

The Advocate

5 OCTOBER 2007

ATHELAS INSTITUTE, INC.

Special points of interest:

- *Athelas Charitable Giving Cards*
- *DSPs to DC*
- *Inclement Weather Information*

To receive The Advocate and other important Athelas announcements by email contact:

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A Message from our Executive Director

As we move into the fall season, we are just beginning to settle down from a number of planned facility moves that have occupied much of our time over the summer. Our Iron Bridge Road Vocational Center has moved to Columbia where individuals and staff are enjoying a new environment and the new opportunities it provides. Our Recycling operation is in the final stage of moving from the Hanover area back to Columbia where our resources can be more accessible and efficient.

We are currently looking at a number of new work contracts and job placement sites for the coming year. To that end, our Supported Employment staff is working closely with our individuals in determining the best matches considering skills and preferences. In an effort to provide staff with easier access to individual information, we contracted with a web based data system provider. This service will greatly enhance our internal and external communication capabilities.

We appreciate being able to send several staff to the Maryland Association of Community Service Providers Conference this year in Hershey, PA. They came back enthused to put into effect a number of new, state of the art, "Best Practices" that they obtained at the conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our golfers, sponsors, staff and volunteers who made

this years Annual Golf Tournament another successful event. Funds raised from the tournament will help offset increasing costs in gasoline and energy, which as you experience are skyrocketing.

As providing a "living wage" benefits and positive work environment has always been one of our top priorities for staff, I would like everyone to read the article in this issue about our representation at the legislature this past month. I would like to thank the staff that traveled to Washington, DC and did such a fine job representing Athelas Institute and their fellow Direct Service Staff members in regards to this issue. It always makes an impact when individuals who are affected by legislation actually testify and meet with representatives from their districts. We can only hope their voices are heard loud and clear. Most of these dedicated people must work two jobs to adequately live and raise their families in our current economy.

Naturally, we all have concerns about the impending state budget deficits and how it could impact services to people with developmental disabilities. I ask that everyone stay on the alert and be ready to contact their legislators should DDA funding be jeopardized. Let's continue to move forward as we celebrate "Disability Employment Awareness Month in Maryland."

Raymond D. Jordan, *Executive Director*

Our Favorite Guy Friday ...

Benjamin Klein or Ben as most of us refer to one of our favorite Athelas volunteers left this September for college at UMBC.

Over the past two years, Ben has been volunteering at Athelas in the Administrative Department. Over the past two summers, Ben has tackled many office assignments with a lot of dedication and good humor.

Being able to be flexible is a priority at Athelas and Ben really stepped up to



Ben Klein

the job. Ben gave breaks to our receptionist, and learned our new telephone system during his first summer with us, he helped with computer problems and filed for our case managers. No task was too big or too small. Each day brought a different task and Ben rose to the occasion. He was also key in getting our new web based data system up and running.

Administrative staff treated Ben to lunch and a farewell party. We will all miss Ben, but look forward to his help during semester breaks.



Spotlight on Lester McFarland ...

This quarter, Athelas is proud to spotlight the cornerstone of our outstanding facilities crew, Lester McFarland.

Lester started his employment with Athelas in August, 1998 and over the past nine years has become one of our most valued employees. All of us know that Lester will never turn away from any task, no matter how unpleasant or because it isn't part of his regular duties. We know that if something needs done, Lester is our man!

Lester is always ready to help staff whenever he can. Billy Triplett, of the maintenance department says, "I praise Lester for showing me the ins and outs of how the department operates. Lester has never failed to help me trouble shoot problems that I've run across in the year and a half that I have worked with him."

There's more to Lester than just plumbing, drywall, electrical and roofing. In his spare time he likes riding his Suzuki motorcycle. Though his wife and children keep him busy, Lester makes time every Sunday to accompany his mother to

church and when he and a guest were invited to our Charity Sock Hop earlier this summer, it was his mother he chose to attend with him. He always has a home project he is working on or a project for a friend. As an avid outdoorsman, he always tries to fit in some time for fishing, boating and hunting, always making sure he has his Sci-Fi novel with him in case of a rainy day.

Athelas staff showed their appreciation for Lester's hard work and dedication by awarding him our first ever Shining Star Award.



Lester McFarland

News Flash:

Athelas continues to search for work opportunities for our individuals. If you work for or own a business that has a need for janitorial services, landscaping, clerical/greeter help, document destruction, assembly work at our site or other opportunities that our folks can assist with, please give us a call. We have a variety of skilled individuals ready to work in the community. Our folks receive ongoing training/supervision while employed in the field and at our programs. Have opportunities? Interested in learning more? Contact Bill Mojica at 410.964.1241, ext. 107 or bmojica@athelasinst.org



Emergency Contact Cards from MDOD ...

MDOD Newsbrief, 10/07

With Emergency Preparedness Month underway, we are reminded that maintaining an up-to-date list of emergency contacts is an important component for anyone preparing for possible natural or man-made disasters.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities now offers a "Family Emergency Communication

Card" on its website that includes names, addresses, email and telephone contact information, as well as a local meeting place and out-of-town contacts.

The communication cards are wallet sized and can be downloaded from www.mdod.state.md.us by selecting *Statewide Resources* then clicking on *Emergency Preparedness*.

"We encourage each family mem-

ber to carry one of these cards in their wallet, backpack or purse," said Catherine Raggio, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

"In times of emergency we may not readily remember our out-of-town contact information and if we are injured, first responders will have this important information."

We encourage all our families with computers to take advantage.

Volunteerism at its Finest ...

Athelas is pleased to announce that Dominique Gibson was nominated and chosen as a MACS 2007 Volunteer of the year.

Along with being a mother, Dominique is a student at Howard Community College studying mental health and human services. Ms. Gibson also has a part-time job. Her busy schedule never interfered with her eighty hours of volunteer community service over a three month

period, which she greatly enjoys.

Following her initial volunteer orientation and training, Ms. Gibson supported various Athelas Day Programs and was eventually assigned to BCRS. Dominique adapted herself to many situations with successful outcomes and demonstrated excellent care giving skills at this program. Dominique integrated herself into BCRS with ease and confidence and our staff admired her for her won-

derful spirit and commitment to one of our most challenging programs.

Dominique, pictured with Raymond Jordan, Executive Director, is truly an example of volunteerism at its finest.





The Your Dinners Team and Athelas Quality Assurance Director Leah Kable enjoy the day.



AFL-CIO, Local 1923

14th Annual Golf Tournament

Submitted by Bill Mojica

The Athelas 14th Annual Golf Tournament was held once again at Willow Springs Golf Course on September 17, 2007. The weather was gorgeous to the delight of our thirty-three golfers. We were happy to see some very familiar faces, as well as make some new friends.

At 9 a.m. sharp our ambitious golfers hit the course with lots of energy and stomachs full of donuts and coffee. This year's event saw a \$20 Greystone Grill gift card to the longest drive in

each foursome, our Closest to the Pin winner was Frank Kline at 4' 1", just an inch over last year's best and Best Team Score went to our friends at the AFL-CIO, Local 1923. Congratulations!

The tournament committee wishes to thank all of our sponsors for making the tournament another success. Once again, Gordon Mumpower, Commercial Insurance Managers, stepped up as Platinum Sponsor and even made a special appearance the morning of the tournament, despite the fact he was unable to play. Additionally, Columbia

Bank was our Silver Sponsor, Tier One, PEP Boys and Kline Paper Mill Supplies came through for us as Bronze Sponsors. Special thanks to our many mini-sponsors and supporters.

The post-tourney luncheon was held at the Athelas Media Center where all in attendance walked away with a door prize. Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Athelas employees who worked tirelessly helping to run the event.

We look forward to seeing everyone back next year and be sure to bring a friend.

6th Annual Art in the Round ...

Tuesday, October 16, 2007
6:30—9:30 p.m.

American Visionary Art Museum
800 Key Highway, Baltimore

Tickets: \$25
410.296.2272, ext 5227
www.arcofbaltimore.org



Athelas individuals enjoy Fidos For Freedom Demonstrations

For the past six years, the talent and artistry of individuals with developmental disabilities has been showcased at the Arc's Art in the Round Exhibit and Auction.

The selection committee receives about 100 entries each year and then has the difficult task of picking 60 pieces to display at the American Visionary Arts Museum

in Baltimore. Along with the auction, wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres are enjoyed during the exhibit. Access to all museum exhibits is also included in the event admission.

Athelas is proud to be represented by five individuals this year. Cynthia Devonne, Robert Grimm, David Hines, Danica Holmes, Paul Phillips and Chris Sheely all

have works in varying mediums selected for exhibit and auction this year. This is a great testament to the success of our Art Therapy program and it's coordinator, Mike Patton.

Please join us in congratulating all our artists and Mike for a job well done. The event is open to the public, so come show your support.

A Smile Is Worth 1000 Words ...

submitted by Pat Owens

To see the wonderful smiles on our individuals faces at Experiences Unlimited, Autism and Alternative Opportunities really makes our day. A wonderful team of community volunteers and their therapy dogs from Fidos for Freedom visit Athelas once a month.

In keeping with the Fidos for Freedom mission to increase the quality of life and provide companionship to people in the local

community through specially trained Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs, and Therapy Dogs our individuals are very happy to be recipients of this great service.

Athelas truly appreciates the wonderful efforts of the Fidos for Freedom volunteer team

They are very attentive to our individuals personalities and needs and make the experience a special one for everyone.

For your information Fidos for Freedom will be sponsoring their Ninth Annual Fall Stroll 'n Roll on October 20, 2007 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Rain or Shine) at Lake Elkhorn Park, Columbia, MD.

For more information call 310-490-4005 or e-mail: office@fidosforfreedom.org or visit their website at www.fidosforfreedom.org.

DSPs to DC ...

submitted by Pat Owens

Caroline Grayson, Eric Williams, Shirley Fair and James Pryear, Direct Support Professionals from Athelas were among the more than 250 DSPs from nearly 40 states who participated in the DSPs to DC event on September 10-11, in Washington, DC intended to raise awareness and visibility about the challenges facing the direct support workforce.

The rally on Capitol Hill focused on H.R. 1279m the DSP Fairness and Security Act of 2007, legislation before the US House of Representatives intended to help give states additional resources to increase wages for direct support staff providing supports to persons with disabilities under Medicaid.

The legislation already has 74 bipartisan co-sponsors, two co-sponsors, Representatives Chris Shays (R-CT) and Jim Langevin (D-RI), spoke at the Rally and the "DSP to DC" effort is expected to generate significant

new support for the bill.

As part of the event, DSPs from Athelas Institute met with Congressman John P. Sarbane's office.

Raymond Jordan, Executive Director of Athelas Institute said it was important for Athelas to send a delegation to the event, "addressing issues impacting the workforce is a priority for all of us and I was proud to know that Direct Support Professionals that represented us in Washington brought the same passion and professionalism to the "DSP to DC" event that they demonstrate in their jobs every day."

Speakers at the September 11 rally included DSPs, self-advocates, parents, providers and the aforementioned members of congress.

Renee Pietrangelo, CEO of ANCOR, closed the rally by speaking directly to the DSPs, "I applaud you because you are the quiet heroes who give integrity and legitimacy to our great human service endeavor and the

security you provide every day has nothing to do with building fences or anti-ballistic missile systems, but everything to do with building opportunities and securing our American way of life."

The "DSPs to DC" event successfully provided a unique opportunity to raise the profile of the Direct Support Professional workforce crisis on Capitol Hill while broadening awareness about the kinds of supports DSPs are providing to millions of Americans with disabilities every day.

It is important that lawmakers understand who Direct Support Professionals are, what they do and why the DSP Wage Reimbursement rates set by state governments are inadequate for DSP job demands. No one can deliver these messages to Capitol Hill better than the DSPs themselves and we were proud to be able to participate in the event.



Eric Williams, top and James Pryear,

Inclement Weather Announcements



- WBAL Radio 11 1090 AM
- WCBM AM 680
- WLIF Lite 101.9 FM
- WXYV 105.7 FM
- WWMX Mix 106.5 FM
- 92Q 92.3 FM
- Magic 95.9 FM
- Spirit 1400 AM
- WOLB 1010 AM

Meals on Wheels Honors Athelas Staff & Individuals ...

For two years, Athelas staff and individuals have been delivering meals to homebound individuals served by MOWCM in the Woodlawn/Catonsville area.

On June 22, 2007, Joseph Edgerton, Athelas DSP and our individuals, Damien Gough and Michael Rosen received 2007 Volunteer of the Year Awards at a

special MOWCM ceremony and luncheon.

Joe, a former government employee at the local, state and federal level has been a Vocational Instructor with Athelas for approximately three years. In addition to delivering Meals on Wheels, he and the individuals with whom he works are also engaged in volunteer activities at nursing homes, churches and

local businesses.

Together with Athelas staff members, Bryan Bowen and Carlton Thomas, Joe continues to work toward their ultimate goal, which is to give their individuals meaningful work experiences in the community that will lead to future employment and help them to become more productive members of the community.

Congratulations to all!



Michael Rosen, Joe Edgerton and Damien Gough

ATHELAS INSTITUTE, INC.

9104 Red Branch Road
Columbia, MD 21045



**PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND
GROWTH**



Sponsors:

Mr. Sam Andelman of Nightmare Graphics, Geraldine Bacote, Anita and Jack Dwyer, Larry Gulley of Minute Man Press of Columbia, Barry Hall, Sandra Kennedy, Umar Lakik, Michelle Lancaster, Cathy Langguth, Ruth and Maurice Levie, Susan Lutz, Giant Foods, Dave Martin, Renee Mitchell of Safeway, Inc., Joseph Murray, Robert C. Owens, Don Rajela of AFLAC, Laura Riley, Gary Saunders, Robert V. Schurter of Niro, Inc., Melissa and Michael Tyler, Brandon Wiliams, Gretchen Willis, Linda Dooley, Denna Townsend, Bill and Nora Mojica, IKON Office Solutions, Sandy Mosberg of Coldwell Banker,

Golf Tournament Support:

Gordon Mumpower of Commercial Insurance Managers, Patrick Shurney of The Columbia Bank, Frank Kline of Kline Paper Mill Supplies, Inc., Mark Feinberg of Your Dinners, Tier One Technology, Arnold Spivak of AFL-CIO Local 1923, Carl Larson, Glenn Larson, Robert Mastropolitto, Diana Crompton, Scott Skogmo of Sperry Van Ness, Robert E. Riley, Jr., Frank Kelly, III of Kelly & Associates, John Appleby of Fuddruckers, Lauren Appleby of River Hill Garden Center, Amanda Bernheim and The American Heart Association, PEP Boys, Dr. Greg Chavis of Integrated Health Center of Bel Air, Ed Connelly of Jason's Wine & Spirits, TGI Friday's, John Mastromanolis of Manny's Restaurant, Tisha Mathes, William Mojica, Sr. of IKON Office Solutions, Applebee's, Olive Garden, Strapazza, Phyllis Smelkinson of the American Cancer Society, Dick's Sporting Goods, Brookes Bennett of The Baltimore Trophy House, Robert Vigorito, Cindy Roberts of the Greystone Grill, Karen Kreh of Wilhide's Flowers, Karen Sterner of Howard County General Hospital,

Volunteers:

Ben Klein, Dominique Gibson, Fidos for Freedom, Monika Hayleck, Barry Hollander, Debbie Baker, Tehodora Aina, Lynn Baker, Emily Eason, Tyrell Ebb, Trisha Fato, Pam Humester, Lindsay Baron, Jumoke Oladapo, Mala Sudma, Ava Ghunney, Karon Johnson, Anthony LeGrand, Wandara Nard, Victor Ng

Athelas is accepting donations of used *ink cartridges and cell phones. Contact Pat Owens or Melissa Tyler at the main office for details.
***Excluding Epson**

Color printing for The Advocate is generously donated by IKON Office Solutions of Owings Mills.

Classifieds

ATHELAS INSTITUTE .

The Advocate is published by Melissa Tyler / mtyler@athelasinst.org

Wish List

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Board Games | Art Magazines |
| Twin Sheets | Bean Bags |
| Bath Towels | DVD Players |
| Wash Cloths | VCRs |
| Exercise Mats | Dishes/Utensils |
| Karaoke Machines | Commercial Vacuum Cleaner |
| Picture Frames | Monetary Donations |
| Microwave Ovens | Picture / Art Frames |
| Toaster Ovens | Driveway Paving |
| Arts & Craft Items | Twin Bed/Mattress |
| Children's Books | Small dinette |
| Magazines | Can openers |
| Scented Lotions | Cook/Bake-ware |
| Soft Mitts | Kitchen Towels |
| Blender | Measuring Cups |
| Baskets | New Televisions |
| Paint Brushes | |



Operating Calendar

10/26/07	CLOSED FOR TRAINING
11/22/07	CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING
11/23/07	CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING
12/24/07	CLOSED FOR WINTER HOLIDAY
12/25/07	CLOSED FOR WINTER HOLIDAY
12/31/07	CLOSED FOR WINTER HOLIDAY
01/01/08	CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY
01/21/08	CLOSED FOR MLK HOLIDAY
02/18/08	CLOSED FOR PRESIDENT'S DAY
03/10/08	CLOSED FOR TRAINING
03/21/08	CLOSED FOR GOOD FRIDAY
03/24/08	CLOSED FOR EASTER MONDAY
05/26/08	CLOSED FOR MEMORIAL DAY
06/20/08	CLOSED FOR TRAINING

For more information about donations from our wish list or volunteer opportunities contact: Pat Owens / (410) 964-1241, ext.128 or powens@athelasinst.org

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed for computer instruction with our individuals at day programs. Skills needed are email and internet use. Volunteers must be available Monday-Friday 9am—2pm and Saturday 9am-2pm.

Volunteer Aides are needed to help with sport activities, crafts, math and reading programs, computer instruction, mentoring, self esteem classes, music therapy, horticulture, exercise classes and to assist w/contract work. Volunteers must be at least 16.

Volunteers are needed for 4 hours on Saturday afternoons to assist with inter-agency dances. Volunteers must be at least 18.

Business Groups are needed to adopt residential homes and complete painting and redecorating projects.

An on-call volunteer is needed to substitute at our main office reception desk. Additional clerical opportunities are available.

Volunteers are needed to sit on a committee to plan Therapeutic Recreation Week in July.

Community Volunteers are needed to complete yard-work at our residential sites.

** Volunteers must complete an application and attend a one hour Volunteer Orientation. References may be required. Any