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  of Developmental Disabilities
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Mike Downard, Elaine Inlow, and Jon Downard

Elaine Inlow is a Personnel Plus employee that has been a valued part of Downard's Ambassador Laundry for 30 years. Aside from being very pleasant and always smiling, she is extremely dependable and rarely, if ever, misses work. Downard's Ambassador Laundry supports Personnel Plus and encourages other local businesses to become involved in Personnel Plus and other ACBDD programs.

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A message from the ACBDD superintendent about this tab

By Kevin Davis

In October of last year, I was fortunate enough to be named the new superintendent for the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD). This is a tremendous honor for me personally and it is not something that I take lightly. Being a public servant who leads such an impactful and valued public agency is not without challenges, but it is an extremely rewarding position.

I can commit to Athens County that during my time here, the ACBDD will continually strive to provide the highest level of services and supports possible to individuals with disabilities and their families.

March has been designated Disability Awareness Month. Disability Awareness Month focuses on people's abilities and similarities rather than differences, and encourages everyone to welcome people with developmental disabilities into their communities.

This year's theme is "What's Your Story?" "What's Your Story?" encourages people to get to know someone with a disability to better understand their story while realizing that we are all connected and alike in many ways.

The ACBDD will be hosting a Disabilities Awareness Festival on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at the Athens Community Center from 6-8:30 p.m. This will be a celebration and recognition of the stories regarding the 600 individuals throughout Athens County who receive services that help them make the most of their abilities, as well as to raise awareness about their challenges and barriers to success.

Please mark this evening on your calendar and make time to stop in. I am confident you will find the evening a very rewarding, enriching and enjoyable experience filled with stories you will remember for a long time to come.

In this Athens NEWS special section,



Kevin Davis, superintendent of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

we highlight a few of the services, programs and supports that the ACBDD provides. More importantly, we highlight many of the individuals we serve through our various programs. We urge you to take the time to read about their stories. Their stories can change your view on the world.

Let's continue to work together to raise awareness, understanding and compassion so that every month can be Disability Awareness Month. Let's continue to get to know everyone's story.

Captions for cover photos...

From left: 1) Ethan Conover and Debra Taylor at an OU basketball game with Rufus the Bobcat. 2) Pam Cline catches a big one. 3) Brandi Kisor stars in "Pinocchio." 4) Beacon Primary 1 students Brenton Mash, Shirley Anderson and Kyle Hunter build a snowman with paraprofessional Amanda Weaver. Photos provided by ACBDD.

ACBDD Services are provided through the following programs:

- **Early Intervention**
740-594-3539, www.athenscbdd.org
- **Beacon School**
740-594-3539, www.athenscbdd.org
- **Atco**
740-592-6659, www.atcoinc.org
- **PersonnelPlus**
740-592-3416
www.personnelplus.org
- **Passion Works Studio**
740-592-3673, www.passionworks.org
- **Service and Support Administration**
Case Management, housing, caregivers
740-592-6006

What's the function of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities?

A better question might be what doesn't this local board do? Its work reaches into every corner of the community

The Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD) serves eligible Athens County children and adults who have developmental disabilities such as autism, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, epilepsy and other conditions that are manifested before age 22.

The ACBDD is legally mandated to assure the health, safety and welfare of eligible Athens County residents who have developmental disabilities. We are also obligated to provide an array of services necessary to meet individuals' needs by facilitating learning, growth independence, and enhancing their overall quality of life through community integration. Services are provided through the following ACBDD programs:

- Early Childhood Intervention

- Beacon School
- Personnel Plus
- Atco Adult Services
- Passion Works Studio
- Transportation Services
- Service and Support Administration (case management, securing housing and in-home staffing)

The ACBDD also distributes funding to the following agencies to provide in-home staffing, transportation and day program services to individuals with developmental disabilities:

- Havar/Building Bridges
- Sech-Kar/Studio
- RHDD/Alternatives
- Expanding Your Horizons
- Buckeye Community Services (BCS)
- Echoing Meadows/Community Connections

tions

- Goodwill
- SOAR
- ResCare
- Goals Anew/Live Anew
- Radcliff Home Health

In addition, funding is provided to more than 45 independent providers for in-home staffing support.



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Beacon School works closely with other local schools

Students talk about what Beacon School offers them

Beacon School has been an integral partner with the schools in our region, providing specialized and appropriate education and life skills training for age 3 through 21 special students with severe cognitive delays, severe autism and physical disabilities.

We work in tandem with our five local districts to ensure that their students are provided with an array of experiences and therapies that enhance their educational, personal and future skills. Examples of this include adaptive physical education and aquatics instruction to develop and improve physical and motor fitness; multiple therapies, such as occupational therapy services to improve the students' fine motor, sensory processing and self-help skills; physical therapy services, to improve functional skills and mobility; music therapy, to promote wellness, express feelings, enhance memory and support enhanced moods; and speech and language pathology services, including assistive technology, such as iPads, and LAMP communication devices, to help students achieve their highest level of communicative ability.

We also collaborate with Ohio University to extend our options in such areas as music therapy, and as a learning center for future intervention specialists. Our community has been and remains fully supportive of our mission. Our VSA Grant has brought visual art classes for our students, exposing them to new mediums and ways to express themselves.

Our Integrated Preschool Program serves special needs students and three typical students for two, three or four days per week. We have worked diligently to improve the space and the resources for our preschoolers, as we prepare for the new accreditation standards.

Early Intervention:

Early Intervention (EI) serves children, age birth through 2 years old. Our Early Intervention Specialists are certified trainers in Responsive Teaching and continue the process for the Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters (P.L.A.Y.) Project. Both programs are evidence-based child development programs and provide training and support to families of young children.

Here is the personal story of two Beacon students, Isaac and Gabby.

Isaac: This 18-year-old lives with his dad and mom, Rex and Beth Maccombs. He enjoys listening to music. He attends various music festivals throughout the year and also loves going to drum circles and pow-wows.

Every year he participates in the Lancaster Soap Box Derby. He is in the Super Kids Division. He rides down the hill with an experienced driver. He laughs and screams while going down the hill. He has gone to Akron to participate in the National Soap Box Derby, also.



Isaac

Isaac started in the



Early Intervention Program when he was an infant.

So his

family has been involved with the county board for 18 years.

Isaac has participated in Early Intervention Services, the preschool program, and the school-age program.

When Isaac was a baby and first diagnosed with cerebral palsy and epilepsy, we had so many questions. It was a whole new world for us. As we started early intervention, the early intervention specialist and therapists answered every question and were very patient with us.

The journey with a special-needs child can be a tough at times, and they were there with us through all those times. As he entered preschool, we found the teacher and assistant to be very caring for Isaac, meeting all of his needs. They were also very patient with us. They were able to get us connected with other parents who share the same journey. As Isaac entered the school-age program, we were met with more awesome teachers and educational aides. They took the time with Isaac and worked with him as if he was their only student. The staff is very caring and loving; they find creative ways to help your child succeed. The therapists involved in Isaac's life also have been a key part in his success. He has received physical therapy services, occupational therapy services and speech therapy. They have all been marvelous and were good at showing us ways that we could work with Isaac also.

What we want people to know most about the Athens County Board of DD is that the

staff who work with the children are there because they love the kids and they care for them. They want to see them succeed. We have formed lasting relationships with teachers, therapists and all the staff at the county board. It's been so nice to have someone whom we can trust our child to, knowing that they have his best interests at heart and they will do all they can to help children succeed to the best of their abilities. We are very thankful for the county board and all the services that they have offered our family.

Gabby: She is a wonderful 19-year-old. She has a mom and dad and three siblings. Gabby has a wide range of interests, including flags, racecars, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and of course sports. One of her favorite pastimes is going to the library and studying books about different countries and, once again, sports!

Gabby has attended Beacon School since she was 15 years old. Her favorite school activities are school dances, pancake breakfasts and teen recreation night. She has also participated in the summer youth work program.

What Gabby likes most about her experience at Beacon School is the kindness she receives from all her teachers and staff as well as all her



Gabby

classmates. Gabby is also a joy to be around, and she enhances the Beacon School atmosphere with her friendly and happy attitude.



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Local choir features variety of voices

People with and without disabilities join in harmony

The Athens County Community Singers (ACCS), a non-profit organization, is a “choir for all voices,” those with and without disabilities. The group formed in 2013, with founder-director Stephanie H. Morris, MM, MT-BC, and Neurologic Music Therapist, wanting a community-based group in Athens County, Ohio.

Before the ACCS’s formation, many individuals with disabilities had never had an opportunity to perform. However, with the creation of the choir, many are now able to fulfill their dream of belonging to a performance group and giving back to their community.

This unique group rehearses at two different day habilitation programs in Athens. The choir year runs from September to December and February to June. On Wednesday mornings, there is a rehearsal at Community Connections on Columbus Road from 9:30-10:15 a.m. On Thursday afternoons, the rehearsal is located at ATCO and runs from 1-1:45 p.m.

Anyone is welcome at either rehearsal. When performance time rolls around, the two different groups come together to perform. Currently, the choir has approximately 34 members and welcomes volunteers to as-

sist choir members who need assistance in rehearsal and/or performance.

Choir members have said that this group means a great deal to them and is a wonderful social outlet where they get together with their friends. Some of them volunteer to sing solos and/or duets with fellow choir members, and recently, several choir members have assisted others when volunteers were not available.

Recently, the choir received a generous grant from the Athens Rotary Foundation, which donated funds to purchase ukuleles and Orff-Schulwerk instruments. The choir performs a variety of music and will sometimes rewrite songs to fit the occasion.

Just this year, Stephanie started a choir at the Beacon School. She wanted to provide a feeder program for the adult program, but also offer a way for those who leave school services to transition into the community through participation in the choir. This transitional group will give students receiving school services the opportunity to experience being a part of a choir, and then upon graduation, participate with confidence in the adult program.

Contact Stephanie at Stephanie@ohiomt.com if you need more information about the choir.

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ATCO: Story of community connection

ATCO has been an innovative and collaborative partner in the Athens community for over 40 years. In its time in Athens, ATCO has flourished, developing tight bonds with the Athens community.

Last year, ATCO began taking a lead role in Ohio in implementing the latest and most up-to-date initiatives in the field of developmental disabilities. The goal is to make sure that the people served by ATCO always receive the latest and cutting edge array of services. The latest initiative is community integration.

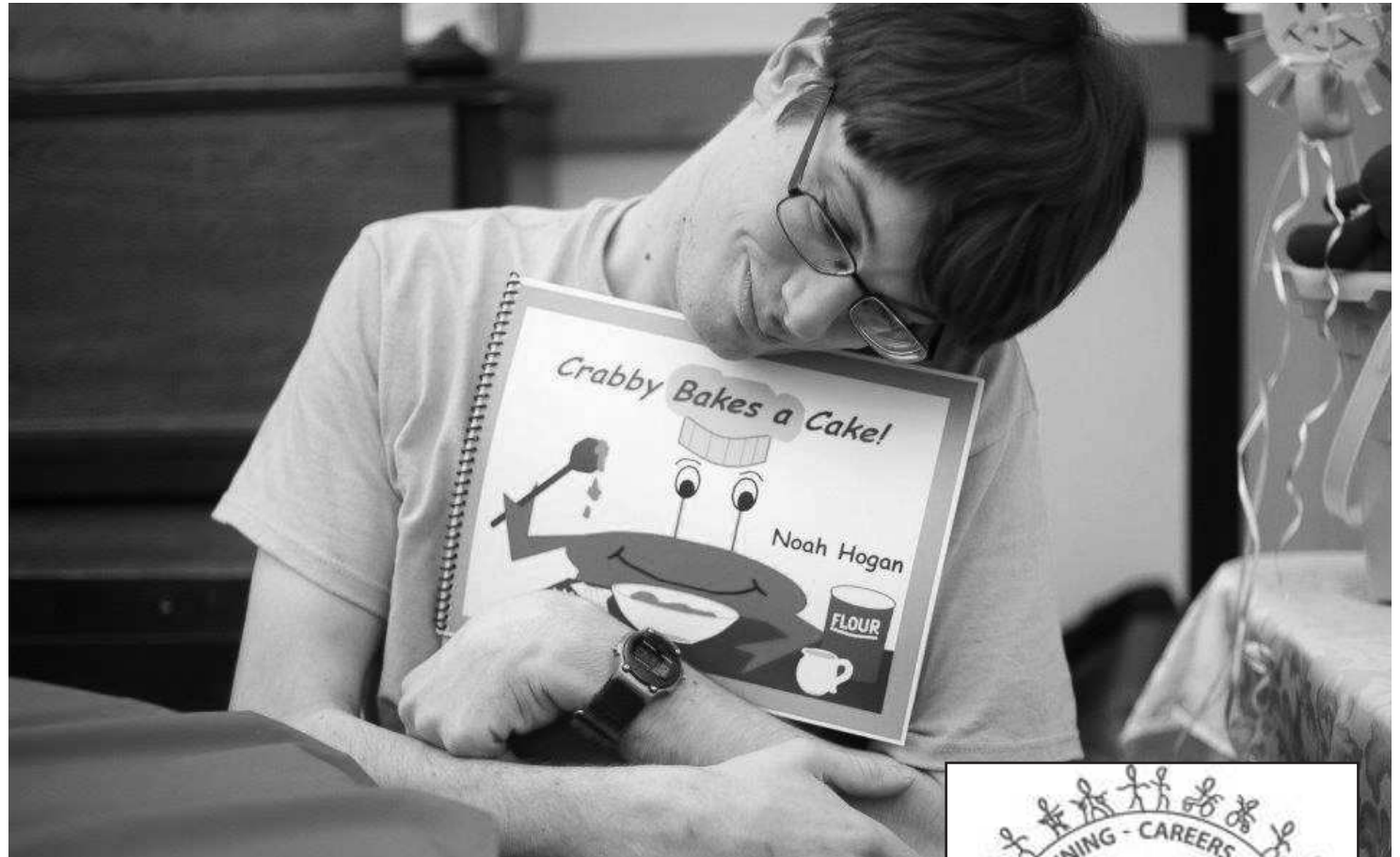
The field of developmental disabilities has been moving away from serving people in settings that give the appearance of segregating people away from the community. These initiatives – driven by societal attitudes and the law – are at the core of a transformation that has and is still occurring at ATCO.

ATCO continues to provide all of its traditional services such as Life Skills, Vocational Skills, Nursing, and Community Inclusion and recreation. However, ATCO has formed partnerships with many community groups who also provide similar services to people without disabilities. The goal has been to transform away from the former sheltered workshop model and into a community-based day services center.

The aim is to ensure the people served at ATCO have the maximum opportunity to be fully integrated into the community of Athens County by participating in many activities right alongside folks without disabilities. This is accomplished by ATCO folks visiting other groups and those groups showing up to interact with the individuals at ATCO.

ATCO has formed community partnerships with Good Works, the Athens Senior Center, the Laurels, Athens County Community Center, Team Heart and Soul and Hocking College Equine Program to name only a few. ATCO also has developed its own community programs such as ATCO Active, Yoga and Dance Therapy. The public is always welcome to participate in these activities.

ATCO's deep connection with the Athens community includes the dozens of volunteers who give their time to support our programs. ATCO's relationship with Ohio University is extremely beneficial for both. Not only does ATCO enjoy the support of many interns and volunteers affiliated with OU, the university benefits by having students learn and be rewarded by connecting with ATCO. The



Noah Greenfire Hogan. Photo provided by ACBDD.

agency has relationships with the OU College of Medicine, OU College of Social Work, OU School of Dance, OU School of Music, Student Council for Exceptional Children, Alpha Phi Omega, and countless fraternities and sororities who provide volunteers.

ATCO's exceptional bond with the Athens community is highlighted in no greater way than the personal story of Noah Hogan

Noah's Story

Noah Greenfire Hogan was born on Nov 2, 1988 in Wilmington, Ohio. Noah has been attending ATCO since he graduated from Athens High School in 2006. Noah is an extremely active member in the Athens community, as well as the Athens County Board of DD community. He attends the Athens Farmers Market almost every Saturday morning and attends Chauncey Friends meeting every Sunday.

Noah attended Chauncey Elementary and Athens Middle School while growing up. Noah is the baby of his family; he has one

brother and one sister. He has a wide variety of interests that include creating art, traveling the world, watching movies, and listening to music. He has traveled around the United States, and outside of the country including Canada, Bahamas and most recently Japan.

Noah has a strong passion and love for the earth. His favorite subject to study is biology. Noah hopes to live a more sustainable lifestyle so that he can contribute to saving the planet. One of his long-term goals is to become a vegetarian. His favorite foods include spaghetti, pizza, dessert, and most importantly chocolate ice cream. His love for the planet reaches even further than just his eating habits. Noah loves animals! His heart beats for our earthly critters.

Most of his role models are animal educators and wildlife enthusiasts. They include the Kratt Brothers (Chris and Martin), Jeff Corwin, Jack Hanna, and the late Steve Irwin and his family. Noah enjoys connecting his love for animals and his love for art-making while working at Passion Works Studio. Often he creates beautiful paintings of creatures and



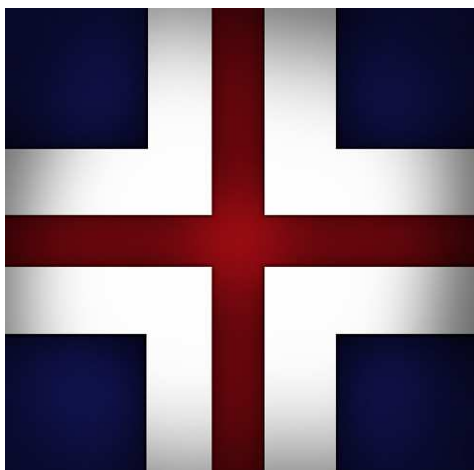
critters that he's curious about. Noah has published his own books full of illustrations titled "Crabby Bakes a Cake" and "Crabby Grows a Pot of Soup," which he calls his "Adventures with Crabby." Noah is a talented young artist and an extremely outgoing person. Many describe him as genuine and kind. He believes his best quality is that he is perspicuous, which means that he has a ready insight into and understanding things.

His parents are his biggest role models because of their kindheartedness and loving nature. One thing that he's anxious about is that there will never be a way to end war. One of his wishes is to end poverty and find world peace. ATCO is important to Noah because ATCO represents fairness, justice and equality but most of all humanness. Noah believes that we all should "enjoy life because you only get one."

PersonnelPlus story never fails to inspire

Since 1983, PersonnelPlus – a branch of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities – has existed to advocate, educate, mentor, inspire and empower individuals with disabilities to gain financial independence and autonomy as viable, contributing employees in a competitive business community.

PersonnelPlus provides services to more than 100 people each year. Job training and job coaching, internships, career exploration, personal and work adjustments, and of course, job development are the core services that PersonnelPlus provides. The summer youth program provided by PersonnelPlus is also an important service to the Athens community. Young people with disabilities are given the opportunity to get what is usually one of their first experiences in employment. Over 20 young people each year begin their path to employment by participating in the summer youth program



One of the characteristics that distinguishes PersonnelPlus, is that it not only serves job seekers, but it also serves employers who are seeking qualified employees. Through this dual service focus, PersonnelPlus is able to help establish mutually beneficial employment rela-

tionships in Athens County. The many people PersonnelPlus has placed in jobs and the businesses that employ them have generated countless amazing stories. Here are two:

What's your story, Holly K.?

Holly is a local resident who has her own house and is very independent. She enjoys getting to visit with family and especially her dog, Dolce, who is a miniature pincher, Chihuahua mix. During the week, she enjoys dinners with her friend, Jessica, making crafts, taking trips to the movies, and going to The Work Station to always be in the process of bettering herself.

Holly is long-time employee at the Ohio University Radio-Television Communications building. When asked about her work she fondly remembers the day she got hired; July 22, 2002. Prior to working with PersonnelPlus to help find her work, Holly had no luck finding a job. Holly said, "If it wasn't for PersonnelPlus I wouldn't be where I am today."

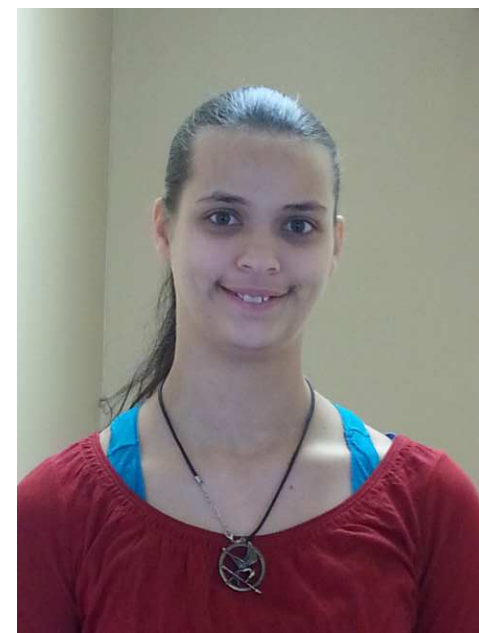
At work Holly's favorite thing is the people; they love her there! When Holly first gets to work, she makes her rounds to say hello to her co-workers prior to starting in on her tasks. While working, she does everything including large mailings, making packets, getting co-workers to sign cards for others, shredding documents, and the list goes on. Holly takes pride in her work and likes to do things right the first time. Holly is truly a joy to be around, and we continue to be proud of all her accomplishments.

What's your story, Machalla H.?

Machalla is a one of the best examples of what can be accomplished when you put your mind to it.

Machalla chose PersonnelPlus to begin working on her career goals the summer before her junior year of high school. Machalla participated in the Summer Youth Work Program beginning June 2014. The program consisted of one week of classroom-style learning and four weeks paid work experience. During classes, participants learned about work ethics, employer expectations, workplace behavior and other work-related topics.

During her four-week work experiences, Machalla worked at the Holiday Inn and Suites on East State Street and OU Animal Research Department. Machalla excelled at both sites,



Machalla H. Photo provided by ACBDD.

was a mentor to the other participants, and won the Leadership Award in 2014 and the Outstanding Achievement Award in 2015.

After completing her second Summer Youth Work Program, Machalla was recommended for Job Development services. The PersonnelPlus Job Developer was able to secure a job tryout for a part-time bagger at Kroger of Athens. Again Machalla proved to be a great worker. While on the job tryout, Machalla assisted a secret shopper and received an outstanding 100 percent on the evaluation. Machalla was offered the position and accepted.

Machalla will graduate this May from Athens High School and Tri-County Joint Vocational School where she is in the Early Childhood program. Machalla recently received her acceptance letter and will begin Hocking College in the fall of 2016 where she plans to study Massage Therapy and then Horsemanship.

Machalla's future plans include graduating from college, moving to West Virginia, purchasing property there where she can have a small farm, and continuing to work for Kroger. When she isn't working, Machalla draws, reads, and hangs out with her friends.

Machalla stated, "PersonnelPlus accepts everyone when no one else will. They give people with disabilities a chance." We can certainly expect more great things from this amazing young woman.



Holly K. celebrates Christmas. Photo provided by ACBDD.

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ACBDD offers transportation services throughout Athens County



Bob Shinn has been driving a bus for the ACBDD since 1995.

The ACBDD transportation department operates five regular bus routes and two van routes throughout the 490,000 square miles of Athens County. Our fleet consists of seven buses, 10 vans, and four cars, which traveled a total of approximately 245,000 miles last year.

Community Employment traveled approximately 82,000 miles, and Community Recreation traveled approximately 15,000 miles last year. We currently transport 53 adults and 32 school age individuals from all over Athens County to Beacon School, ATCO, Passion Works and PersonnelPlus or to area job sites, allowing them to maintain successful employment within our community.

An amazing story involves Bob Shinn, who has been a school-bus driver for the ACBDD since 1995. Before coming to ACBDD in early 1995, Bob retired from UPS while receiving an award for driving two million accident-free miles while delivering for the company. Since then, Bob became certified by the Ohio Department of Education as an On Board Instructor (OBI) around the year 2000 and has trained all ACBDD school-bus drivers since that time, as well as driving a bus for ATCO and Beacon.

Bob plans to retire at the end of this school year in June, 2016. He plans to return as a substitute after retirement but will be greatly missed.

Creating art with passion a win-win proposition

Local studio very busy in Athens

To inspire and liberate the human spirit through the arts."

This has been the mission of Passion Works Studio since its inception in 1997. Through the use of the collaborative process in the arts, Passion Works seeks to enhance the quality of life, strengthen community, change perceptions, and provide a voice to an often-marginalized portion of our population.

Collaboration happens when two or more individuals work together on a shared goal. In the case of Passion Works, this shared goal is ultimately beautiful artwork – beautiful artwork that also acts as a vocational opportunity for its artists. At Passion Works, artists with and without disabilities combine their skills in a multitude of mediums from painting and drawing to sculptural and textile arts, film-making and installations.

Passion Works Studio also has expanded its scope of collaboration in projects with Athens businesses as well as with Athens city. These collaborations are visible around town in the form of *Athens NEWS* newspaper boxes, as well as the cigarette butt recycling boxes in the uptown area of Athens. Past collaborations also include the fountain adjacent to the community center.

The heart and soul of Passion Works art comes from the vital visions and renderings of its client artists. Several artists' work is often represented in a single piece of artwork. This is accomplished with the art piece passing through the hands of artists with different styles. Some artists working in an abstract



realm while others may choose to work in a figurative realm. This layering technique is not unlike the layering of instruments in a musical composition. One artist in a piece might be the featured soloist while another may provide the rhythmic foundation... each being essential in the overall piece

Passion Works art has also been translated into a line of products available in the Passion Works Store/Gallery on East State Street in Athens. Proceeds from the sale of Passion Works art are split between the client artists and the coverage of studio expenses. This provides a vocational outlet for client artists in which their imaginations and creativity play an integral role.

Passion Works Studio is one of the first programs of its kind in the nation. The Passion Works model has been emulated by many around the world in recent years. Passion Works stands as a true pioneer in the field of community inclusion for people with disabilities.



This mural is located at the Passion Works Studio on Esst State Street.

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SSA leads way in focusing on what's best for a person

Two beneficiaries of people-centered approach highlighted

The Service and Support Administration Department continues to lead the way in Person-Centered Thinking for the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities (ACBDD).

We continue to improve our skills to develop good person-centered plans for people with developmental disabilities. We are focusing on discovering as much as possible about what a person wants in the way of services from ACBDD.

We have changed how we develop plans over the last several years from a model that may have looked like we were trying to fix what is wrong with a person to a model where we treat people with dignity and focus on the unique gifts that they are able to share and add value to others.

We have changed from addressing the desire of the agency to addressing desires of people supported by ACBDD.

This focus means that the person is the center of the focus, replacing the program or system as the primary focus. We meet with people, and their circles of support including family, friends, community members, and professionals or whomever the individual wishes to be part of his or her circle of support.

We continue to focus on what's important to the person and balance that with what's important for the person's health and safety. These themes are the central themes of a person's Individual Service Plan, which should describe not only what is important to and important for the individual but also address known and likely risks, the individual's place on the path to community employment, and what is working and what is not working in the individual's life.

We learn these things through a process of discovery by speaking with the individual and his or her circle of support. The discovery



Jim Gillespie enjoys a day on a boat. Photo provided by ADBDD.

In Honor of



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of Developmental Disabilities
Building on Abilities

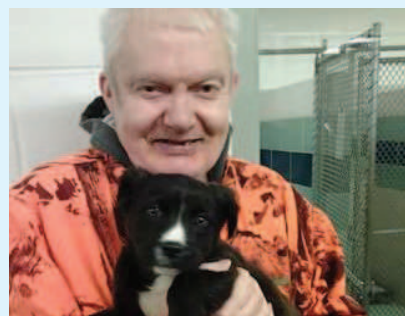
We support and appreciate the services they have provided in our communities since 1957.



provides residential and transportation services throughout Athens County as well as operating The Studio Group, a day activities program, in Doanville.

The Sech-Kar Co. works with the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities to provide individualized opportunities which allow everyone to enjoy the many wonderful events and activities available to all of us in Athens County.

The Studio Group specializes in accessing community activities in small groups of five or fewer people. Recent activities have included swimming at Hocking College, volunteering at the Athens County Dog Shelter, and patronizing our Athens County Library System.



For information about job opportunities or any services provided by The Sech-Kar Co., please visit www.ts-kc.com or call 740-797-0629

SSA leads way...

Continued from page 10

process should consider the supports that promote the person's rights; their choices, opportunities, and self-advocacy; their physical well-being including routine and preventative health care and daily living skills; their emotional well-being including their self-esteem and satisfaction with life; their material well-being including employment, money, education and housing; their personal development including achievement, success and personal competence; and their interpersonal relationships including social contacts, relationships and emotional supports; and social inclusion including participating in their community and social supports.

During this change in process and focus we have witnessed changes in people. One individual who typically only answered questions with yes and no responses now speaks up in his team meetings and shares his thoughts. We have people who asked to have pictures in their ISPs that represent the particular section of the ISP. As an example, a person picked a picture of her apartment to represent a section that addresses housing issues. People are beginning to feel more in control of their planning process. Some have even led their planning meetings.

People are beginning to develop relationships with others in the community and are doing things with new people in the community. We have established a Family, Allies and Neighbors network that encourages interested people with or without disabilities to form relationships with people with similar interests and do things together.

One of the purposes of the FANS network is to help create greater awareness of what's available in the community and to foster new relationships. One comment about FANS was that a person made a connection with another



Mike Bartlett with a very fine old car. Photo provided by ACBDD.

individual who enjoys reading mystery novels. Another comment was "The FANS represent all that is good in the Athens Community, caring, sharing and bonding to help us all become integrated, whole and active to make this a more inclusive community for all."

The FANS network was able to generate the raising of donations to help purchase the materials for a ramp for a woman who moved back into her home after spending time in a rehab center. She now is using a wheelchair and the ramp made it possible for her to access her home. Thanks to all who made this possible. FANS is on Facebook, and if you are interested in more information, please connect with FANS – Athens County on Facebook.

The SSA Department is helping people have the kind of lives they wish and expand relationships to include more people from the

community. People are having more fulfilling lives because of the new focus on person-centered thinking.

Two of the individuals who have benefited from this person-centered approach are: Mike Barlett and Jim Gillespie.

JIM GILLESPIE IS A SOON-TO-BE 70-year-old. He spent many years of his life living in his own apartment and having minimal drop-in services. He enjoys spending time with his friends laughing and drinking coffee. Many of his friends are gone, but a few are still around. He loves to get together with them, go out to eat, or sit around the table to talk and laugh with them. Though he is definitely old enough to retire and spend every day in his recliner, he still goes to ATCO on a part-time basis to work, socialize and spend time with

his lady friend whom he really enjoys and who makes him smile. Jim is quite easy-going and a sweet man who gets along with everyone.

Jim has had several setbacks in recent years. He broke his hip several years ago, was diagnosed with emphysema, and became dangerously thin. We were afraid that he might not make it back to living in the community in his own home. But Jim did persevere. He is living in a home in the community with a housemate, with services in the home. He is maintaining his weight, being as healthy as he can, and enjoying his life and his time with family and friends. Jim is still looking toward the future. He and his brother have recently started seeing one another again and have discussed the option of maybe living together in a home in the community. Anyone who knows Jim and spends some time with him will definitely have a smile on their face from their time spent with him.

MIKE BARTLETT SOON will be 27 years old. He is known for his infectious smile. Mike went through some very rough times during his teenage and young adulthood, as many young people do. Mike had some hard battles to work through in learning to be appropriate with his family, peers and community. Through the years, Mike has grown and matured in so many ways it is unimaginable. He lives in a home in the community with a housemate and staff. He attends ATCO day center but most importantly and impressively, he is not only working at Goodwill Industries doing several different job duties, but is also working at a job in the community for Green Cab and doing quite well. Some people who knew the Mike of eight to 10 years ago might never have believed this possible. Mike has shown a great turnaround and is such a great addition to have at his job and community. He has made great strides and is continuing to do so.

Great job, Mike, and keep on working hard!

We are proud to support the efforts of the

**Athens County Board
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The Athens **NEWS**

Together, our story is better... Profiles:

What's your story, Jeffrey McCoy?

Jeffrey (Jeff) McCoy was born on July 15, 1981 in Athens County where he has lived all his life. Jeffrey has been receiving services at ATCO for 12 years, before which he graduated from Beacon School. Currently, Jeffrey lives at Buckeye Community Services in The Plains with many family members living nearby.

His favorite foods are pizza, yogurt and rice crispy treats. Jeffrey and his staff have indicated that ATCO is important to him because it allows the opportunity for him to make friends, socialize with others, and empowers him to be independent.

At ATCO, Jeffrey enjoys a variety of programs including therapeutic horse handling, swimming, mall walking, working in the

ATCO garden, reading books, taking rides in the van, helping out the staff, and watching "The Price is Right."

According to his friends at ATCO, Jeffrey's greatest strengths are that he is always willing to help out those around him. He is smart and always wants to learn new things. He has a great sense of humor and keeps those around him laughing.

What's your story, Sarina Winner?

Sarina Winner was born on Aug. 28, 1975 in San Diego, California. Shortly after her birth, Sarina and her family moved to Ohio where they found a home in the Athens community. When she was younger, Sarina attended Federal Hocking High School as well as Beacon School in the city of Athens.

When she was a child, Sarina said she wanted to become a high-school teacher and loved to play dress-up and play with her mother's makeup. Shortly after graduating from Beacon School, Sarina transitioned to ATCO where she has been receiving services for over 10 years.

Sarina currently works at Passion Works Studio in uptown Athens as an artist where she has worked since 1997. She states that working at Passion Works has fostered and encouraged her creativity and also offered her a fun way to further develop her fine motor skills.

Sarina enjoys spending time with her husband, David, watching Netflix, and being on Facebook.

Sarina is an advocate for herself and also for her peers. She has a great inclination to help others, which is exhibited by the fact she is currently writing an autobiography that she hopes "will make people with disabilities of all sorts feel more confident and comfortable in their skin."

Sarina has many friends at ATCO and can never be caught without a smile on her face. She loves her staff at ATCO, and her role model in life is her mother. In the future, Sarina hopes to move to Florida, have her autobiography published, and write another book.



Sarina Winner with a canine friend. Photos on this page provided by ACBDD.



Jeffrey McCoy

What's your story, Blane Morris, Jr.?

Blane is a 31-year-old charismatic male who enjoys a variety of activities. He has worked at Beacon school as part of the janitorial crew since Jan. 2011, and as a bagger at the Athens Kroger since October 2012. He enjoys both positions as he states "one job is physically tough and the other is mentally tough."

Outside of that, he participates in the Athens County Community Choir, as they travel throughout Athens County and perform as well at a few events in Columbus.

Also, he is an usher at his church and truly enjoys serving those in the congregation.

For enjoyment, Blane is active with recreation bowling with his friend, Ethan, and many others, and he attends Monday Lunch and helps with clean-up there. His true

Continued on page 14



Blane Morris Jr.

James Long, well-deserved recipient of the ‘Champion’ award

James Long is being recognized this year as the first recipient of the Debbie Schmieding “Champion” award presented by Havar, Inc. of Athens County.

This award honors a recipient of Havar services for his or her outstanding accomplishments. James’ courage to share his dreams with a circle of friends has provided him with the strength, support and resources to realize success. His values and hard work have proven valuable as an employee at Texas Roadhouse, a busy East-Side Athens restaurant. He is only a couple months short of his first-year anniversary.

James’ dream is to one day work in home construction or video game design. For now, he is content with his accomplishments and new friendships at the restaurant. This opportunity has provided him with the much-desired resources to purchase his reliable black Ford Focus he’s dubbed “Black Betty,” giving him the ability to drive to work as well as the many activities he enjoys in the Athens community.

Aside from his strong work ethic, James highly values time spent with family and friends. He stays healthy by spending the rest of his free time at the Athens Community Center on the skateboard park, joining in flag football or ultimate Frisbee, or hiking and biking on the trails. He also enjoys any opportunity to listen to heavy-metal music with his friends and is a regular at the annual humans vs. zombies event in Athens.

James’ friends know him as a caring person wanting to see everyone around him happy and respected. He participated in “Healthy Havar” activities, sharing his wisdom and encouragement. His upbeat personality is often appreciated and contagious. Please extend a warm congratulatory hello if you pass him on your adventures in our Athens community. – Lisa Simpson, Futures Planning Program Manager/ Havar, Inc.



Congrats to James Long! Photo provided by ACBDD.

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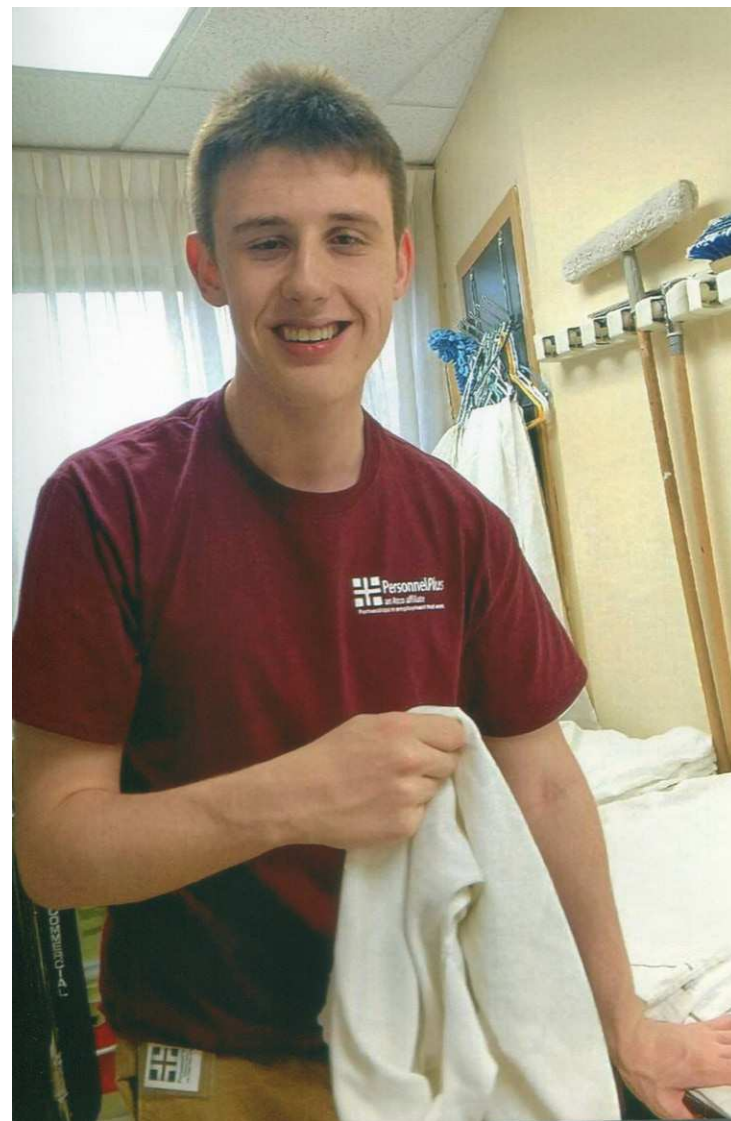


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Alex Stock. Photo provided by ACBDD.

Continued from page 12

excitement comes when he is playing on his computer, watching movies, walking at the Community Center, or on occasion, conducting his model train set.

Blane would like to say that he “likes to be funny” and “help wherever he can,” as he is appreciative of the ACBDD for helping him with knowing his rights and seeing who he is, and for helping him obtain a good job in the community.

What’s your story, Alex Stock?

Meet Alex Stock. He’s a senior at Athens High School, takes classes at Ohio University, and works part time at the Athena Grand.

Alex attended the Summer Youth Program and was an exemplary employee. His intelligence, work ethic and overall presence enhanced the program. Alex won the Most Positive Worker Award in the summer of 2015.

After completing the Summer Youth Program, Alex applied to and was hired at the Athena Grand Movie Theater on Athens’ Far East Side. This was accomplished on his own accord. Alex is just beginning his educational and employment journey. We are excited to see what lies ahead for Alex. PersonnelPlus is proud to have had the privilege of knowing Alex and playing a small part in helping him achieve his current and future successes.

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The **Athens VOICE**

New ADBDD hire to oversee ATCO transition

By David DeWitt

Athens NEWS Associate Editor

The Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities has hired longtime ATCO employee Autumn Brown as transition manager to assist in the three-year process of moving services rendered by ATCO, Inc. to private providers.

The board announced in early February that over the next three years services provided by ATCO, Inc. will be transitioned to private providers, and ATCO itself will be shuttered due to a federally mandated order from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Also impacted will be the popular Passion Works studio in uptown Athens, which produces the well-known “passion flower” of Athens. ACBDD Supt. Kevin Davis has said that the board is working with the Athens mayor’s office, Ohio University and private providers to ensure that Passion Works will continue to exist through and beyond this transition. Beacon School will not be affected, he said.

Davis said that a CMS rule change in 2014 calls for “conflict-free case management,” and that a board – in this case the ACBDD – that receives Medicaid funding cannot monitor services that it also provides – in this case through ATCO, Inc. (Advocacy, Training, Career, Opportunities).

ATCO, on Campbell Street in Athens, is a department of the ACBDD and has been a day-service provider for people with developmental disabilities since 1969, according to its website. Services include community inclusion and recreational activities, life-skills training and nursing services.

Davis said that 50 people are currently on the ATCO roster with an average daily attendance in the mid- to low-30s. With six or seven private providers of day and recreational services to individuals with disabilities in Athens County, Davis said, the ACBDD will work to transfer services to those providers in the coming years.

All 17 employees of ATCO will be able to keep their jobs for the next three years during that transitional phrase, Davis said, though some may choose to retire or leave early.

The ACBDD now also has fulfilled plans to hire a transition manager from the group



Autumn Brown, the new transition manager for ATCO, Inc. Provided photo.

of ATCO employees to help coordinate the moving of services for individuals and their families to the private providers and ensure the transition goes smoothly.

Autumn Brown, who has been employed with the ACBDD at ATCO since 1997, has been hired to serve as the ATCO transitional manager.

Brown has served as the coordinator of the Developmental Activity Center, as a life-skills coordinator and as a community inclusion specialist, all at ATCO.

She began her new role March 1.

Brown said she agreed to take the position because she is passionate about ATCO and the work that it has done.

“I’m dedicated to the employees that we have working at ATCO, and I know that together we will get through this process and make sure everybody lands in a new place that fits them well and will still enhance their quality of life,” she said.

Supt. Davis described the board as very excited to have Brown on as transition manager.

“She has spent her entire career at ATCO and is completely dedicated to the individuals and families served there,” Davis said. “Because of this and the relationships she has established, there could not be a more suitable and qualified person to lead ATCO through this upcoming transition than her.”

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