

Athelas Institute, Inc.

FALL/WINTER 2017

ATHELAS ADVOCATE

In Loving Memory of Our Founder



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Raymond D. Jordan, Jr., Founder and Executive Director

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

Since 1976, Athelas has been the premier organization 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 or call 410.964.1241.

New Website Coming Soon!

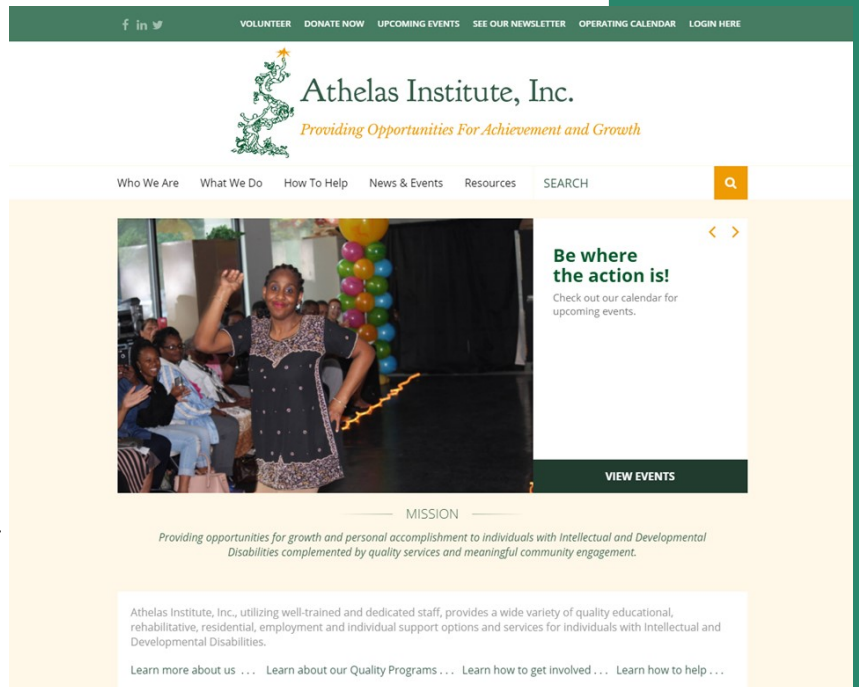
We here at Athelas are so EXCITED!

Our NEW LOOK is coming!

Soon we will be unveiling our new website for **Athelas Institute, Inc.**

You will still find us at our same web address www.athelasinstitute.org but we have totally redesigned the “look and feel” of the website and we have updated and expanded our content. The new website is much more dynamic, will be easier to navigate, and is mobile friendly. You will have many more opportunities to learn about our programs and services, as well as, to see and follow all of our upcoming and past events, breaking news, volunteer opportunities, and all the different ways to be a donor / contributor to Athelas. There will also be more articles about the achievements and successes of the individuals here at Athelas, more pictures and even video to keep you informed and engaged.

So keep an eye out for our “**NEW LOOK**” website (coming soon) and “**Check IT Out!**”



A Tribute to Raymond D. Jordan, Jr.

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



Raymond (Ray) D. Jordan, Jr. founded Athelas Institute, Inc. in 1976. It was his dream to see individuals with Developmental/Intellectual Disabilities live, work and fully participate in their communities. In this way, he was among the pioneers of community supports in Maryland. Initially, he had the vision to incorporate work in the field of recycling as steady employment for individuals with disabilities. This was not yet being done in the community at large. During his 41 year tenure as Founder and Executive Director, along with his wife, Sherrie Jordan, Athelas has grown from serving 20 individuals with three staff, to providing services for almost 400 individuals with the help of over 260 professional staff. What began as vocational and

work opportunities in the community has grown into training programs for those with varying levels of disabilities, residential homes, services for people in their homes and specialized programs for those with distinct needs based on their diagnoses.

Ray was a generous, devoted man who loved his and the Athelas family. He was passionate about changing the world and improving the lives of individuals in Athelas programs. He was equally passionate about helping the Athelas staff. He recognized when staff members might be in need

of extra supports, be they personal, mentoring, educational or any number of other concerns. So many current and former Athelas staff were fortunate enough to have Ray personally touch their lives and assist them to be more successful. Many have grown with Athelas and continue to provide services here.

Ray Jordan was a strong, influential leader at Athelas. While humble in his actions, his deeds spoke volumes. As we move forward, we will all keep Ray’s mission in mind. Athelas will continue to be “for the individual” as well as a family of support for our staff. There is so much more work to do and so many more projects to complete.

We will continue to work hard to keep Ray’s dreams alive here at Athelas.

Respectfully submitted,
 Diane S. LaSov
 Deputy Director



2017 Annual Campaign Letter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As Athelas Institute's 41st year comes to a close, we would like to extend sincere wishes for a joyful and safe holiday season!

This has been a busy and productive year, making great strides in our programs, but also a sad year given the recent loss of Athelas Founder and Executive Director, Raymond D. Jordan, Jr., known to all as Ray. Ray was totally invested in Athelas programs, participants and staff. It was his personal mission to be equally involved and informed about all three. His compassion for so many is apparent in how Athelas has grown and, at the same time, implemented so many innovative programs over the last 41 years. This year's **Annual Giving Campaign** is dedicated in Ray's memory and his goal of continuing to keep Athelas Institute focused on meeting the needs of so many who are depending on this.

Generous contributions given over the past year have already allowed for improvements at Athelas. Just a few examples include:

- ✓ The purchase of iPads and software being used daily for learning and enhancement of the autism program.
- ✓ Rehab of the autism program's facilities to be more conducive for learning.
- ✓ Continued renovations of residential homes to meet the needs of our aging population.
- ✓ The purchase of recreational equipment and other supplies to continue to support the Annual Athelas Games each summer.
- ✓ Staff are traveling to get the best training and bring information back to provide the best programs.

There is so much more work to do. Athelas looks toward your continued generosity to enable us to provide excellent services in each program. Some of these projects will include:

- ✓ Facilities and homes will need to continue to meet changing physical needs for our aging population.
- ✓ New technology and equipment to provide the most up-to-date training for individuals.
- ✓ Staff support and training is a must, both professionally and personally.

Please know that your donation will make a great impact on these and other projects meant to help everyone in Athelas programs.

Enclosed, please find our giving envelope with the various levels of support. Everyone at Athelas greatly appreciates your generosity in keeping Ray's mission for Athelas and our individuals alive.

Sincerely,
Diane S. LaSov
Deputy Director

Athelas 24th Annual Golf Tournament

On behalf of all of us at Athelas, we want to extend a sincere and heartfelt "Thank You" for all the participants, sponsors, donors in support of the Athelas 24th Annual Charity Golf Tournament held Monday Sept. 25, 2017.

We appreciate that all of you have been long and loyal supporters. For us at Athelas, especially for the individuals we serve and the programs we deliver, your participation and contributions helped make the event a solid success. Based on the feedback everyone had a great time !

Special Thanks go to Don Van Deusen and Fairway Hills Golf Club for hosting us and to Lance Cook and Tino's Italian Bistro for all the GREAT food!



As we are planning even bigger and better things for what will be our special 25th Annual Charity Golf Tournament Event in 2018, we look forward to your continued participation and support. Sincerely, Jeff Callahan, Director of Business Development

Platinum Sponsor



Silver Sponsor



Sandy Mosberg



Event Caterer & Bronze Sponsor

Bronze Sponsors



Breakfast & Lunch Sponsor



Individual Player Sponsors

Hole Sponsors



Tino's: Combining Food and Philanthropy



Interview with Lance Cook – Owner of Tino's Italian Bistro in Columbia, MD

Lance has, and does, employ Individuals with Disabilities and supports the Disability Community.

Interviewer – Scherazade Agurto, Employment Coordinator with Athelas Institute.

We asked Lance if he would share a few thoughts about working with and employing individuals with disabilities and working with Athelas. He graciously agreed, despite his hectic schedule, to answer a few questions.

Scherazade: Lance, you and your restaurant have been great supporters of Athelas Institute and our individuals, as well as, the Disability community in general. What would you say to other business owners to encourage them to get involved – either by offering job opportunities or by engaging with individuals with disabilities as a supporter?

Lance: First of all, it's just really rewarding. The average person you see where it is just their 6th or 7th job, and it's just another job, is so different from when an individual with disabilities comes in. The confidence and empowerment you can give an individual with disabilities is just amazing . . . it's something very special.

Scherazade: What have been some of your challenges associated with working with individuals with disabilities?

Lance: The challenges are typically the same as anybody else. Each person is an individual, so you base it on their individuality. Specifically to the disability— sometimes there are some memory issues, so we just have to reaffirm, to use checklists, and go over and over, to make sure they are being trained the way they need to be trained. Another issue might sometimes be that they are a little more shy than the average person, they may not have the same level of self-esteem or confidence to go to a table and ask if they [the customer] needs anything, etc.; so we work with them to build their confidence and letting them know they are capable and can do anything.



Scherazade: What have been some of your greatest rewards in working with individuals with disabilities?

Lance: Just the happiness they have coming to work every day, the positive attitude and the appreciativeness they show.

Scherazade: What can Athelas do better to understand your needs and those of other business owners with respect to your workforce/employment requirements? How can we better work with you and other business owners to improve the transition of persons with disabilities into your workforce?

Lance: I think you do a good job already; you just need to get the word out more about who you are and what you do. Even though you have been around a long time, a lot of businesses still don't know who you are and the great work you do! That's probably the main thing.

Scherazade: Thank you Lance for your time and your support.

Tino's Foundation Night



Tino's Italian Bistro & Wine Bar, and its owner Lance Cook, are great supporters of Athelas Institute and the disability community. As part of that support, a couple of times a year, we have a Fundraising event in association with Tino's.

Our latest fundraising Event "Foundation Tuesday" was on Tuesday Oct. 24, 2017! It was a smashing success!

All day, from 11:00 AM until 10:00 PM, for any dine-in, carry-out, delivery, wine and beer sales, etc., a percentage of the sales would be donated to Athelas. Both Tino's and Athelas benefitted.

Funds from this event go directly to support the Athelas Programs and activities that support the almost 400 individuals we serve.

Thanks to all who participated and we look forward to our next Foundation Tuesday Fundraising Event in cooperation with Tino's Italian Bistro.



L to r.: Jeff Callahan, Pat Owens, Lance Cook

NEW TEACCH Program & Tablets at BCRS



Understanding ASD and its core symptoms (social communication deficits and restricted/repetitive patterns of behavior) are key concepts of TEACCH. Visual Supports (physical organization,

individual schedule, work systems, and visual structure of materials) are used in blending structured TEACCHing in with other strategies to support and enhance skills.

How does the TEACCH technique and the installment of tablets enhance the BCRS program?

Simply put, the BCRS/TEACCH program is using personalized visual cues alongside technology to enhance education, cultivate the feeling of stability and consistency, and to introduce interactive games and educational programs. This allows individuals to have yet another avenue to learn as well as a visual “checks and balances” system so that they may have smooth transitions into different activities during the day.

A personalized schedule is created for each person based on their Individual Plan, skills, and interests. The schedule tells the person where they should be and when. It is based on a full day. Once the person arrives at the scheduled work station, he/she has the opportunity to choose an activity. The individual also has the ability to change their schedule based on their personal

needs for the day.

TEACCH emphasizes the concept of finished and predictability, two important skills necessary for people with Autism. With that, each schedule has a “finished” section to indicate task completion.

Based on their individual need, staff structures each activity/lesson as well as the setting (classroom /individual). At the end of the day, each individual also works toward their personal responsibility of cleaning up their materials, and setting up their folder for the next day.

During the day, the individuals are also able to go into the new Technology Room and use the tablets for educational or recreational purposes. This is also a great addition to the program for those individuals who do not have tablets or cell phones in their homes. Using these tablets also lends to a sense of accomplishment because they are able to use the devices properly and frequently.

The Sensory Room, which is available for de-escalation and scheduled structured breaks, has also been remodeled with stimulating tools and aids that help people on the spectrum to calm and relax.

These renovations have allowed the individuals to have great success each day. We look forward to helping each person in their endeavors.



On June 29, 2017, Athelas Institute proudly premiered the amazing changes at our Behavior and Communication Resource Service (BCRS) program. The program facility was renovated and equipped with specialized tables, and the new and innovative TEACCH technique, headed by Danielle Harrington, Assistant Director of Day Programs, was implemented.

This endeavor was also made possible by friends of Athelas. Much appreciation goes to Cynthia Gula, and Joselyn Mullen for their generous donations to this project, as well as, their continued support to Athelas other programs. Their unwavering support of Athelas and the individuals is invaluable.

Background on TEACCH

TEACCH, Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children, is a part of University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Medicine. TEACCH is a framework, not a curriculum. TEACCH's philosophy focuses on a family collaboration, a whole person view, ASD symptoms and learning styles, and structured TEACCHing.

Tablets, Telephones, and Fun, Oh My!



“Technology is not just a tool. It can give learners a voice that they may not have had before.”

— George Couros, Author



This year, Athelas Institute has been fortunate to find opportunities, to improve our resources of technology for the individuals. After learning of an opportunity through Maryland Access Telecommunications, we were able to apply for tablets and assistive phones for our individuals. The responses and outcomes have been priceless. Here are a few of their stories.

Thomas Baker—Tablet

Thomas thoroughly enjoyed instituting his very own Westerns movie night. He also uses the device to FaceTime with his younger sister. Since this is a visual app, he is able to recognize her face which makes him feel at ease as he listens to her talk; staff will assist by helping him answer her questions. Both Thomas and his sister really love being able to communicate with each other in this way. He is also a fan of listening 70s & 80s music on his tablet.

Lisa Bressi—Phone

Lisa uses her phone to call family during the week. While staff tell her the numbers, Lisa is able to dial numbers independently which a great accomplishment for her! It also re-enforces her skills in listening.

Marley Cameron—Tablet

Marley uses her tablet everyday! She is a fan of the game Solitaire, and she loves listening to music. In fact, she happily sings around the house

more often.

Robert Dingley—Tablet

Robert is head over heels for his tablet. He is already close with his brothers, so being able to FaceTime with them just makes the experience ten times better! He grins ear-to-ear when he sees them on his tablet.

Jason Grier—Phone

Jason and his mother love using his phone to stay in contact each day. Since the buttons are bigger and he has easy access to its features, Jason has the independence to call his mom, or answer her call at anytime. They are both happy with this device.

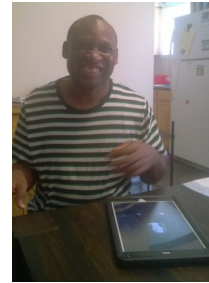
Joe Turner—QuickTalker

Joe loves using his QuickTalker device at home and day program. He has outfitted it to his specifications (including Wendy's and Burger King options). Joe is especially happy when he is able to communicate with more ease and independence. Having this device has also enforced his understanding of accountability as it is his sole responsibility to bring the device to and from day program (he has never forgotten it.) Using this device has caused Joe to have



more of a willingness to speak on his own.

Wayne Montgomery—Tablet



Wayne uses his tablet to continue his education in sign language. His staff

frequently helps him to go on the American Sign Language site where he watches tutorials. In these recent months, he has been signing more, and becoming more comfortable with the tablet as well as retaining the information.

Melissa Romesberg—Phone



Melissa was so excited to get this phone installed in her room.

She immediately customized it with pictures of her family and staff. She enjoys calling everyone and telling people about her day. She also reminds people about holidays and dinners. She is now more verbal in everyday life (saying more, trying to sound out words) Her new favorite word is "yup!"

Athelas Games 2017

Our 17th Annual Athelas Games, under the direction of Ms. Pat Owens, took place in July throughout our day program facilities and in the community. Competitive activities were provided for all levels of participation. Our individuals were afforded the opportunity to compete against each other on various levels for special recognition.

Once again it was a banner year for our Athelas Softball team. We beat Opportunity Builders handily and brought the trophy back to Athelas.

This year's Athelas Games were sponsored by a special volunteer and company donor, Ms. Josie Mullen. Her donations enabled each individual to have a very special Athelas Games T-shirt. Funds were also utilized for Banner prizes, supplies and a new Karaoke Machine. Athelas thanks Ms. Josie for this special outreach and generous donation to the 2017 Athelas Games.

The Banner Contest was once again an opportunity for our day programs to be creative. The theme this year was "Embrace and Take Your Place in our Communities." Congratulations

go out to:
First Place Winner – BCRS
Second Place Winner – GO
Third Place Winner – CRC

Athelas Games would not be complete without a Big Celebration Dance with DJ Big Owl (William Murray) and the infamous Raven Bird Poe.

Big thanks also go out to the staff, and summer volunteers (Ryan, Katelyn, Tess, Emily, Madison, Alexis, and Joshua)who helped to facilitate games and activities throughout the month. It was a great team effort.



The Raymond D. Jordan, Jr. Fashion Show



Athelas Institute, Inc. held its 2nd Annual Fashion Show on Friday, Nov. 3, 2017 at the main office.

The months of planning and prep, the hard work, the practice runs, and the making of decorations and props by the Athelas staff, the individuals / models, and volunteers all paid off. The grand event, attended by a record crowd again this year, went off without a hitch and was a resounding success! The energy was high and the music by DJ Will kept everyone pumped up. The models walked the runway in

each of our four (4) themed sessions –

- ◆ A Winter Wonderland
- ◆ The 70's – A Disco Funk (A big hit with the crowd!)
- ◆ Causal / Sport
- ◆ Grand Finale – The Big Wedding (a spectacular event that had everyone celebrating!)

All of our models made a fashion statement with their hair, makeup and clothing. They walked, danced and “strutted their stuff!” along the runway. The crowd danced with, cheered and encouraged our models all night long. There were also big winners for the 50-50 cash raffle, for the Addidas shoes, the Starbucks Coffee gift basket and the Yankee Candles gift basket.

Models

Jasmine Green, Errol Totten, Stanley Lesane, Jr, Nick Savoy, Devaughn McNeil, Tegra Hughes, Cheryl Eley, Carrie Murphy, Carlie Murphy, Alice Henn, Cynthia Devonne, Danyella Williams, Sheila Eckles, Mary Langrehr, Ashley Wedlock, Brandon Brown, Laila Allsberry, Aliah Allsberry

A BIG Thank You to the Athelas Staff who helped plan, coordinate, direct and M/C the Show:
Marlene Best, Angelo Best, Ivory Bolling, Pia Green, Shontee Witherspoon, William Murphy (music)

Special Thanks to all the Athelas Staff and Volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the Fashion Show a reality:

Andrea Callahan, Danielle Harrington, Scherazade Agurto, John Contreras, Billy Triplett, Paul Phillips, James Powell, Karen Lowery, Tisha Mathis, John Toich, Vernetta Edwards, Mike Patton, Michelle Watkins, Joseph Edgerton, Sequaovia Williams, Pamela Ellis, Temitope, Destiney Barnes, Kayla Davis, Dazmen Murphy, Candance Dukes, Chris Garner, Sachet McAllister, Terry Manning, Robin Barney, Betty Enoch, William Murphy, Hakeem Abukhdeir and Omar Agurto (ushers), Jeff Callahan, and many more who remain unnamed!

We look forward to next year and your continued support for an even more spectacular show!

ARC's 16th Annual Art in the Round Exhibit



After the Rollercoaster, Todd Ohler

With over 450 people in attendance, all avid art lovers, The ARC's 16th Annual “Art in the Round” was an outstanding success in Hunt Valley on Sept. 29, 2017.

Eight Athelas artists were on exhibit that evening, including: Cy Adams with two very popular mixed media paintings, “Reunion” and “Eruption,” respectively; David Bruce was showcased with one floral acrylic painting; Alice Henn presented two glazed ceramic flower objects; Franco Harris exhibited two glorious acrylic landscapes; Todd Ohler displayed one of his unique watercolors; Blythe Reid entered the competitive exhibition for the first time with a set of six watercolors entitled “Spring Series,” Christopher Sheely exhibited an exciting oil pastel “Falling Leaves”; and Blair Smith was back in the exhibition with one of his remarkable cityscape renditions in pencil, which he draws from memory in amazing detail.

All of the artists sold all their work that night, with sales topping \$1000.00, and enjoyed the enthusiastic appreciation of the audience. All of the artists in the juried show were repeat exhibitors, with the addition of newcomer, Blythe Reid.

To top off the evening, Christopher Sheely played several classic rock and roll songs on the grand piano in the lobby, to the delight of many attendees. A great time was had by all!

- Michael Patton, Art Therapy

