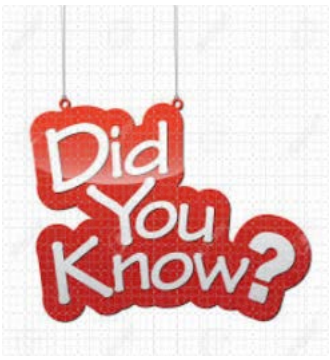
Developmental Disability Awareness Month

March 2020

In 1987 President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month." President Regan called upon Americans to provide the "encouragement and opportunities" necessary for people with developmental disabilities to reach their full potential. National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is an opportunity for everyone to promote respect for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to increase the awareness of the daily obstacles faced by these individuals and their families. These disabilities can vary, some disabilities are visible (a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches to ambulate), while other disabilities may not be easily recognized or seen by the eye (cognitive impairments that affect the way a person speaks, learns, or interacts with others).



OVER 5 MILLION AMERICANS ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY. According to the DD Act, the term developmental disability means a severe, chronic disability that occurs before an individual is 22 that is likely to continue indefinitely and results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency. These impairments require the individual to sustain lifelong or extended supports or assistance. Diagnosed conditions may include autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, or spina bifida. There is a local Missouri Association of County Developmental Services. This organization has a conference once a year to raise awareness.

Sources

https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/

https://www.arcnj.org/news_events/dd_awareness/

https://macdds.org/