



### 2019 has been a year marked by tremendous transformation and achievement. At the top of the list are two of Disabilty Rights Ohio's landmark class action lawsuits.

Thousands of Ohio school children with disabilities will be positively impacted by the settlement we reached this past year with the Ohio

Department of Education in Doe v. State of Ohio. The plan we created with our partners and the State will improve integration and academic achievement for thousands of Ohio students with disabilities. This is monumental. A Federal judge recently approved the final settlement in Ball v. DeWine, DRO's class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of individuals with

developmental disabilities who are unnecessarily segregated or at risk of segregation. The agreement we have reached will better inform Ohioans with developmental disabilities about their options for living and working in the community. This fight is at the very core of our existence and we believe the settlement is the big step in restoring freedom of choice for thousands of Ohioans living with disabilities. As the year drew to a close, DRO prepared for new leadership. I am thrilled to begin my role as Executive Director of Disability Rights Ohio and to partner with all of you. I learned early in life that speaking up and listening are essential to do what's right and get things done. They are also the first steps toward effective advocacy. Our Annual Report is not just filled with statistics, but also stories of how our #AdvocacyMatters and how our efforts impact the lives of Ohioans with disabilities. Our vision at DRO is to promote a society in which people with disabilities have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest potential

we can partner with you to find a solution. Together, we can continue to make a difference. I am excited for the opportunities ahead and look forward to working with you to advocate for Ohioans with disabilities. Thank you for your ongoing support of DRO's mission and work. **Kerstin Sjoberg Executive Director** 

and make their own life choices. We want a society that is free from discrimination, abuse and any barriers that inhibit full participation in all aspects of daily life. To make this vision a reality, I encourage you to speak up when you experience or observe a problem. Let us know so that

Every day, Disability Rights Ohio helps people with disabilities:

#AdvocacyMatters

**2019** AT-A-GLANCE

• Navigate bureaucracy to access the public programs and services they need.

• Ensure Ohio children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education. • Fight abuse, neglect, and exploitation in our institutions and communities. • Challenge stigmas and provide resources necessary to be a self-advocate.

individual requests for services

investigations & monitoring activities

DRO'S IMPACT

trainings
provided to 6,173 individuals

reaching 6,141 individuals

community outreach events



### When an individual needs advocacy or information about their rights to live, work, and go where they choose, DRO's Short-Term Assistance and Intake Teams can help.

**INTAKE & SHORT-TERM ASSISTANCE** 

Ben needed additional services to keep him safe. With one email, DRO delivered. #AdvocacyMatters

Ben's Level 1 Medicaid waiver provides services he needs. Still, it wasn't enough to keep him from wandering from home at night, putting him at risk. Fearing for his safety, Ben's dad applied three times to get his son placed on a SELF waiver. But the county board of developmental disabilities (DD) repeatedly denied his request. Overwhelmed, Ben's dad requested an appeal and turned to Disability Rights Ohio to help him manage that process. A DRO attorney reached out to the county DD board to obtain Ben's records for review. Just four days later, DRO's attorney received an email from the DD board explaining that, after careful consideration, they were rescinding their denial and approving Ben for a SELF waiver. Now, Ben has what he needs to stay safe in his

community, and his dad can rest easy. DRO's Short-Term Assistance and Intake Teams helped: 2,484 people in 2019.

### Gabe struggled in school but, his school refused to provide additional services. Feeling hopeless, Gabe's mom turned to DRO. #AdvocacyMatters

SPECIAL EDUCATION

A DRO attorney worked to have his school evaluate Gabe more thoroughly. From this, Gabe was shown to have a learning disability, that-with advocacy from DRO's attorney-led to an IEP that meets Gabe's needs. Now in third grade, Gabe is doing much better, he earned all As and Bs and even received student of the month!

Second grade was a real struggle for Gabe, and the services his school provided simply weren't enough. Despite his struggles, the school repeatedly denied him services. His mom had tried everything, even placing

The law requires a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities.

him in online school. Desperate for help, Gabe's mom turned to Disability Rights Ohio.

When students with disabilities receive anything less, DRO takes action.

DRO's **Special Education Team** helped: 544 children & families in 2019.



## When individuals with disabilities face discrimination or barriers at work, DRO's Employment Team Daniel needed surgery to keep his job.

**EMPLOYMENT** 

Daniel was happy to start his new job, but his cataracts soon caused him to miss the holes for the nails he was inserting. He received a warning that if he couldn't see, he'd be let go.

to pay for it. #AdvocacyMatters

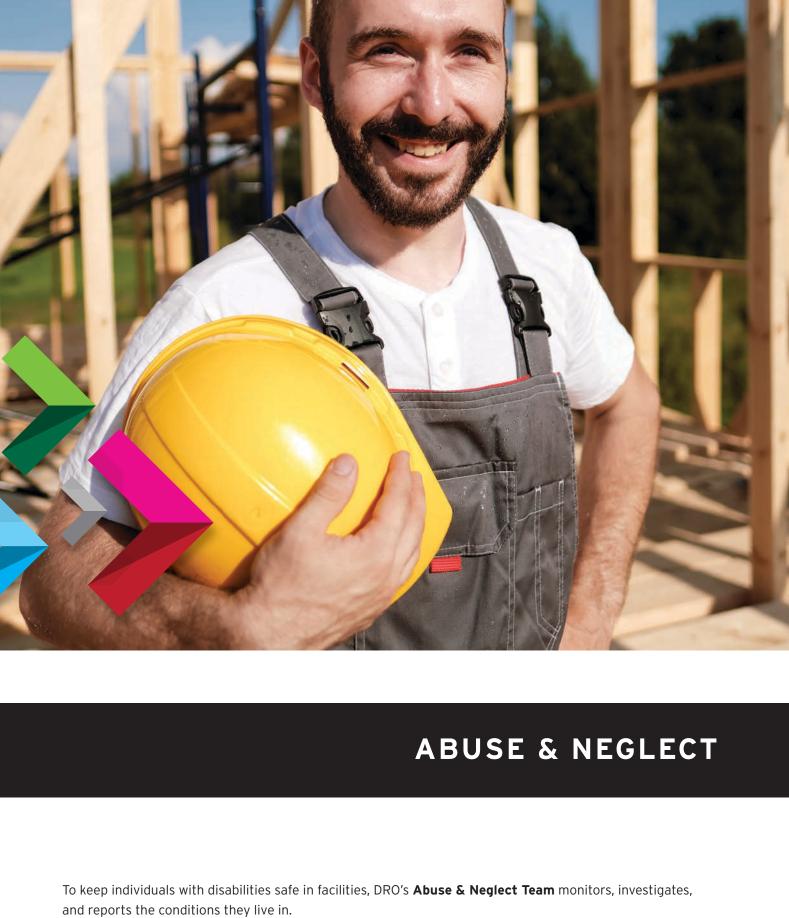
upholds their rights.

Scared, Daniel reached out to a state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency to help pay for cataract surgery, but he was denied since he had private insurance. Though the state wouldn't help, he also couldn't afford the deductible, which delayed the surgery and jeopardized his job. Finally, Daniel called Disability Rights Ohio A DRO advocate argued that the agency needed to cover the surgery because waiting would delay a successful Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) outcome. Eventually, the agency agreed to pay for his surgery.

DRO helped him get the assistance he needed

Daniel withdrew his appeal and underwent successful cataracts surgery last summer. DRO's **Employment Team** helped:

**435** people in 2019.



### respect they deserved. #AdvocacyMatters During a facility's routine monitoring visit, residents reported several incidents of abuse: staff were seen throwing water on residents, verbally abusing them, and stealing their personal items. Residents also experienced

a number of issues regarding neglect: limited access to necessary medication and equipment, unclean living spaces, limited staffing, and poor-quality food. After seeing these conditions, Disability Rights Ohio opened an official investigation using access which caused action from a state agency to put the facility on a plan of corrections. The facility hired specialized staff members

Residents were abused, stolen from, and neglected.

We stepped in to make sure they were given the

trained in social work, rehabilitation, and nutrition and removed problematic staffing. Now, the residents are reporting far better conditions with further improvements-such as general tidiness-on the way. DRO continues to regularly monitor this facility to ensure that residents are given the quality of care they deserve.

and opened investigations for a total of: 443 cases & individuals served in 2019.



DRO's Abuse & Neglect Team helped individuals, conducted monitoring visits,

### settlement in 2019. For years, DRO has worked closely with the State of Ohio to ensure these settlements improve the lives of Ohioans with disabilities.

LITIGATION

Ball V. DeWine is the class action lawsuit DRO filed against the state on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities who were unnecessarily segregated or at risk of segregation. A Federal Judge approved the final settlement in March 2020. That settlement expands access to community-based supports for those who want them and will increase class members' access to community-based supports.

When advocacy and mediation aren't enough, DRO advances disability rights through litigation.

#AdvocacyMatters

in 11 of Ohio's school districts.

Two landmark class action lawsuits moved toward

In 2019, Disabiltiy Rights Ohio reached a comprehensive settlement in **Doe v. State of Ohio** with the Ohio

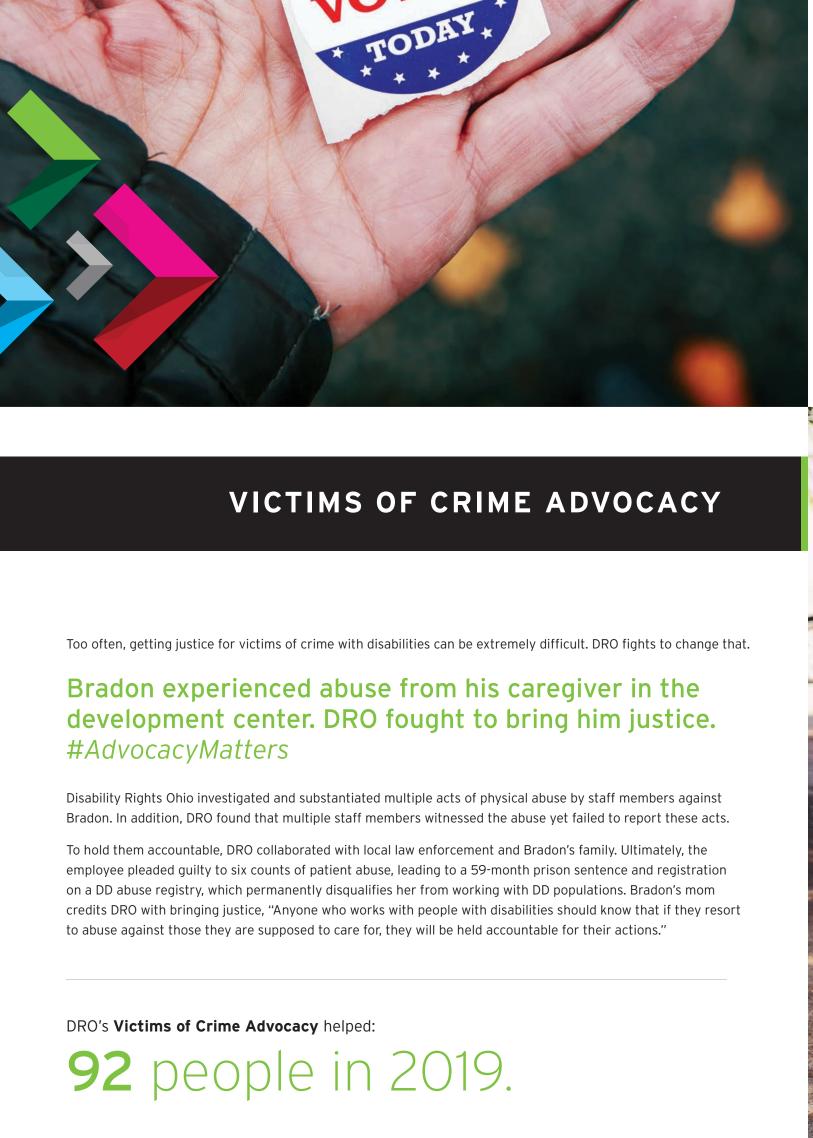
as support measurable improvements in student performance and inclusion for children with disabilities

Department of Education that outlines a plan to improve integration and academic achievement of Ohio students with disabilities. The agreement will enhance the State's support for special education throughout Ohio, as well



**425** people in 2019.

DRO's Community Integration Team helped:



**VOTING** DRO hosts voter hotline to help Ohioans with disabilities exercise their right to vote. #AdvocacyMatters For some Ohioans, voting on Election Day can be stressful, difficult, or impossible. Voters with disabilities sometimes experience accessibility barriers or even discrimination based on their disability. Additionally, voters with disabilities may be unsure of their rights, while others may be unsure of the voting process or worried about receiving proper accommodations. To combat these deterrents and advocate for Ohioans' right to vote, Disability Rights Ohio holds a voter hotline on each Election Day that serves as a free resource to Ohio voters with disabilities. DRO's attorneys and advocates are on call while polls are open to address voting concerns and answer disability-related voting questions. DRO also provides more resources on voting rights through its online Self-Advocacy Resource Center.

**POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS** DRO stands at the forefront when it comes to policies and issues impacting people with disabilities, providers and their loved ones. DRO's Policy & Communications teams, track legislative issues that protect and advocate for people with disabilities, both at the Statehouse and Washington, D.C. #AdvocacyMatters DRO's policy team monitors dozens of pieces of legislation and maintains relationships with lawmakers to educate and inform them about how their proposals will affect people with disabilities. We know that many partners and self-advocates need information on constantly moving and complex legislation. So we maintain a Legislative

## WIPA/BENEFITS OF COUNSELING Some Social Security Administration beneficiaries receive their disability benefits through work. To help them understand their benefits, DRO's Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (WIPA) program guides the way. They wanted to understand their benefits while transitioning back to work. We helped guide the way. #AdvocacyMatters Receiving disability benefits through the Social Security Administration can be a needed relief for individuals with disabilities who are transitioning back to work. But when award statements get confusing, Ohioans can count on Disability Rights Ohio to help.

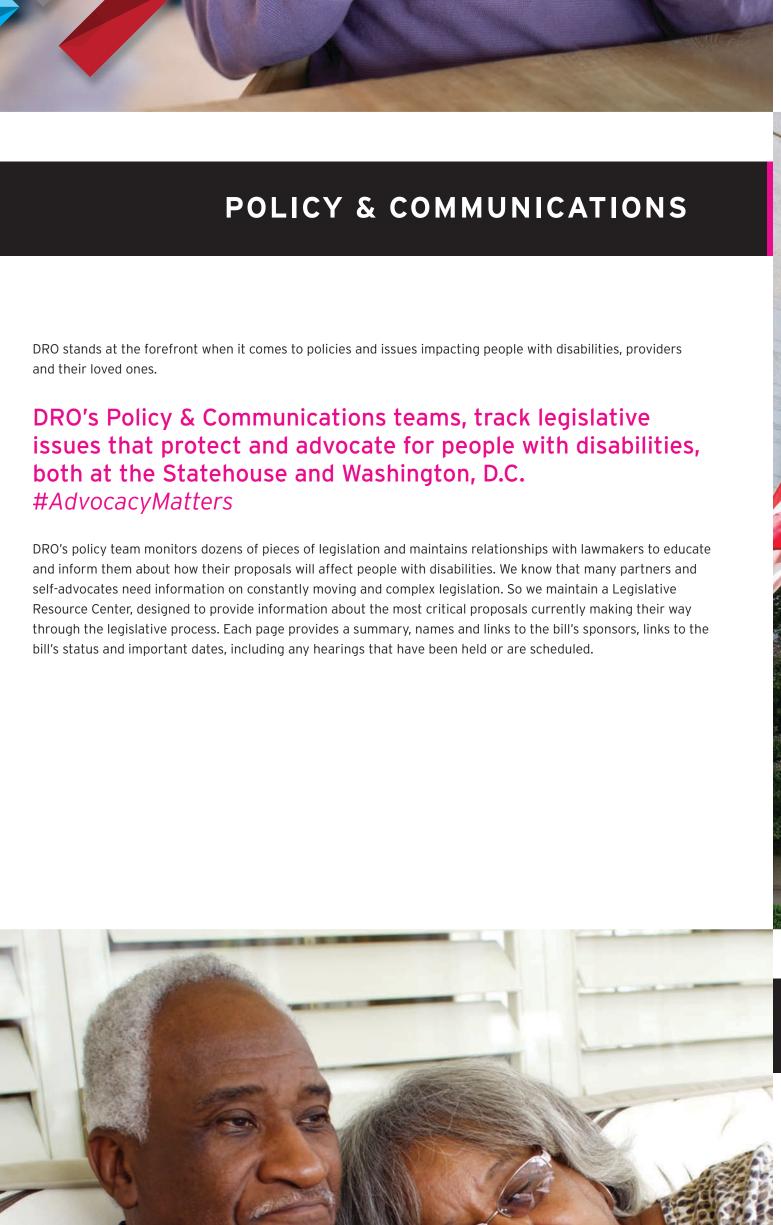
DRO's benefit counselors help beneficiaries understand their benefits, appeal denials of coverage, and ensure people with disabilities get the help they need to be financially stable. These counselors provide individual

guidance, planning, and advice to help SSA beneficiaries feel good about getting back to work.

**491** people understand

their benefits in 2019.

DRO's WIPA Team helped:



REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM When Social Security beneficiaries are subject to fraud or exploitation, DRO's Representative Payee program can help. DRO's Representative Payee Program exceeds expectations in its second year as it protects Social

with the team performing 13% more reviews than targeted for FY 2019.

Security beneficiaries. #AdvocacyMatters

DRO's **Representative Payee** program performed: **215** reviews in 2019.

FINANCIALS

Through the Representative Payee program, Disability Rights Ohio conducts regular reviews of representative payees to protect and advocate on behalf of people with disabilities who have another person, entity, or facility (like a nursing home) managing their social security payments. It has quickly become one of DRO's core programs,

DRO assists representative payees, reviews financial records, and makes internal or external referrals in cases regarding abuse and neglect. DRO's Representative Payee program also works closely with DRO's Benefits

Counseling and Abuse and Neglect teams to keep Ohioans with disabilities independent and safe.

provide additional programs and services that advance our mission. **Core Federal Grants** • Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Disability Rights Ohio receives support from core federal grants that provide the basic foundation for our work as the protection and advocacy system. We also strategically partner with federal and state agencies, private foundations and individual donors to build long-term stability and

 Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA) Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries with Representative Payees (PABRP) **Other Resources** Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Housing Program

Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights (PAIR)

Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT)

Protection and Advocacy under the Help America Vote Act (PAVA)

Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI)

FINANCIAL PICTURE

# • Ingram-White Castle Special Education Fellowship and The Columbus Foundation Victims of Crime Assistance Act Fund

JOIN US IN OUR MISSION

through advocacy that matters. As a 501(c)3 corporation, we rely on contributions from individual donors who want to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. With your support, Disability Rights Ohio is able to continue to provide legal rights protection and advocacy services for individuals with disabilities.

Help **Disability Rights Ohio** continue to positively impact the lives of Ohioans with disabilities

**Programs** Protection/Advocacy & Client Assistance Programs 70% Assistance Programs Total Revenue FY 2019: \$5,332,459\* Total Expenses FY 2019: \$5,386,752\* \*Expenses exceeded revenues in FY 2019 due to the expenditure of grants received in the prior fiscal year. 2019/2020

**Revenues by Source 2019** 

Programs

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Marsha Moore

Keri November

Janet E. Pecquet

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Expenses by Category 2019

Fundraising

Disability

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Disability Rights Ohio

**FAX** 614-644-1<u>888</u>

We have the legal right of way.

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Jennilee Mohler

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