

## MARCH IS DD AWARENESS MONTH

In 1987 President Ronald Regan signed [Proclamation 5613](#), declaring March 1987 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Since 1987, March has been recognized as DD Awareness Month—a time to recognize the awe-inspiring achievements of the DD population, and to raise awareness about the barriers those with disabilities still face in everyday life. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) works every day to assist those with Developmental Disabilities to live their lives on their own terms, and recognizes the achievements of our community as they pursue their education, employment, and community living goals. OCDD encourages everyone to share their stories during March using [#DDawareness2021](#).

OCDD serves as the single point of entry (SPOE) into the developmental disabilities services system, and oversees public and private residential services and other services for people with developmental disabilities. OCDD conducts an assessment of anyone requesting services to determine the person's eligibility for services. Eligibility is based on the definition of developmental disability contained in [Louisiana R.S. 28:451.1-455.2](#). OCDD strives for a society that promotes partnerships and relationships which empower people with developmental disabilities to live fully integrated and valued lives. We administer several programs and waivers to help participants receive the most appropriate services, for their health, safety, and welfare. We also strive to allow participants the ability to make their own decisions about their lives and services. You can further explore OCDD's services on our [website](#). To inquire about services please contact your local [Human Services District](#), or by emailing [OCDDInfo@la.gov](mailto:OCDDInfo@la.gov).

Lillian DeJean, of Lafayette, LA, is employed in the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA).

Lillian is a student at Nicholls State University majoring in Political Science. She has served as an appointed member on the [Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council](#) since 2017. Lillian is the youngest person, and only youth, ever appointed to the Council. She is also a member of the Adult Advisory Council (AACT) of the [United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation \(UMDF\)](#), and served as their 2018 Teen Ambassador.

Lillian is the recipient of multiple awards, including the [2017 Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities Youth of the Year Award](#), the 2017 Lafayette Parish Consolidated Government Disability Committee Youth of the Year Award, the 2018 Acadiana Community Media's Gumption and Gusto Award, and the [2020 Louisiana Public Broadcasting Young Hero Award](#).

As a talented public speaker, Lillian has quite a resume. She was the keynote speaker at the 2019 Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children's SuperConference, panelist at the 2019 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities National Conference, presenter at the 2020 Oklahoma's Youth Leadership Forum, and [keynote speaker at the 2020 Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Annual Conference](#). Lillian has also [testified at the legislature many times over the years](#).

Lillian believes that cultivating a new generation of disability advocates begins with a community-wide appreciation for youth advocacy, disability culture, and disability history.

#DDawareness2021 Profile: Lillian DeJean

