The RUNDOWN
Agency for Persons with Disabilities
NOVEMBER
2026
VOL. 11



Message from the Director

As we enter November, I want to express my appreciation for the dedication of our APD employees, providers, families, and community partners who make a difference in the lives of Floridians with developmental disabilities each day. October was a busy month for our agency, from celebrating the 20th Annual Exceptional Employment Awards to supporting individuals with disabilities during Hurricane Isaias. These efforts reflect our shared commitment to the individuals we serve. As we recognize National Family Caregivers Month and approach Thanksgiving, I am especially grateful for the families and caregivers who provide unwavering support to their loved ones. Thank you all for your continued dedication to APD's mission.

– Bob Asztalos

APD Celebrates 20th Annual Exceptional Employment Awards

On October 20, the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) celebrated the 20th Annual Exceptional Employment Awards at the Florida Capitol. The ceremony recognized outstanding employers and employees who demonstrate the importance of inclusive workplaces and meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. APD congratulates this year's award recipients and thanks the businesses and community partners who continue to support inclusive employment across Florida!

OBSERVANCES

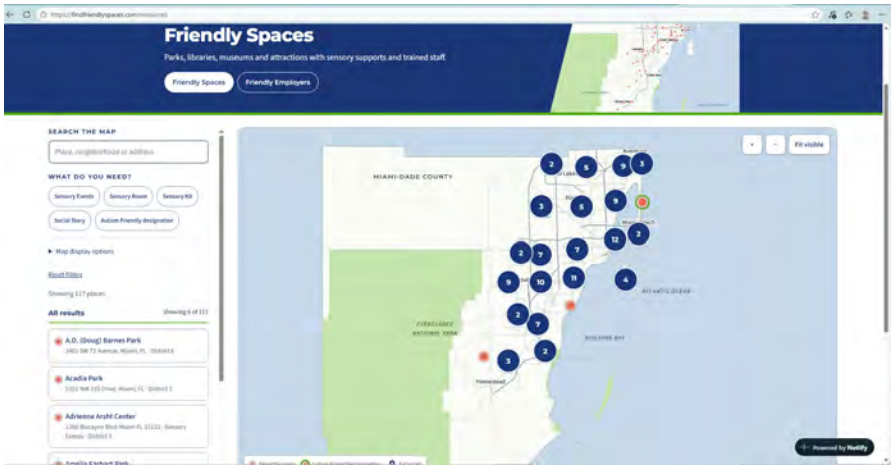
- National Family Caregivers Month
- National Epilepsy Awareness Month

APD'S ROLE IN DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY



During emergencies, the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) works with state and local partners to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to essential services and support. Following Hurricane Isaias, APD coordinated with regional offices, providers, and community partners to conduct wellness checks, assess storm impacts, and identify unmet needs. APD's disaster response efforts extend beyond individuals served by the agency to include Floridians with disabilities who may need additional assistance before, during, and after a disaster.

MIAMI-DADE LAUNCHES NEW NEUROINCLUSIVE FRIENDLY SPACES MAP



Miami-Dade County has launched a new interactive map highlighting businesses and employers that support neurodivergent individuals. The resource helps individuals and families identify inclusive businesses and employment opportunities in their communities. The initiative promotes greater awareness and accessibility while encouraging businesses to create welcoming environments for people of all abilities. Explore the map and learn more: Friendly Spaces

APD CELEBRATES FALL WITH CHILI COOK-OFF & COSTUME CONTEST



APD employees got into the fall spirit on October 29 with a Chili Cook-Off and Costume Contest! Staff enjoyed a fun-filled event featuring creative costumes, delicious homemade chili, and friendly competition. Congratulations to our Chili Cook-Off winner, Brittani Griffin, and Costume Contest winners, for taking home this year's top honors! Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make the event a success. It was a great opportunity for employees to come together, share some laughs, and celebrate the season!







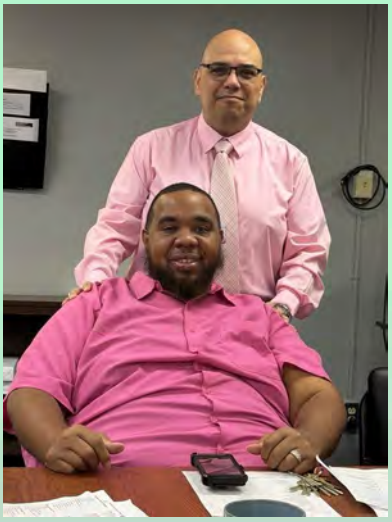








DDDP/PATHWAYS GOES PINK FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS





Throughout October, staff at DDDP/Pathways wore pink every Wednesday in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The team came together to raise awareness, show support for those affected by breast cancer, and highlight the importance of early detection. Thank you to everyone who participated!













NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH



November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to recognize and honor the dedication of family members who provide care and support to their loved ones. Family caregivers play an essential role in the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, helping them achieve greater independence and improve their quality of life. APD extends its appreciation to the many family caregivers across Florida for their compassion, commitment, and unwavering support.

BECOME A UNIQUE ABILITIES PARTNER

October was **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**, and we are proud to spotlight our agency's **Unique Abilities Partner Program**. This initiative recognizes businesses and organizations that are committed to creating meaningful employment, career development, and opportunities for individuals with unique abilities. We encourage employers to apply today and become a Unique Abilities Partner, helping us build a more inclusive workforce and a stronger community for all. Visit: https://apd.myflorida.com/unique/ for more information or apply. Also be on the lookout for the new Unique Abilities Partner Program newsletter, coming soon!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: MICHELLE LUCAS



Michele, supervising attorney for the forensic litigation team, leads with professionalism, high expectations, and genuine kindness. She responds with grace and unwavering dedication, often working extra hours to ensure the Agency is well-represented in court. Michele balances advocating for both the Agency and her team, and she frequently takes on additional tasks without hesitation. Most recently, she stepped in to assemble a time-sensitive policy proposal. Her tireless commitment and exemplary leadership make her an essential part of the team.

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