

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Summit County celebrates March Women’s History, DD Awareness Month**

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—On February 28, 2022, County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council passed a resolution declaring March Women’s History Month and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Women’s History Month honors the achievements of women throughout the history of the United States, especially the accomplishments made by women while facing significant challenges. Among these accomplishments are the right to vote, the right to own property, and guarantees of gender equality on the local, state, and federal levels.

One of the earliest gatherings for the advancement of women’s rights in the United States was the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention held in Akron, Ohio, where Sojourner Truth made her famous speech, known as the “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech. A champion for both women’s rights and the abolition of slavery, Sojourner Truth argued that if she could work as hard as any man, why should she be denied the rights she had earned? The women’s movement, spanning centuries, contributed to the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, securing the right to vote for women and later women of color. These achievements can be attributed to the tenacity and grit of thousands of women working toward the ultimate goals of equality and equity in society.

Following the National Women’s History Project’s petitioning of Congress in 1987, March was declared Women’s History Month in perpetuity with the purpose of honoring all women in the United States. Though challenges remain, the stories of the past and present continue to inspire all women to fight for equality and remind us to celebrate the perseverance and courage of our predecessors.

“It is important for our community to reflect on the past and current struggle for the equality of all women, especially women of color, while celebrating the progress made over our history,” said County Executive Shapiro. “Summit County has a rich tradition of supporting and elevating women, and I look forward to seeing this tradition continue for years to come as the young women of our community grow into leaders who will make their own history.”

March is also Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, an annual campaign that celebrates the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of life with the intention of both highlighting the barriers that inhibit people from connection to their communities and breaking those barriers down. The Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board is participating in this campaign by

asking residents to spread the word by wearing orange clothes or stickers as well as posting pictures or graphics on social media.

Summit DD is also hosting Inclusion Day on Monday, March 7 and Inclusion Day at the Zoo from March 5-7, where residents can receive free admission for wearing orange to the Akron Zoo. To participate on social media, use the hashtag #IncludeME or tag @SummitDD on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Visit <https://www.summitdd.org/> for more information.

“We should all take time this month to consider what we can do, personally and collectively, to ensure people with developmental disabilities can easily connect to the communities in which they live,” said County Executive Shapiro. “Doing so will strengthen and diversify our communities, helping all of our residents feel welcomed and valued.”

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