

# Athelas Institute, Inc.

SPRING 2018

## ATHELAS ADVOCATE



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*Christy Scott and Melanie Cole working at the Community Resource Center*

Athelas Institute  
9104 Red Branch Road  
Columbia, MD 21045

410.964.1241  
[www.athelasinstitute.org](http://www.athelasinstitute.org)  
[www.facebook.com/AthelasInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/AthelasInstitute)

## Who We Are and What We Do: Athelas Institute, Inc.

Since 1976, Athelas has been the premier organization for serving individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. We continually strive to help both individuals and their caregivers. Currently we have services in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County and Howard County. Limited services may also be available in Anne Arundel County.

Our mission has always been to provide opportunities for growth and personal accomplishment to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities complemented by quality services and meaningful community engagement.

For 40 years, Athelas has pioneered specialized programs in residential services, individual services, and specialized day programs for disabled seniors, dually diagnosed individuals and for individuals with autism.

This quarterly newsletter is intended to be a resource for the community. Inside these pages, you will find information about our organization, useful tools and supportive information for caregivers, health tips, highlights of the outstanding works that our individuals do in their everyday life, feature stories, and updates on events such as Special Olympics and the Athelas Institute Annual Campaign.

Our hope is to be a beacon of help, hope and light to the community. We have fantastic individuals who are working, volunteering and having fulfilling days at our programs and in the community. Their journey and that of their caregivers deserves to be shared; thus opening the conversation on how to further support each other, and how to make a difference in the lives of others.

For more information on our organization, or to make a donation, please visit our website: [www.athelasinstitute.org](http://www.athelasinstitute.org) or call 410.964.1241.

*“There is no more important or noble work than to have the opportunity to have a positive impact on someone’s life.”*  
— Ray Jordan,  
Founder,  
Athelas Institute  
Inc.

## New Athelas Mission & Vision



After 40 years of operation, Athelas’ executive team has been reviewing many of our documents,

policies, etc. to make sure that we are working within the best practices for a non-profit organization. This is being done in an effort to assure that we are using current language and program philosophies in all we do. As a part of this process, we spent several sessions updating the Athelas Mission and Vision statements. Neither had been

refreshed in at least 20 years!

Below are the new Mission and Vision statements which, we feel, much more accurately portray where we are now (our Mission) and where we see ourselves going (our Vision).

**Mission Statement:**

Providing opportunities for growth and personal accomplishment to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities complemented by quality services and meaningful community engagement.

**Vision Statement:**

To participate in a world where all people are empowered to live a life of opportunity, individual satisfaction and success.

You will see these new statements all around Athelas. We are encouraging staff to use these as a guide in all we do “For the Individual.”



## A Letter from the Executive Director, Diane LaSov



March 1, 2018

To the Athelas Community,

I cannot express how honored I am to have been appointed Executive Director of Athelas Institute, Inc. It is true that I have been here for many years and have had the experience of doing many different jobs during this time. I have also had the honor of working with Ray Jordan throughout that time and helped to develop the Athelas Mission and Vision. Since the Mission is what we are doing now, my focus is to continue to provide services and opportunities for individuals at Athelas, which help to accomplish the Vision.

As a service provider to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, we are in the midst of changing times. Maryland is now an Employment First state and DDA is changing the ways in which our services are being provided. It will be a process over the next many years. My goal is to assure that Athelas Institute is informed about all new initiatives and to help guide Athelas through these changes.

To assist with this transition and guide me in areas that are relatively new to me, Athelas has enlisted the help of Arnie Dordick. Arnie is the recently retired Executive Director of Langton Green, a provider agency located in Annapolis. Athelas and Langton Green have worked together in past years. After 30 years, Arnie has passed on the baton at Langton and is offering his expertise as a consultant to agencies like Athelas. He will bring an objective, fresh perspective, as well as a working knowledge of our services, to help enhance what Athelas is already doing.

I am grateful for our knowledgeable, professional staff and I look forward to working with everyone, through these changing times. I have no doubt that Athelas will continue to improve its services and be a leader in the state of Maryland.

As always, my door is open to your feedback and great ideas! It will be an exciting time and a team effort of which I am looking forward to being a part. I hope to share the great energy of dedicated personnel and individuals making great strides in the coming years. Athelas is still and will always remain "For the Individual".

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane LaSov". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

Best Regards,



A DYNAMIC, EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM FOR CAREGIVERS



Powerful Tools  
FOR Caregivers

**A**re you a caregiver, or do you know someone who is? The Howard County Office on Aging and Independence and the Caregiver Support Program is excited to introduce Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC), an evidence-based program designed with the caregiver's well-being in mind.

This six-week series of 90-minute classes offers caregivers opportunities to explore a variety of self-care tools in a supportive environment, designed to help you:

- reduce personal stress
- change negative self-talk
- communicate more effectively in challenging situations
- manage your emotions
- make tough caregiving decisions

Previous participants have found the learned program tools improve relaxation and exercise habits, as well as their physical and mental well-being. The tools also helped them better manage their emotions, increased confidence in their ability to meet caregiving demands, and improved their ability to seek out and utilize community resources.

If you or someone you know is a caregiver, we encourage you to register today! Our goal is to improve the lives of caregivers (and ultimately their care recipients) through outreach, conversation, training and resources.

If you need this information in an alternate format, or need accommodations to participate, contact Maryland Access Point of Howard County at 410-313-1234.

2018 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Ellicott City 50+ Center, 9401 Frederick Rd., Ellicott City 21043

March 7 through April 11

5:30 to 7:00 PM (six consecutive Wednesdays)

April 17 through May 22

6:00 to 7:30 PM (six consecutive Tuesdays)

September 11 through October 16

6:00 to 7:30 PM (six consecutive Tuesdays)

October 11 through November 15

5:30 to 7:00 PM (six consecutive Thursdays)

\*\$30 fee covers all materials

— FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER —

Kathy Wehr

CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM MANAGER

410-313-5955 (VOICE/RELAY) • kwehr@howardcountymd.gov

“You can’t pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first.”

— Unknown

## Tax Law Makes Changes to ABLE Account

As a result of provisions to the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, families who have saved money in 529 savings accounts can roll over up to \$15,000 each year from a 529 account to an ABLE account.

Here are some advantages and disadvantages.

For the entire articles, visit: <https://specialneedsanswers.com/new-tax-law-makes-changes-to-able-accounts-16488>

<https://specialneedsanswers.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-able-accounts-15004>

### What is a 529 Savings Account?

A tax-advantaged savings plan designed to encourage saving for the future higher education expenses of a beneficiary. This beneficiary is typically one's child or grandchild, but there does not need to be a family relationship. (Maryland529)

### What is an ABLE Account?

ABLE Accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families. These savings still allow the beneficiary to maintain eligibility for Medicaid and other means-tested public benefits programs. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Contributions to the account, which can be made by any person (the account beneficiary, family and friends), must be made using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible for purposes of federal taxes, however some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contribution made to an ABLE account. (National Resource Center)

*Advantage:* While 529 accounts were solely used to cover college costs, the monies can now be used for a child's K-12 education

in a public, private or religious school.

*Advantage:* The account beneficiary who earns income from employment will be able to make ABLE contributions above the \$15,000 annual cap from their own income up to the Federal Poverty Level, provided they do not participate in their employer's retirement plan.

*Disadvantage:* If there are funds remaining in an ABLE account upon the death of the account beneficiary, they must be first used to reimburse the government for Medicaid, and then the remaining funds will have to pass through probate in order to be transferred to the beneficiary's heirs.

For more information about qualifying for an ABLE account, please call 1-855-563-225 or visit [www.marylandable.org](http://www.marylandable.org)





# SPRING DANCES



## ATHELAS COMMUNITY DANCE

**Date: April 14, 2018**

**Time: 1:00pm-3:00pm**

**DJ - Big Owl**

**Cost: \$5.00 (Caregivers Free)**

**[plowens@athelasinstitute.org](mailto:plowens@athelasinstitute.org)**

**410-964-1241 Ext. 128**

**9104 Red Branch Road**

**Columbia, MD 21045**



# Supported Employment At Athelas

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy invested in efforts that would increase community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities.

This national movement is called **Employment First** — a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that **all** citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.

Since 1976, Athelas Institute has been a forerunner in programming that speaks to this very need. Our Supported Employment Program (SE) is structured around the Employment Discovery and Customization process which is designed to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to discover their unique skills, capacities, strengths, and support needs necessary to gain integrated employment.

The time-limited process to determine where the person would be best-suited involves three key steps. Listed below are the steps along with some of the services they encompass:

1.) **Discovery:** The process of gathering information about the person for the purpose of job development. Through discovery we learn about interests, connections in the community, supports needed, and the skills that the person already possesses.

- Getting to know the individuals comfortability level in different situations alongside different skills
- Utilize conversations, interviews, and observations
- Cataloging findings in a descriptive profile so that the person may be matched with the appropriate job

## 2.) Job Development:

Developing a person's skill set (consolidating the discovery information into conditions).

- Job and analysis activities
- Job seeking training skills
- Job exploration and shadowing
- Mock Interviews

## 3.) Customized Employment:

Considers both the needs of the individual and the employer. This stage is done during and after the hiring process (if needed).

- Fits employment to who the person is, what the person needs and what the person has to offer
- Job training
- Community-based situational assessments

Due to these in-depth processes, many individuals have been successful in maintaining employment or internships at various places in the community, including:

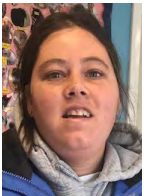
- ◆ Baltimore County Public Schools
- ◆ Burger King
- ◆ Colosseum Gym
- ◆ Didlake
- ◆ Giant
- ◆ Goodwill
- ◆ Grace E. Day Care
- ◆ Happy Dog Day Care
- ◆ Howard County Public Schools
- ◆ Industrial Deli
- ◆ Maggiano's
- ◆ McDonald's
- ◆ Safeway
- ◆ Tino's Italian Bistro
- ◆ VSP, Inc.
- ◆ Wal-Mart
- ◆ Wendy's
- ◆ Athelas Institute, Inc.
- ◆ Auto Spa
- ◆ Baltimore County Parks & Recs

*“People with developmental disabilities CAN work, and contribute to their community, when given opportunity, training, and supports that build on their strengths.”*  
— **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**

To be admitted into this program, the individual must have an Intellectual Disability, be at least 18 years of age, have potential to benefit from and participate in a work-oriented program, and demonstrate a desire to participate in work services.

# Taking Care of Business

We wanted to get some feedback from some of the individuals who have successfully obtained employment or an internship within the community. Each person has gone through the Supported Employment program which has given them the necessary tools needed to succeed in their specific workplace environment. Here are their comments.



**Abby Anderson:**  
**Happy Dog Day Care**

"I love it there! I get to take care of dogs, feed the dogs and watch the dogs. I definitely like everyone because they are nice to me. I love them! I know I

am a good worker because everyone tells me so."



**Eric Blackwell:**  
**Safeway**

"At Safeway, I put the food back on the right shelves when people don't want it, I bring in carts, and clean up messes [in the aisles]. My supervisor, Ms. Stacy, trained me and I learned about cleaning supplies on the computer. I know I am a good worker because I am always working. I find things to do all the time."



**Melanie Cole:**  
**Athelas—CRC**

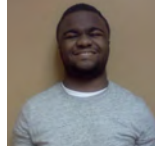
"I am the receptionist at CRC. I answer phones, greet visitors, make copies, file, and help take attendance. Ms. Vickie trained me really well, and I can work independently. I know I'm a good worker because I got a certificate for being employee of the month."



**Alan Conway:**  
**Auto Spa**

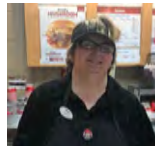
"I am helpful and I come prepared to work each day. My favorite part is greeting the customers. Rodney is my supervisor

and he helped train me so that I can work there."



**Eddie Jackson:**  
**Oakland Mills MS**

"I help the gym teacher with the balls and mats in the gym. I also help the principal with filing. I am always on time, and I am learning to follow directions. Filing helps me with my alphabet."



**Rachel Kalatzis:**  
**Wendy's & McDonald's**

"I work Wednesday-Sunday at both of my jobs. I work on the cash register, greet customers, and clean. All of my co-workers help me when I need it. I am a good worker because I am dependable."



**Kenny McCue:**  
**Tino's Bistro**

"I am a busboy. Everyone is nice to me and I am a part of a team. I know how to work hard. As soon as I walk in, I go straight to work."



**Germaine Nangle:**  
**Burger King**

"I like working at my job. I enjoy mopping because I like things to be clean and tidy. I am a good worker because I get along with people, keep busy, and I make sure everything gets done."



**Paul Phillips:**  
**Athelas—Facilities**

"I help Billy with whatever he needs like moving furniture, painting, or fixing stuff. I really like my job because my boss is cool and I really like working with my hands. I know I am a good worker because I work hard! I get things done!"



**James Powell:**  
**Athelas—Facilities**

"I work with Billy in the Facilities Department. I help to keep the grounds in proper shape,

(like landscaping), and I also help with things like plumbing, and drywall work. I like my job because it's hard and it's fun. I'm a good worker because I work hard, I following Billy's rules, and I pay attention."



**Christy Scott:**  
**Athelas—CRC**

"I assist Vickie, the Administrative Supervisor. My job is to file, log attendance, order supplies and type. I really

like being challenged, so I like getting new projects. I am a good worker because I get my work done, I'm on time, and I like learning new things."



**Tabitha Smallwood:**  
**Industrial Deli**

"I have good skills. I like to help people, so I like my job. I am learning to work carefully."



**Christopher Snell:**  
**Safeway**

"I am the cart clerk at my job. I really like helping people with their groceries. My supervisor, Melinda, trained me so

now I can work alone. I am a hard worker."



**Danyelle Wilton:**  
**Burger King**

"My job is to clean, greet customers, and take out the trash cans. When I need help, I can ask my manager. I know I am a

good worker because I am on time, and I try my best to get all of my work done."



**Jennifer Wright:**  
**Day Care**

"I hand staff [items] when they need it, I clean up after meals, and I prepare the room for nap time. I am independent."



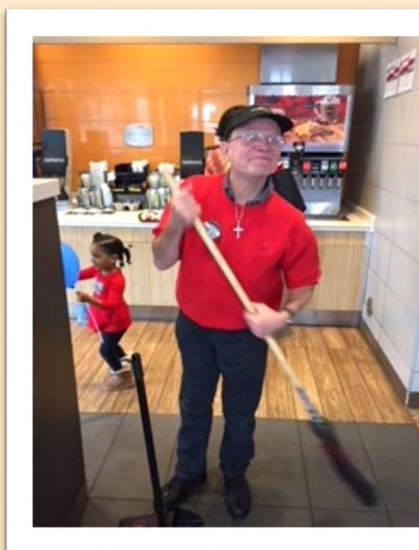


**EMPLOYMENT**   
**MARYLAND**



## LOOKING FOR TEAM PLAYERS?

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR DEPENDABLE,  
HARD-WORKING, AND EFFICIENT TEAM MEMBERS FOR  
YOUR BUSINESS, PLEASE CONTACT  
ATHELAS' EMPLOYMENT COORDINATOR,  
SCHERAZADE AGURTO  
410.964.1241 x 173  
SAGURTO@ATHELASINSTITUTE.ORG



## Bryan Zapatosky: Seasons Greetings



who would benefit from donated gifts. Here is their story.

### The Patterson's

It has been a hard year for the Patterson family. Mr. Patterson passed away due to cancer, and

Upon hearing their story, Bryan selected this family as this year's recipients. Once Bryan got the word out into the community, people donated a plethora of gifts which included food and hygiene items.

Bryan would like to thank everyone who gave!

Once again, Bryan has recruited family, friends, and the community to help him with his Adopt-A-Family initiative. Each year, he selects a family in need

Mrs. Patterson was left to care for their disabled son with no assistance. On top of that, Mrs. Patterson's health began to fail and she was laid off from her job.

## Athelas Angel Project & Food Baskets

The Athelas 2017 Angel Project was another great success. Thanks to Ms. Joan McCabe, Key Club Advisor from Marriotts Ridge High School for facilitating this project for the last 4 years. Along with Joan and the Marriotts Ridge High School Key Club, Future Educators, Glenelg High School, and a local Kiwanis organization, gifts were purchased, wrapped and delivered to Athelas Institute in December.

Pat Owens, Therapeutic Recreation Manager, rounded up the Angel names and ages. She worked together with Joan, starting in October to identify 134 Angels. The Key Club of Atholton High School worked on getting 10 more gifts to add to the Angel List for a total of 144

gifts.

Athelas truly appreciates the efforts of all of the students and the community for making this a special yearly project. Our hardworking staff sincerely appreciate an extra holiday gift for their children, Athelas' Angels.

If you or your organization would like to participate by purchasing gifts or donating gift cards for the 2018 Angels Project, please contact:

Pat Owens  
410-964-1241 Ext. 128

The Angel List will be completed by October, 2018.



### Christmas Food Baskets

Thanks go out to Mt. Hebron High School under the direction of Ms. Sugg, for the donation of yearly food baskets to our Athelas Residential homes in Howard County. Baskets were delivered right before the Christmas holiday. We are grateful for this great community outreach to Athelas Institute.

— Pat Owens,  
Therapeutic Recreation Manager

*"It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."*  
— Mother Teresa,  
Nun, Missionary,  
Teacher

# Athelas Holiday Carolers



The Athelas Holiday Carolers completed a wonderfully successful, well-received and highly enjoyable tour of area nursing homes and

Athelas Day Program sites on December 14th and 21st before performing the Grand Finale at the Cafe in the Main Administration building. The fantastic 2017 version of the Carolers was comprised of the following performers: The always essential and often magical musical leadership of Christopher Sheely on keyboard and vocals; joined by the soothing and sweet sounds of Amanda Whitt, Danyella Williams and Charisse Wilson; along with the exciting energy of Rosa Hudgins, Julie

Luthy and Carrie Murphy; while the able experience and strength of Franco Harris, Stanley LeSane, Adam Rabau and Colin Rabau round out this talented group. Linda Fink, Terrance Dorsey, Blair Smith and Bryan Zapotosky were capable alternates.

The Singers performed seventeen songs spanning many styles and eras, from the old stand-bys to updated and upbeat versions. At the close of the Community Resource Center show, Jermaine Glover asked if they knew "Feliz Navidad". Even without any rehearsal or preparation, they "nailed it" and we added it to our program. Thanks to Chris Sheely's ability to play just about anything and everyone's remarkable musical memory, the group could have performed twice as many songs with equally great results.

The challenging "The Twelve

Days of Christmas" was a crowd pleaser as was the simple tune, "The Drehdle Song". The duet of Julie Luthy and Stanley LeSane always delivers a soulful rendition of "O Holy Night" to great applause. Nat King Cole's "A Christmas Song" was also a big hit, as was "Silent Night" as sung by the women of the group. "Jingle Bell Rock" and the Bruce Springsteen version of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" are lots of fun leading up to a spirited "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" to end the show. When the Athelas Holiday Carolers perform, they are the essence of the Spirit of the Season, generously spreading the joy, love, peace and hope of the Holiday to all present. We are very proud of them and the gift that they share with us.

— Michael Patton,  
Art Therapy/Art Program

*"The only thing better than singing is more singing."*  
— Ella Fitzgerald, Singer

# Special Olympics Stats



## Special Olympics

Founded in 1968, the mission of the Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with Intellectual Disabilities. This gives them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

### Team Members

- Marley Cameron
- Ronald Claud
- Jvette Edwards
- John Herndon
- Anna Marie Ianuzzi
- Mary Langrehr
- \*Devaughn McNeil
- \*Cindy Phelps
- Paul Phillips
- Tony Presti
- \*Peter Reider
- Nick Savoy
- Tabitha Smallwood
- Douglass Tabb
- Donald Tinsman
- Danny Westcott

### Awards

- Gold - Danny Westcott
- Silver - Tabitha Smallwood
- Rookie of the Year - Cindy Phelps

Congratulations to all of the bowlers who persevered and worked hard!

\*1<sup>st</sup> year bowlers





## Commitment to Excellence Recipients



Athelas Institute has created the Commitment to Excellence program to pay tribute to those who have personified “For the individual” by going above and beyond in the daily duties. These staff members can be counted on time and time again. They are also strong advocates for their individuals. The recipients were treated to lunch with executive staff and received other special awards.

**Recipients (l. to r.):** Shawn Mills, CRC; Denna Townsend, Accounting; Raymond Paysour, Transportation; Jermaine Glover, BCRS; Shonte Witherspoon, GO

**Honorable Mention:** Marlene Best, GO; Taneka Gibbs, Res.; David Johnson, CRC; Charlene Lemmon, GO; Tracee Thrash, Res./Thunderhill; Arthur Williams, CRC/SE

**Serving almost 400  
individuals in a  
variety of  
programs and**



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