

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

During the holiday season, we are often called upon to help others.



Heather Foll has created a network that works year-round to help others.

Heather, Community Connection and Special Olympics coordinator for the Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities, created the Friends, Allies & Neighbors Network.

Called FANS, the network was created to help people with developmental disabilities in Pickaway County by connecting with community members.

When Heather hears of a client who needs something, she sends an e-mail to those on the network mailing list, about 250 members.

If a network member can help, he or she replies to the e-mail. If not, just hit delete, Heather said.

"There's no formal commitment," Heather said. "Just a simple way to help out."

Heather started her job in January and was asked to start the FANS Network, basing it on a format that is used by the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

FANS started in February and Heather said she has been thrilled with the response so far.

One client had a driveway that was so filled with potholes she couldn't get out to go to work.

Upon sending an e-mail to the network, the Shelly Co. donated 3 tons of gravel. Then Arledge Construction picked up, delivered and spread the gravel for the client.

"This all happened within a week," Heather said.

Heather credits some of the network's success to her long-time connections in the community as a native of Pickaway County.



Dec. 16, 2016

She also thinks the goal of the network – to make the community more inclusive – resonates with everyone.

"We are educating people on what we do and the community has been very receptive."

Heather has created events in an effort to bring those with and without disabilities together, such as a painting night held recently and plans to have a fashion show in the spring.

"People of all abilities can model clothes; we'd love to work with local businesses to show their fashions and get the community involved," Heather said.

For more information about the FANS Network or to become a FAN, contact Heather at hfoll@pickawaydd.org or (740) 477-3353, Ext. 39.

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Heather Foll, center, with FANS network members Kristin Morrison and Josh Arledge