



Shalanda Lawrence

Self-Advocate of the Year 2024

Tonight, we are recognizing someone whose voice, determination, and courage have become a driving force for change and empowerment...Shalanda Lawrence.

Throughout 2024, Shalanda demonstrated an inspiring blend of optimism and strength in her personal journey. While navigating her treatment, she not only maintained a positive outlook but also built meaningful, lasting connections with her peers and support staff—reminding us all the power of community.

Over the past year, Shalanda embraced new opportunities for connection and growth including graduating from the Project STIR program. She also switched Adult Day Service providers, which has led to increased social engagement, and expanded her employment days from two days to three days per week.

What makes Shalanda truly exceptional is her voice—her unshakable commitment to speaking up for herself and for others who may not yet be able to speak for themselves. At the Northwest Ohio Developmental Center, where she currently resides, Shalanda has become one of the most vocal and respected advocates on campus.

With the support of her team, she has turned personal empowerment into community impact—driving forward conversations about dignity, inclusion, and person-centered care. Her courage in making her choices known and her willingness to challenge the status quo have inspired both staff and peers alike.

Shalanda, your journey is a shining example of resilience, leadership, and the importance of using your voice to lift others. Thank you for leading the way. We are honored to present you with this year's Self-Advocate of the Year Award from the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities.