



Disability Ministries
The United Methodist Church



Ohio Disability & Ministry Collaborative
Enlighten. Educate. Engage.

Accessibility Grant Recipient Project Reports

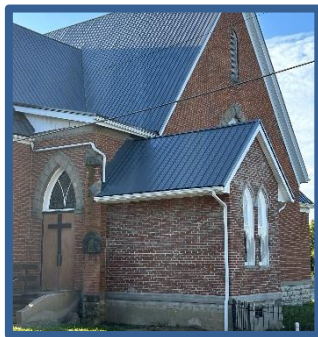
Powell UMC, Olentangy River District



From Powell UMC we have this report from Hannah Van Meter. "We are so grateful for the ways in which this funding has allowed us to have an accessible restroom in the Lower-Level youth space of our church. This accessible restroom has proven to be incredibly beneficial to our youth and youth leaders whether it be during Sunday school, weekly Bible studies, Confirmation or for other groups who are using the space and are unable to make frequent trips up the stairs just to use the restroom. "



Staunton UMC, Scioto River District



Pastor Mark Armstrong of Staunton UMC, Scioto River District, shared that his congregation is thrilled to have an accessible restroom in the church building. Previously, the nearest facilities were across the street in the annex building. No more crossing the street, especially in rough weather conditions!



Invisible (Hidden) Disabilities

Do you ever feel frustrated or even angry because of another's behavior or attitudes? Professional writer Susan Boltz shares a prayer experience in which she told God about her anger with an aunt who had paranoia and schizophrenia. The aunt was often cruel and told lies about members of the family. As Sue shared her anger

with God, this is the conversation she imagined with her Heavenly Father. From *Living Impaired* by Susan Boltz.

God says:

"Let me ask you something. If she said what she just did and she was deaf, would you be this upset?"

"No, I'd think perhaps it was because she couldn't hear and didn't understand."

"If she said or did these things because she had a brain tumor, would you be angry?"

"No, because her brain isn't working right."

"Sue, she's living impaired. The way her brain functions, she's incapable of loving like many people can. She can't love you or others the way you want to be loved. She lashes out because she's afraid everyone will turn their backs on her. Many already have. She hurts you to get the pain over-with now, to drive you away while she's not as vulnerable."

"What should I do?"

"You have a choice to make. You can decide to love her no matter what, even though she can't love you back. Or you can abandon her just as she believes you will."

"LORD, I wish I could love her no matter what, but I don't think I can."

"I'll help you, and I'll help her."

After my prayer time, I called my aunt and told her that it did not matter what she said or did – I would still love her. "I'm coming to visit you on Friday," I said.

She gasped. "Oh. Okay. I'll see you Friday."

Did she change? Not much at first, but the stunts and tirades became less as I visited regularly. The change was mostly in me; the anger was gone.

I learned a great deal from loving her no matter what. At some point, I realized that I have times of living impairment too. A person with a mental health issue is not always living impaired, but we all have our own areas of impairment."

Does this scenario seem familiar and are you like Sue, frustrated by someone whose disability is not visible but rather invisible? Perhaps, they, like her aunt, say or do things that cause trouble or separation between family members. Perhaps they have outbursts of anger or delusions. Mental health conditions come in many forms, and it may be difficult to understand or even recognize the illness. Sue's conversation with God allowed her to realize that if the aunt's disabilities were visible, or medical, it would be easier to deal with, but because they are invisible, it was more difficult.

If you have trouble relating to or understanding someone with an invisible disability, help is available. Please refer to these resources or talk to a professional. Of course, this is just a sampling of available resources, but it is a starting point.

[What Is an Invisible Disability? Why Invisible Disabilities Matter \(prevention.com\)](https://www.prevention.com/health/mental-health/what-is-an-invisible-disability-why-invisible-disabilities-matter)

[Invisible Disabilities: Break Down the Barriers \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com/health/mental-health/invisible-disabilities-break-down-the-barriers)

[Invisible \(Hidden\) Disabilities | Disabilities | Accessibility.com](https://www.accessibility.com/resources/invisible-hidden-disabilities)

The UMC Accessibility Badge Program

Let your community know you are accessible and inviting to all by sharing your UMC Accessibility Badge on social media, your website, and even on the church building itself. The badge levels are awarded according to the accessibility accommodations in your church and parking areas.

[Audits and Accessibility Badge – Disability Ministries of the United Methodist Church \(umcdmc.org\)](https://umcdmc.org)

Questions? Let us know if you need help with the Audit.

Email Rose at Rdarling@flatrockhomes.org and we will point you in the right direction!

Flat Rock Homes, Care Center & Community Services

Located about 20 minutes south of Sandusky, Ohio

Flat Rock Care Center

The Care Center is home to 34 individuals with significant developmental & intellectual disabilities, aggressive behavior disorders and physical disabilities. 24/7 care available.

Community Services

Supportive living (group) homes support 31 individuals in 11 homes. Provide transportation to/from Adult Day program, community activities and outings, employment, and medical appointments.

Youth/Adult Programs/Adult Day Support Program: Serving 27 adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Provides activities within the local community, development of independent living and social skills, and pre-vocational training.

For more information or to schedule a tour, please contact engagement@flatrockhomes.org

Visit www.flatrockhomes.org

Resources for the Holidays



Soon, the holiday season from Thanksgiving through Epiphany will be here and with it there will be increased opportunities for social gatherings. Your church may offer several parties, concerts, and programs. The following articles give hints on making your party or gatherings more comfortable for everyone!

[10 Tips for Including People with Disabilities in Your Holiday Celebrations - RespectAbility](#)

[5 Tips for Dealing with Stress and Depression During the Holidays - Vail Health Foundation](#)