

2024



Lake County
General Health District

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Bi-Annual Community Impact Report

Note: This first issue will contain reports from all of 2024. Future issues will report on the previous six months of Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) activities.



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About LCGHD

The Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) was established in 1919/1920 under the Hughes-Griswold Act; a direct response to the influenza epidemic (pandemic) of 1918-1919 in which more than one-half million people died in the United States and more than 20 million worldwide. Prior to its adoption, municipalities were responsible for their own health programs, meaning that nearly 2,150 health departments existed in Ohio. Most departments had little medical training or public health knowledge. Since the formation of public health agencies, the life expectancy of Americans has increased dramatically through the prevention of diseases through safe food and water supplies, sanitation, nutrition, vaccines, and antibiotics. These are the services and educational programs that are delivered through your local and county health departments in Ohio. Currently, there are 121 health departments in Ohio. Lake County General Health District was the 14th health department in Ohio to become accredited, in August 2016, under the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards.

The Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) is governed under Federal, Ohio, and LCGHD Laws, Rules, and Regulations that pertain to LCGHD programming. See the Laws, Rules, and Regulations page of our website for a table containing clickable links to these areas. Note that some regulations have not been included that are outdated or superseded by Ohio law.

Mission

Working to prevent disease, promote equity in health, and protect our community through innovative public health practice.



Community Health Needs Assessment

What is a Community Health Needs Assessment?

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) is one of two documents used to assess Lake County's health needs and create strategies to improve the health of Lake County residents. The 2025 CHNA will be the next assessment. The second document is the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which seeks to make a positive impact on the information gained from the CHNA. Both can be found at www.LCGHD.org. These documents are developed in partnership with a wide variety of organizations representing many different sectors of the community.

Significant health needs as identified in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment:

- Access to Healthcare
- Built Environment
- Cancer
- Chronic Disease
- Infectious Disease
- Substance Use & Misuse
- Unintentional Injury & Accidents
- Economic Concerns
- Mental Health

LCGHD and its programs work to address the highlighted areas from the above list of identified health needs, as well as other health concerns. The efforts of the Health District, in collaboration with community partners, aim to move toward a healthier, safer, and more accessible county.

The following report reflects these efforts.

Vision

Lake County residents enjoy continually improving health and quality of life



Message From Our Leadership



RON GRAHAM, MPH

Health Commissioner

Vaccines and Nutrition: Working Together to Keep People Healthy and Safe

Vaccine Safety: A Pillar of Public Health

Vaccines are one of the most effective tools available to prevent infectious diseases; and their safety is paramount to public health.

As such, vaccines undergo tough and comprehensive testing, both before and after they are approved for public use. This ensures not only their efficacy—meaning they work as intended—but also, that any potential risks or side effects are identified and managed effectively.

Clinical Trials and Monitoring: What happens before a vaccine is licensed and given to the public?

1. Preclinical Testing: Initial laboratory and animal studies assess the vaccine's safety and immune response.
2. Phase 1 Trials: A small group of healthy volunteers receives the vaccine to evaluate its safety, determine appropriate dosages, and assess immunogenicity, which is the ability of a substance that contains antigens to cause the body to make an immune response against that substance.
3. Phase 2 Trials: The vaccine is given to a larger group, allowing for more thorough examination of safety and the body's immune response, alongside the collection of key efficacy data.
4. Phase 3 Trials: Thousands of participants receive the vaccine in diverse populations. This phase is essential to confirm effectiveness and to identify any rare side effects. After a vaccine receives approval from regulatory authorities like the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), it enters a phase of continuous post-marketing surveillance known as pharmacovigilance. This ongoing monitoring is crucial for spotting any long-term or rare adverse effects that may arise once the vaccine is administered to the general population.



The Importance of Nutrition and Nutrition as Medicine: Introduction to Nutrition's Role in Health

Nutrition is a fundamental pillar of health, influencing every aspect of our well-being. The concept of “nutrition as medicine” embraces the idea that what we consume can prevent, manage, and even treat various health conditions. This perspective shifts the focus from merely treating symptoms with pharmaceuticals to addressing underlying causes through dietary choices, nutrient density, and lifestyle modifications.

Strategy for Enhancing Nutrition as Medicine

Accurate Information

Access to accurate, evidence-based nutritional information is crucial. Misinformation about diets, supplements, and health trends can lead to poor health choices and diminish the efficacy of nutrition as a therapeutic tool. Our strategy emphasizes updating the public with scientifically validated guidance on nutrition, helping individuals discern fact from fiction. By championing trustworthy resources and the latest nutrition studies, we aim to empower people to make informed dietary decisions.

Collaboration

Collaboration with healthcare providers and researchers is essential for delivering effective nutrition education. By working alongside dietitians, physicians, and scientists, we can create a multidisciplinary approach to nutrition that addresses the complex interplay between diet and health.

This can involve developing educational materials, conducting joint workshops, and integrating nutritional assessments into regular healthcare routines. The aim is to cultivate a healthcare model where nutrition is recognized and prioritized as part of patient care.

Community Outreach

Active community engagement is crucial to disseminate nutritional knowledge widely. Workshops, webinars, and social media campaigns can reach diverse populations, ensuring that varied audiences understand the principles of nutrition and its implications for health. Providing multilingual resources caters to non-English-speaking community members, promoting inclusivity and effective communication. This outreach can demystify complex nutritional concepts, making them more relatable and actionable for everyday life.



RON GRAHAM, MPH

Health Commissioner

Accessibility

Accessibility to nutritious foods and educational resources is a vital part of improving community health. Initiatives to enhance nutrition should include programs in local clinics that provide dietary counseling and education. Mobile outreach units can bridge gaps in access, bringing nutritional resources to underserved areas. Moreover, partnerships with local food producers to establish community gardens or farmers' markets can promote the consumption of fresh, healthy foods. These efforts not only improve individual dietary habits, but also foster a supportive environment for sustainable health improvements.

Closing

We urge the public to rely on trusted sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and qualified healthcare professionals for accurate information on nutrition and health practices. Just as vaccines play a critical role in preventing disease and maintaining public health, nutrition is an equally vital component of our personal health strategy. Embracing nutrition as medicine empowers individuals to take charge of their health and makes an impactful difference at both the individual and community levels. By recognizing and addressing the importance of nutrition, we can cultivate a healthier society equipped to prevent chronic disease, enhance longevity, and improve overall quality of life. Let us commit to a future where nutrition is viewed not merely as sustenance, but as a cornerstone of medical care and chronic disease prevention.

Warm Regards,

Ron H. Graham



“Being able to share helpful information to the public is an important job, and I’m glad I get to play a part in keeping Lake County residents safe and informed.”

LCGHD Staff Member



Donated Breastmilk to Help NICU Babies Across America

Lake-Geauga WIC's Milk Bank Depot reaches their one-year anniversary after collecting over 6,000 ounces of donated breastmilk from just a handful of local mothers. In January 2024, WIC opened their first Mothers' Milk Bank Depot site where they accepted breastmilk donations from mothers from all over Northeast Ohio. The milk WIC collects is added to the nearly 35,000 ounces of donated breastmilk that eventually reaches more than 50 U.S. hospitals per month. This milk can be life changing for premature and ill babies who are unable to breastfeed.

All 6,000 ounces from the seven mothers in Northeast Ohio were pre-screened and pre-approved before dropping their milk off at Lake-Geauga WIC. The breastmilk is then frozen and shipped to Mothers Milk Bank located in Columbus, Ohio where the milk will remain frozen until ready for pasteurization and culturing. Pasteurization is a process of heating milk to a certain temperature to kill bacteria. The milk will then be cultured which is a process that tests for the presence of bacteria. Once that process is finished, the milk will be frozen again until it's ready to be sent to Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) babies in need all over Ohio and beyond.

How You Can Help

Follow these steps from Ohio Health to donate breast milk:

- Complete the initial phone screening to check your eligibility
- Read the Mothers' Milk Bank information packet
- Complete a medical and lifestyle history review
- Complete a medical release form signed by you (the donor) and your healthcare provider for both you and your baby.
- Consent to receive a blood test to screen for HIV, HTLV (human T-lymphotropic virus, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis.



Approved mothers can start donating their extra breastmilk to Lake-Geauga WIC in Painesville as soon as they're able.

Call the Mothers' Milk Bank at (614) 566-0630 to start the process today or email MilkBank@OhioHealth.com. Call (440) 350-2552 to learn more about Lake County's local drop off site located at Lake-Geauga WIC, 89 Chester St., Painesville.

Wickliffe WIC is moving to Willoughby!
New address: 35104 Euclid Ave. Willoughby.
Phone number is the same 440-833-6007.



Lake County General Health District

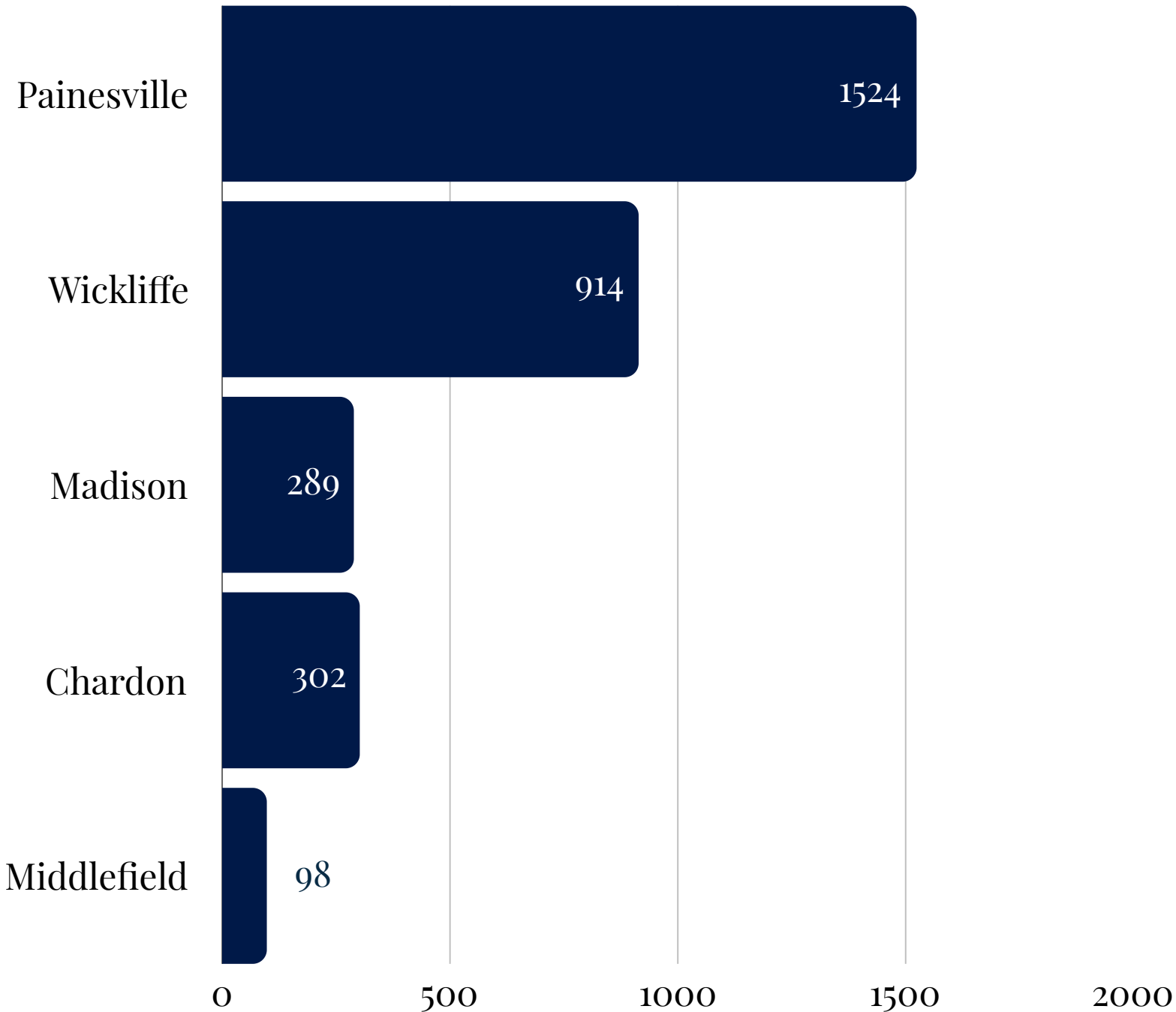


Department of Health

Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

WIC Locations

FY 24 assigned caseload by clinic.



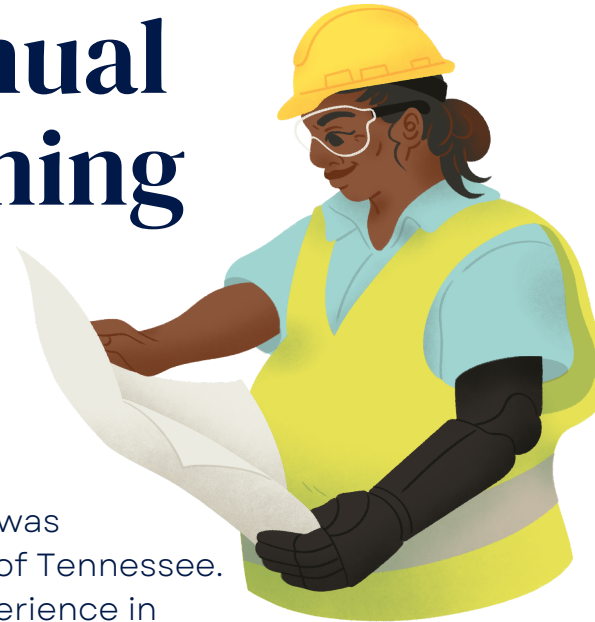
Beach Cleanup



Pilot Senior Cycling Class



LCGHD Hosts Annual Contractors Training



The Lake County General Health District Sewage Division hosted their annual Contractors Training at the LaMalfa event center on November 19, 2024.

The event saw about 170 contractors in attendance and was honored to have Dr. John Buchanan from The University of Tennessee. Dr. Buchanan has 35 years of teaching and research experience in onsite and decentralized wastewater management. He spoke about Nitrogen Reduction, Drip Systems and Low Pressure Pipe designs. His insight is particularly important because LCGHD is responsible for ensuring that contractors are properly insured and bonded with the state of Ohio. All individuals conducting business as an Installer, Service Provider, and Hauler must obtain annual educational credits before registering with LCGHD.

The LCGHD Sewage Treatment System program monitors the proper treatment and disposal of all wastewater for household, small flow, and semi-public sewage treatment systems in an effort to protect surface and groundwater from contamination.

The program also reviews, investigates, inspects, and regulates new sewage systems, replacement systems, and sewage system alterations.

The LCGHD Sewage Division continues to inform and support Lake County homeowners with septic systems through education about maintaining their septic systems and private water well sampling.

The next date for the annual Contractors Training is TBD.

82%

Attendees, on average, had an overwhelmingly positive experience at the training.



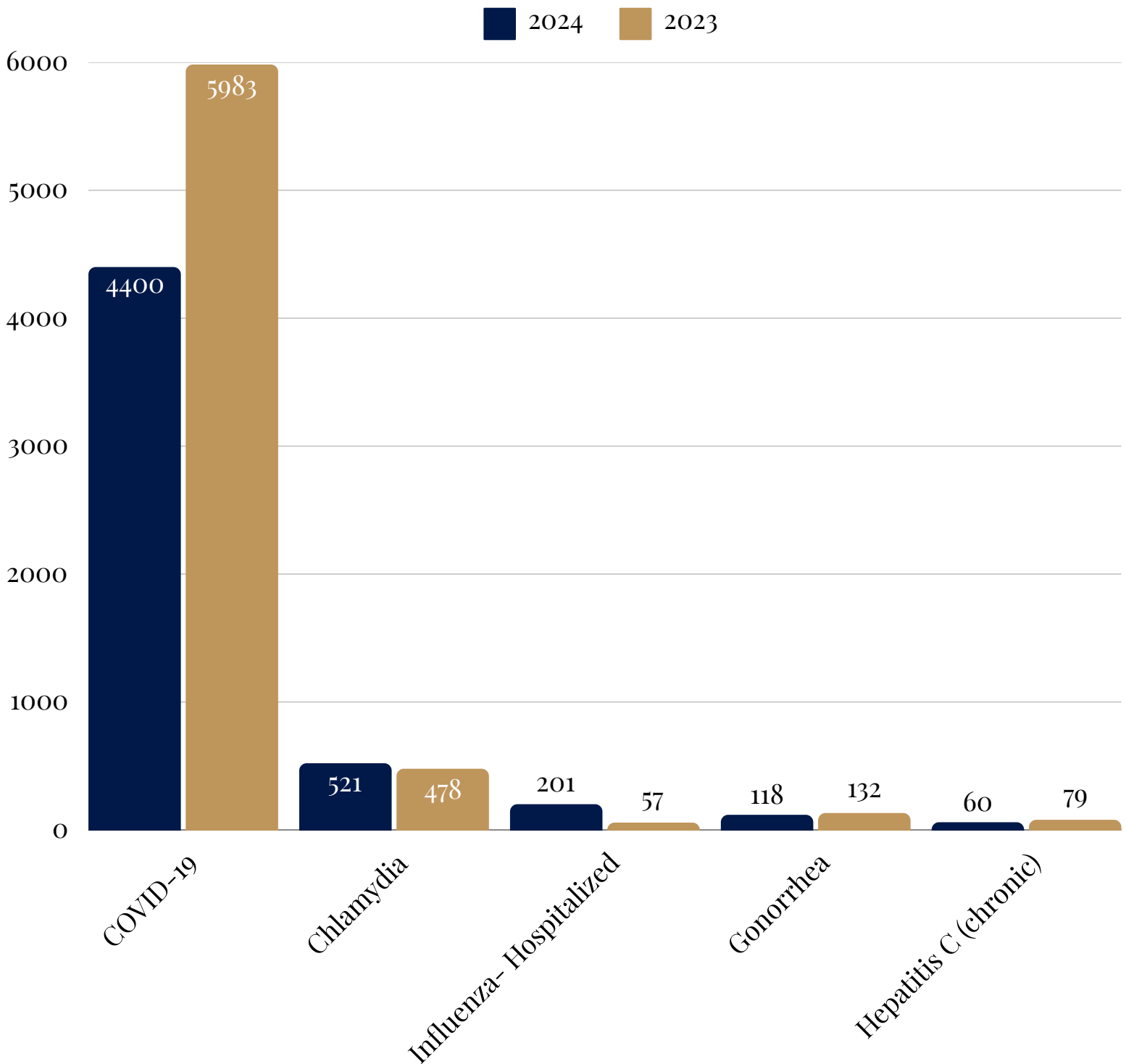
“Being able to help families and having their kids personally thank the whole staff has been amazing to be part of.”

LCGHD Staff Member



5 Most Reported Communicable Diseases

Diseases monitored by our Epidemiology team closely.



Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Graded Exercise at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant (PNPP)

The Lake County General Health District Field Monitoring Team (FMT) participated in the FEMA PNPP graded exercise held on September 24. Our FMT has a total of 12 members; seven of which were present for the drill. Two teams consisting of two members were evaluated in the FMT vans, 1 team member was evaluated at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for their coordination roles, and the remaining 2 team members that were present acted as controllers and relayed information to the FMT vans.



Field Monitoring Team Van

LCGHD is unique as we are one of the only local field monitoring teams in the country. The majority of all other counties with nuclear power plants rely on state teams. The advantage of having a local team is the speed with which we can respond to a potential release at the power plant.



Used to find a radioactive plume

During work hours, we could have teams monitoring for a radioactive plume within 90 minutes of notification. Our best guess for the state teams to arrive in the area is a minimum of 5 hours. This is important, as the data we collect is a way to verify the PNPP onsite monitoring equipment and computer models are accurate. The data we collect is used by the County Commissioners and the Ohio Department of Health to make public safety decisions like sheltering in place or evacuating an area.

The FEMA evaluators had glowing remarks about the LCGHD team.



“The team’s knowledge, understanding, and comfort with the Suggested Operating Guide was another strong point. The way it was used to ensure everything was done was also noted. Everyone is comfortable with the operating guidelines, and it showed. There is no reason to try to memorize what needs to be done in the vans. Using the procedure as they did ensure steps are not missed. This is a direct result of our training schedule.”



Kiwanis Park StoryWalk

Welcome to the Kiwanis Park StoryWalk®

Presented by the following partners:



This project is supported by a grant from the State Library of Ohio.

Special thanks to Boy Scout Troop 62 for their assistance.

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson.

Literacy Tips

Unless otherwise noted, the literacy tips found in this box come from Every Child Ready to Read.

Activity Prompts

The questions or statements found in this box will encourage communication about parts of the story to build literacy skills.



MilkBank Grand Opening



Swing set installed in collaboration with the City of Painesville

Creating a Healthier Lake County, One Cyclist at a Time

The LCGHD Senior Outreach team has made measurable differences in the lives of seniors and community centers across Lake County. Through the new Senior Cycling program, the team has been able to reach and instruct seniors at senior centers and community centers from Perry all the way to Willoughby Hills to Come Ride With Dave!

In collaboration with the newly formed bicycle advocacy group Cycle Lake County, LCGHD held a bicycle “fix-it” event at McKinley Elementary School in Fairport Harbor. Over 30 bikes were inspected, repaired or replaced by a volunteer team of six bicycle mechanics, including LCGHD’s cycling instructor and Health Commissioner Ron Graham.

What is the Mobile Senior Cycling Program?

This program uses a sturdy, portable fitness trainer that connects to a smart tablet displayed in front of each bicycle, which has a virtual cycling app for each rider. The basic 8 speed-equipped bicycles are mounted to the trainer and as the rider pedals, their actions are mirrored onscreen, in real time, by an avatar representing the user. The app is set up with various goals and achievements for participants to engage with, along with an open world “free roam” option.

40
Participants across 5 locations in Lake County in the cycling program’s first year.

30

Bikes inspected, repaired, or replaced by team of 6 bicycle mechanics.

Creating Connections for Seniors

The Senior Outreach team strives to create programming where seniors can be active, independent, engaged, social and ultimately improve their quality of life.

Contact a local community or senior center to see if this cycling class is currently being offered or contact David Patton, the instructor, directly at 440-391-6524.

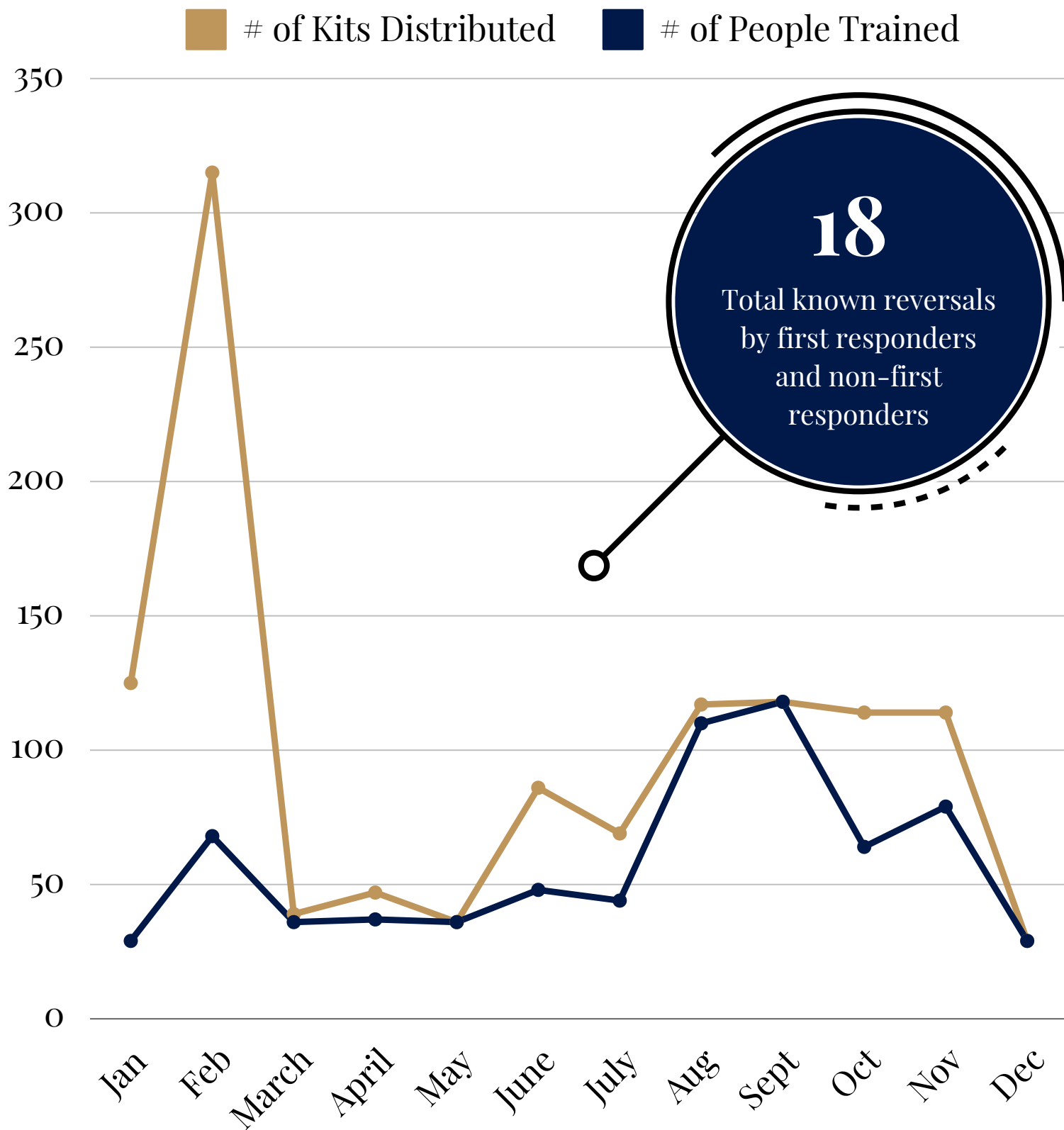


“I was happy to see my endurance improving as at the beginning I was watching the clock and at the later cycling classes, I wasn’t even aware it was time to stop until I was told.”

Perry Senior Cyclist

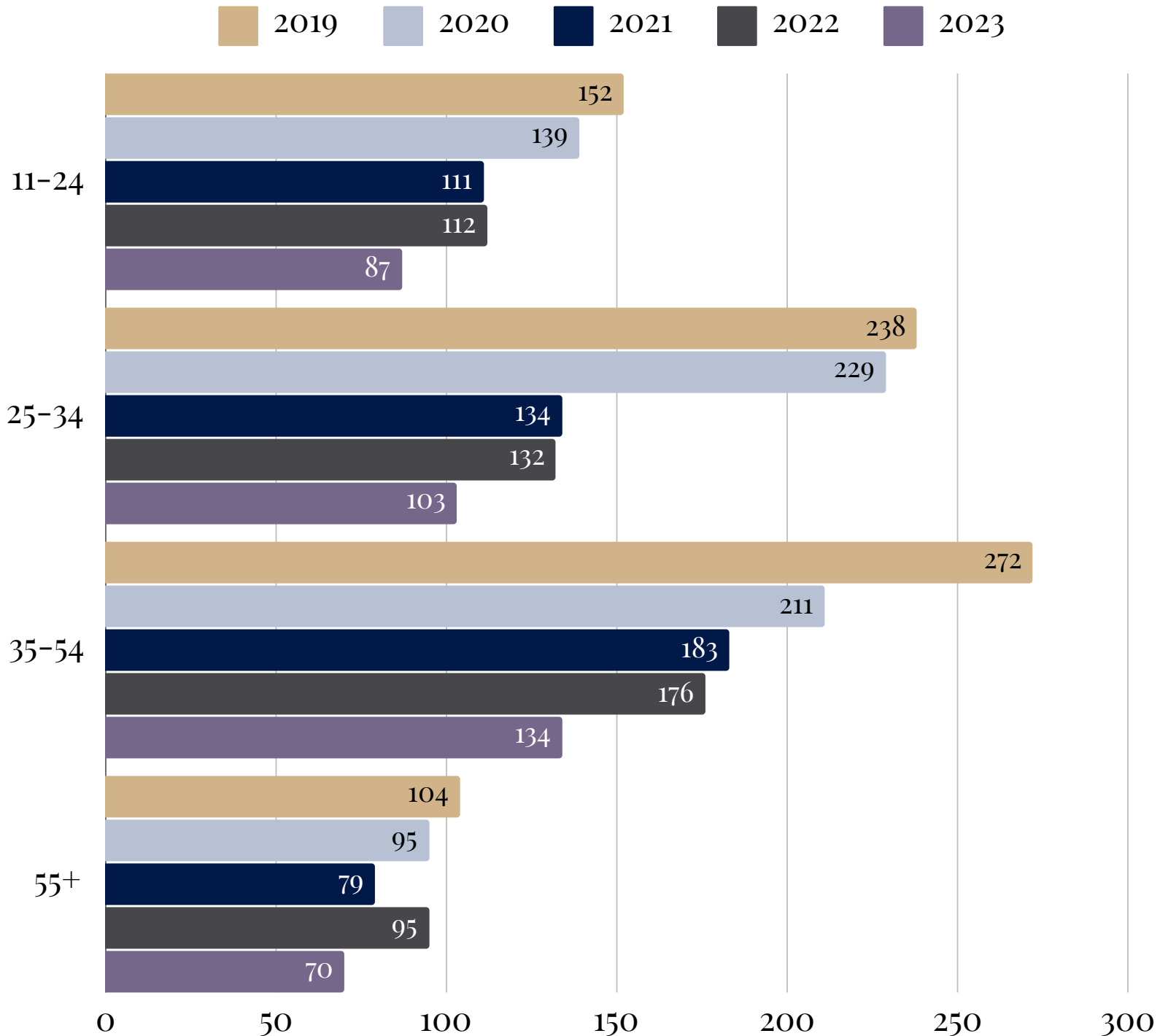


Naloxone Distribution



Suspected Overdoses by Age and Year

Suspected overdoses have continued to go down since 2019.



2025 ODH Violence and Injury Epidemiology and Surveillance Section (VIESS)



Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Enrollment Complete

Enrollment of all household sewage treatment systems (septic systems) into the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) program is now complete. The Operation and Maintenance program is a state-mandated, unfunded program to ensure that all residents with household sewage treatment systems are obtaining routine maintenance for their systems to ensure proper function. Lake County General Health District evaluates compliance with operation permits via receipt of service and pumping records submitted by contractors and homeowners.

The aim of this program is two-fold. One goal of O&M is that routine maintenance will lengthen the lifespan of any septic system and reduce how often systems need to be replaced. The second objective is to protect Lake County's water. Nutrients and bacteria in untreated sewage can contribute to poor water quality in our streams, rivers, and Lake Erie, which can ultimately lead to Harmful Algal Blooms.



As part of this program, the health district began a quarterly stream sampling program in 2022 to track water quality improvement over time due to better septic system maintenance.

The sampling map can be found at this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/5xhtm2y9>

Streams are sampled and evaluated for nitrate, E. coli bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and visual characteristics. Samples are given a score out of 10 to indicate the overall quality of the stream. Descriptions and explanations of the parameters tested can be found on the linked dashboard.

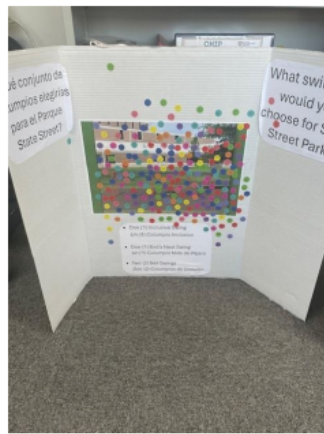
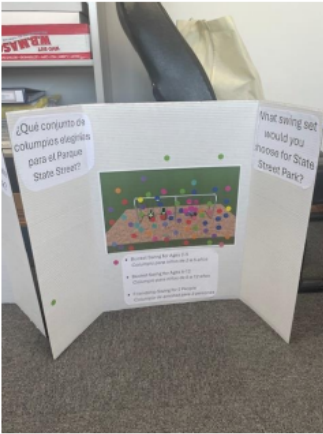


“I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to senior well-aging through LCGHD's Senior Mobile Cycling Program and the many personal successes senior participants are experiencing.”

LCGHD staff member



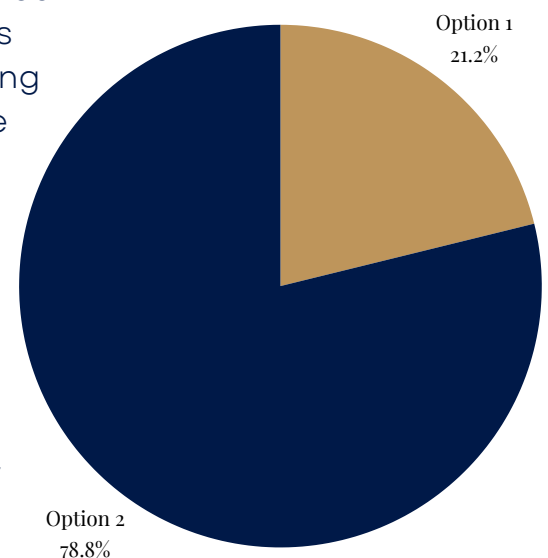
Painesville Students Choose New Swing Set for South State Street Park



Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) and the City of Painesville are pleased to announce a new, inclusive swing set has been installed at South State Street Park located at 384 South State Street in Painesville. This installation is the culmination of a two-year project funded by the Ohio Department of Health as part of its Capacity Building for Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) program.

In 2023, LCGHD conducted a Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Assessment and targeted community resident interviews in Painesville around the areas of healthy eating and active living. Through those assessments, Painesville residents voiced their wishes for several types of amenities in their neighborhood parks, and the addition of swings at South State Street Park was suggested time and again. Staff from Painesville's Public Lands & Recreation Department solicited quotes from several vendors and in March 2024, students from Maple Elementary and the Salvation's Army's Learning Zone used a dot-voting method to select which structure would be installed. The structure chosen by the students is from Playground Equipment Services (PES), and includes two belt swings, one bird's nest swing, and one inclusive swing.

The purpose of the HEAL program is to provide funding for community assessment and engagement with local community residents while working toward sustainability and expansion of these efforts within the county or jurisdiction. LCGHD will continue to work with residents and communities to improve policies, systems and environments through the Creating Healthy Communities program.





Lake County
General Health District

Great Lakes Mall Event



Safe Communities
Event



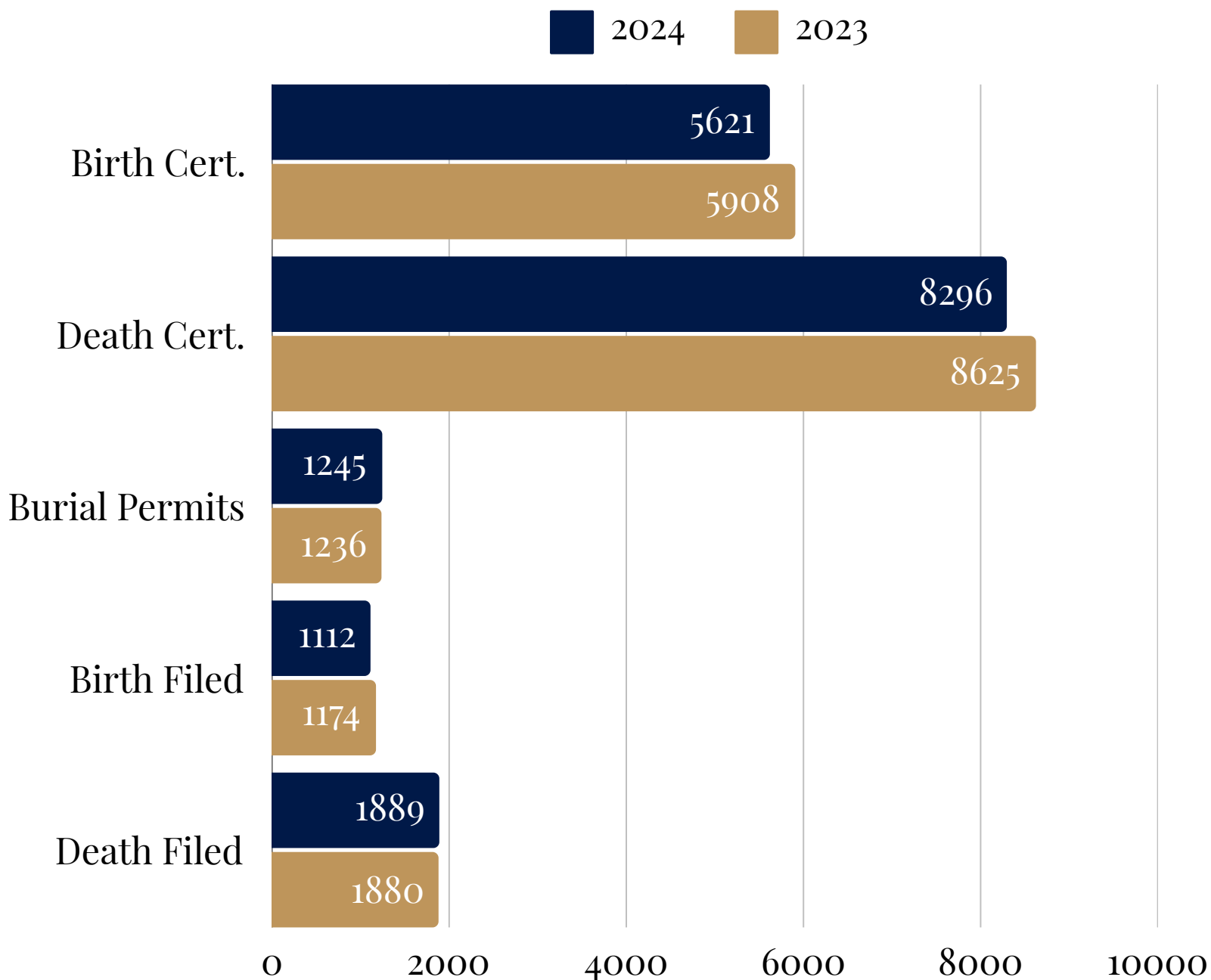
Community Safety Check
Event with Cycle Lake County



Student dot-voting
for swing set

Vital Statistics Sales and Services Rendered

This includes the services LCGHD provided to those who needed to report births, deaths, and burials.



“Presenter was upbeat, clearly articulate and demonstrates that she cares.”

Local Nonprofit Employee about Naloxone Training
Presentation



LCGHD Conducts Focus Groups to Hear From Residents

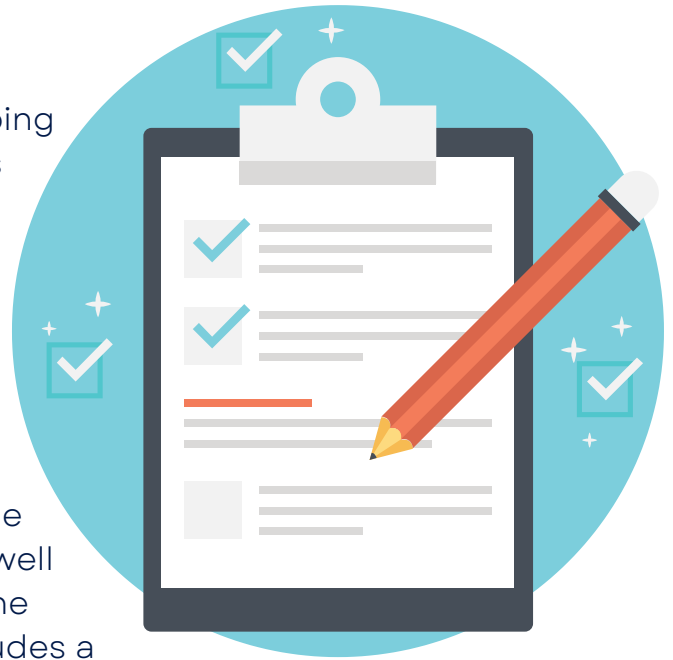
The Lake County General Health District (LCGHD), with University Hospitals, is in the process of wrapping up the 2025 Lake County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). This assessment is a way for LCGHD and University Hospitals to hear from the public about their health-related concerns like access to healthy food, smoking cigarettes, substance use, mental health challenges and other areas.

The purpose of the assessment is to understand the current health needs of Lake County residents, as well as understand both where and how the health of the community can be improved. The assessment includes a review of national and state data sources, the community resident survey, and targeted community focus groups, which are currently happening across Lake County.

Partnered with University Hospitals and Four Springs Health, LCGHD began conducting focus groups for Eastern, Central, and Western Lake County in late November. Six focus groups targeting various populations including, but not limited to, the Latinx, senior, and the Black populations were conducted and open to anyone from those target populations who wanted to share their opinions. General population focus groups were conducted as well, along with a community resident survey which became available on December 16 to further engage residents and collect data.

How will this information be used?

The information collected from the CHNA will be used to inform the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which is expected to start in Fall 2025.



Connecting & Reaching



Reach: 229,058
Posts: 689
Engagements: 6,836
Followers: 10,287



Reach: 62,087
Posts: 386
Engagements: 329
Followers: 329



Reach: 86,013
Posts: 313
Engagements: 64
Followers: 201



Reach: 41,545
Posts: 500
Engagements: 1,100
Followers: 2,233

Goals for 2025

- Continue reaching and informing residents.
- Continue growing following and engagement.
- Foster positive and informative engagement with the public.
- Share more about what our staff is up to.
- Interact with local organizations more.
- Become a “go-to” place for accurate information.



Breast Feeding Peer Table



Safe Communities Event



Community Safety Check Event with Cycle Lake County



LCGHD Emergency Preparedness Division Training and Exercise Program

Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) takes several different parts into consideration when identifying emergency preparedness priorities. In addition to identified local threats, hazards, and risks, LCGHD uses lessons learned from our robust training and exercise program to make improvements in overall emergency preparedness planning and response.

Training and exercise in the public health emergency preparedness world combine educational training with practical drills and simulations to give LCGHD's staff the knowledge and skills they need to effectively respond to different public health emergency situations, such as infectious disease outbreaks, nuclear accidents, and flooding. Trainings can take the form of classroom instruction, seminars, and remote learning opportunities, while exercises are simulated emergency scenarios that let participants practice their roles in decision-making, coordination, and response in a controlled environment. Exercises are designed to test emergency plans and identify areas where the plans may be improved.



Some trainings and exercises are required by state and federal grants that help to fund the LCGHD Emergency Preparedness Division, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Cooperative Agreement. Lake County is also a Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) jurisdiction due to its location in the five-county Cleveland-Elyria Metropolitan Statistical Area. The CRI is a federally funded program that strengthens preparedness in areas where, when added together, nearly 60% of the nation's population lives. CRI increases the need for LCGHD to be able to respond to large-scale public health emergencies, such as bioterrorism and other events.



Would You Like to Participate?

In support of PHEP and CRI, LCGHD's training and exercise program in 2025 will include a series of drills, including staff notification, and the opening and set-up of a Point of Dispensing, or POD, which is a location where public health goods (medication, vaccinations, etc.) are given to the public. These drills will be concluded with an exercise that will require 200 people to simulate that they are getting goods from the POD to figure out how long it takes, and to make improvements to the design of the POD.

LCGHD is seeking volunteers to help us test out the POD.

A goal of the LCGHD Emergency Preparedness Division is to work with the whole community to leave them with an understanding of what may be required of them during different types of public health emergencies with the goal of keeping the community as safe and healthy as possible. A "whole community" approach means that everyone, including those who may have unique needs, are encouraged to volunteer for this exercise.

For more information about when and where the exercise will take place and how to get involved, please visit our website at www.lcghd.org, or call Jessica Wakelee, Manager of Emergency Preparedness at 440-350-2543.



POD during COVID-19 Response



"I just wanted to follow up from last weeks phone call. Our department has had many interactions with your department and we appreciate the helpfulness and knowledge that always accompany it. I wanted to reach out and really put a spotlight on Kristen Fink in your department. She was working on an issue on Chandler Court last week and truly was awesome. We had a customer call and thank her for explaining everything to them and how nice she was as well as our Dept. had great things to say about her knowledge, friendliness, and how on top of things she is. Always a pleasure working on projects with her, I'm sure you already know this but wanted to express our appreciation."

From a LC Utilities Employee.



Special Thanks

AAA

Alliance Against Human Trafficking

Alliance for Working Together

BrightView Health

Campus of Wickliffe

Catholic Charities

Celebrate Recovery

City of Mentor

City of Painesville

Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Cleveland Rape Crisis Center

Community of the Holy Spirit

Crossroads Health

Cycle Lake County

Eastlake Police Department

Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve

Extending Housing

Forbes House

Four Springs Health

Grief Share Support Group

Grieving OverDose

Kirtland Community Center

Kirtland Library

Kirtland Police Department

Lake Catholic High School

Lake County ADAMHS Board

Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Lake County Commissioners Office

Lake County Coroner's Office

Lake County Council on Aging

Lake County Fair

Lake County Free Medical Clinic

Lake County Jobs and Family Services



Special Thanks

Lake County Juvenile Court
Lake County NAACP
Lake County Narcotics
Lake County Opioid Alliance
Lake County Probation Office
Lake County Sheriff's Office
Lake County Treasurer's Office
Lake County YMCA
Lake Erie College
Lake Geauga Recovery Center
Lake Geauga WIC
Lake Metroparks
Lake Metroparks Ranger Department
Lakeland Community College
Laketrans
Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
Madison High School
Madison Public Library
Mar-Bal Inc.
Marous Brothers Construction
Mentor High School
Mentor Police Department
New Season
Ohio Department of Health Project Dawn
Ohio Department of Transportation - District 12
Ohio Living Breckenridge Village
Ohio Means Jobs
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Chardon Post
Painesville Police Department
Perry Fire Department
Perry High School
Perry Senior Center
Project Hope for the Homeless
reLink Medical
Salvation Army



Special Thanks

Signature Health
State Farm Insurance
Students Against Destructive Decisions
Surfside Towers Senior Living
Sub Zero Mission
Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance
United Way of Lake County
University Hospitals
Wickliffe Family Resource Center
Willoughby Hills Senior Center
Willoughby Senior Center



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“Balance is better, exercise value-great, was fun to ‘travel’,
Dave was great explaining cycling protocol.”

Mentor Senior Cyclist



Contact Us

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 www.LCGHD.org

