Ambassadors reconnected them.

APSI continues to recruit more members for Advocacy Ambassadors in hopes that participants will build their self-advocacy skills and give them more opportunities to advocate for themselves and others.

### **Community Leadership Council (CLC)**

The CLC brings together former APSI board members, advocates, family members, and others from diverse personal and professional backgrounds to provide input that furthers APSI's strategic mission. Members share their perspectives on issues such as improving client quality of life, supporting staff, and funding opportunities.

This collaboration provides an opportunity for members to discuss pressing issues facing Ohioans with developmental disabilities, the impact of statewide policy proposals, and how APSI can advocate for its clients' interests along with its partners across the state.

Thank you to our 2023 board for their expertise and dedication to APSI.

Blaine Brockman, President

Nathan Griffin, Secretary

Bradley Eberhard, Vice President

Alice Pavey, Treasurer

Erin Barker-Brown

Nancy Banks

John Cohen

Rebecca Dean

Sandy Dirkman

John Hauser

Margaret Hutzell

Darrion Mitchell

Roberta Montenegro

Marci Straughter

Rachel Ulbrich

Tonya Whitsett

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A green, square QR code that links to a video about the board.

End image

Scan to hear from board members.



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## **Financials**

### **Expenses**

Begin image

Pie chart of various shades of green and blue showing APSI's expenses.

End image

Payroll Taxes/Benefits: \$1,414,259

Administrative: \$862,645

Other Program: \$326,425

Professional Fees: \$305,900

Mileage/Travel: \$256,813

Rent & Utilities: \$223,008

Donated Space: \$169,848

Program Staff: \$4,526,687

FY23 Total: \$8,120,775

## Revenue

Begin image

Pie chart of various shades of green and blue showing APSI's revenue.

End image

Title XX: \$734,000

Donated Facilities: \$169,848

County Contracted Services: \$85,000

Interest: \$78,449

Donations & Grants: \$43,560

Other: \$16,524

State of Ohio Funds: \$6,653,595

FY23 Total: \$7,780,976

Back Cover Page

## APSI Word Search

Begin image

A grid of letters forming a word search puzzle.

End image

- Advocacy
- Decisions
- Freedom
- Wishes
- Rights
- Goals
- Forty
- PSR

## APSI Ohio

### 2023 Annual Report

