

THE MANY FACES OF WASCO, INC.



Many members of the community see WASCO as one-dimensional: they only see one aspect of the organization's impact on the community. But in all reality, WASCO Inc. facilitates positive interactions within the community in countless ways. The corporation, founded by parents in 1950 and established as a corporation and 501c3 in 1971, offers employment and services to adults with developmental disabilities in Washington County. Currently, approximately 150 adults attend WASCO daily; many participate in the production of ceiling tiles pressed from tin ceiling molds or participate in the mail service offered to many businesses, but some choose to participate in leisure activities such as fitness, art, life skills, senior activities, games, or music.

In addition to the programs that are run on site, WASCO also runs three businesses in Marietta. One can stop and enjoy ice cream along the bike path at Marietta Harbor, indulge in a hearty breakfast or lunch at the Courthouse Café, or purchase hand-crafted jewelry at the Heart to Art shop on Front Street. Coming soon—in replacement of the Heart to Art shop—the organization will open a resale shop that allows citizens to donate household items such as lamps, furniture, pots and pans, etc. Some of the jewelry and craft items will also be sold at the resale shop. Credit can also be given to WASCO for the enjoyment of clean traveling facilities; their employment division—run by Joe Faires—is responsible for all of the Ohio Department of Transportation sites within Washington County.

Perhaps one of the most exciting programs the adults at WASCO participate in is the Special Olympics. There are approximately 80 athletes that participate in a range of sports from bowling and swimming to track and field. The athletes train year-round for the different events, and prepare for local competitions as



well as the larger state competition. This year, the WASCO Special Olympics Team returned from the Ohio Special Olympic Games with 17 gold medals, 5 silver medals, 9 bronze medals, two 4th places, and one 6th place. The Olympics crew is thankful for volunteer and parental support, without which the continual growth of the Olympics would not be possible. In the future, they would like to incorporate basketball as one of the programs available to train for, and also hope to find enough funding to go to the national sect of the Special Olympics, as cost for attending larger events is high (approximately \$4 to \$5,000 dollars just for the state games).

With passionate leaders such as Jan Powell (Executive Director), Tara Meeks (Business Manager), Nancy Harris (Business Development Coordinator), Linda Mugrage (Day Program Coordinator), Jennifer Hupp (Day Services Coordinator), and a dedicated Board of Directors, WASCO provides invaluable services to the community. The people behind the organization continue to put their vision in action by "maintaining a strong community agency that opens gateways to opportunities for citizens with developmental disabilities" and go well above and beyond their mission "to provide meaningful employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities." - Nici Rea, Intern/Program Development Associate