

## Gala celebrates 35 years of employment services



“Yes I Can!” Nearly 350 people repeated these words, sometimes in song form, during the PersonnelPlus Employee/Employer Recognition Gala at the Baker Center Ballroom. “Yes I Can!” served as the theme of the event, which celebrated 35 years of supporting Athens County workers with disabilities and their employers.

“The gala is about celebrating workers of diverse abilities and recognizing the value they bring to their employers and their communities,” said Kevin Davis, Superintendent of the ACBDD, which hosts the event every other year. “We are thrilled to see so many people come out to celebrate with us. 2018 is particularly special for a number of reasons.”

This year marks the 35th anniversary of PersonnelPlus, the employment services arm of the ACBDD. PersonnelPlus currently supports nearly 80 workers with disabilities and over 50 businesses. The evening included an awards ceremony recognizing a few of those individuals and businesses; it honored the history of ATCO; and it paid tribute to a long-time employee who had recently died.

“Even after 35 years, our goals remain the same,” said Doug



John Wallisch treated the crowd to his singing performance of Journey’s “When the Lights Go Down.”

## Gala cont. ...

Mitchell, Director of the ACBDD’s Employment Options Division (which includes PersonnelPlus). “To help job seekers get the jobs they want, to help people keep their job, to help local businesses find good workers, and to help high school kids move successfully from school to work.”

One of the many awards featured that night, called Employee of the Year Award, went to Dale Ellis. Ellis works as a greeter at Texas Roadhouse and is visually impaired. This award is given to a worker who has an outstanding work ethic and someone who demonstrates exemplary professionalism.

“Dale deserves this award for lots of reasons,” said Julie Jones, an Employment Support Coordinator with PersonnelPlus. “I’ve known Dale throughout this whole process of looking for a job, and he’s never given up hope.”

Other awards, and the recipients, from the evening included:

- Teresa Fulk Legacy Award – Presented to Virginia Bowles, for her work in forging the path to employment for individuals with disabilities
- Retirement Award – Presented to Paul Coe, for his 20-year career at Quidel
- Ambassador Award – Presented to Quidel, for employing multiple individuals with disabilities over the last 10 years
- Business Leader Award – Presented to Nikki Nichols, for her work promoting the skills and abilities of workers with disabilities within the workplace
- Business Award – Presented to Texas Roadhouse, for its efforts in promoting the skills and abilities of workers with disabilities within the workplace
- Visionary Award – Presented to Joshua Cook, for his strong interest and understanding of the mission and values proudly held by PersonnelPlus
- David Welsh Award – Presented to Lillian Stamm, for exemplifying the award’s namesake by being an inspiration and role model to other individuals with disabilities



Lillian Stamm receives the David Welsh Award.



Chris Stewart (at left) presents the Employee of the Year Award to Dale Ellis.



Paul Coe poses with his sisters.

The evening was dedicated to the memory of a longtime member of the PersonnelPlus team. Celeste Salzman, who passed away in late September, worked for PersonnelPlus as a Job Trainer for almost 30 years. Beth Atherton, the ACBDD’s MUI Coordinator, said Salzman wanted nothing more than to see the individuals she worked with succeed in their employment goals.

“For all of the people in this room who had the opportunity to receive job training from Celeste, ... the best way you can honor her life and her work is to continue to thrive and work hard in your jobs, to never give up, and to reach for your dreams,” Atherton said.

## Gala cont. ...



A representative from the Ohio Lt. Governor’s office presented a surprise proclamation to both Kevin Davis, the ACBDD Superintendent; and Doug Mitchell, ACBDD Director of Employment Options, for their outstanding leadership in their respective roles.



Pam Cline waves her “Yes I Can!” fan. Everyone in the attendance was given a fan and was encouraged to wave it to show their enthusiasm throughout the night.

In addition to celebrating success stories, event organizers paid tribute to ATCO, the ACBDD’s adult services program that is reaching the end of its three-year transition this year. The program is closing in order to comply with a federal mandate. It is also through ATCO that the ACBDD started its supportive employment initiatives. In 1983, the ACBDD created the ATCO Job Placement Services program. At the time, this program was one of the first of its kind in Ohio. By 2000, the name changed to PersonnelPlus. Over the years, the ACBDD has continued to build a strong supported employment program and remains a standout in the state.

“The gala showcased many of the incredible opportunities that can be made available to people with developmental disabilities when there are strong partnerships between county board leaders and local businesses,” said Bridget Gargan, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disa-

bilities. “This year’s award ceremony was a testament to the passion and perseverance of everyone helping people with developmental disabilities live, work, and learn in their communities in Athens County.”

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— Bridget Gargan, OACB Director

As a way to honor the leaders who made these partnerships happen, April Cohagen-Gibson, a representative from the Ohio Lt. Governor’s office, presented a surprise proclamation to both Davis and Mitchell for their outstanding contributions.

“We are honored to acknowledge you and the work you have done,” she said. “We are grateful for the example you have set and we commend you on receiving this well-deserved recognition.”

While the evening made a point to highlight that individuals with disabilities can be successful employees, Mitchell said he hopes that in the future these successes will happen with less fanfare.

“I envision a day when someone says that a person with a disability got a job in the community and the response is – ‘So what?’” Mitchell said. “‘So what,’ because it will be typical, regular. And we are certainly on our way now.”

## Superintendent presented with Workplace Hero Award

The ACBDD has accomplished a lot over the past few years, the local Red Cross chapter believes, and a lot of those projects started while Kevin Davis has been at the helm. Kevin’s involvement as superintendent of the ACBDD has earned him the Red Cross Hometown Heroes’ Workplace Hero Award.

Kevin “embodies what it means to be a Workplace Hero,” said Margaret Demko, the ACBDD Board President, in explaining why she nominated Kevin for the award. “He has made everything so much better in so many different ways. He has brought positivity, he’s brought incredible inclusive change, he’s done things in creative ways that no one really was expecting or no one had really thought of prior to his coming here. He’s also made the board’s employees cohesive in the way that he manages the staff, the way that he speaks with them, the way that he educates them, and the way that he empowers them.”

Margaret went on to say, “Kevin is able to take all of that positivity and have people understand what it really means to be on a team. I think that’s why it’s so important to know that Kevin Davis really embodies for Athens, and maybe for the state, what a Workplace Hero really is.”

Kevin was among those in Athens County who worked to end the practice of paying individuals with disabilities a “sub-minimum” wage. Kevin also was at the helm during renovations at the Beacon School. This included renovations to the playground, which was built in the 1980s and not originally handicap accessible. Today, the new playground is open and accessible for everyone, regardless of mobility issues.

Kevin said he accepted the award on behalf of all the team at ACBDD.

“It just validates the staff that we have here, and I don’t think it’s singular to me; it’s recognizing the staff as a whole and the amazing things that we do.”



Kevin Davis poses with Margaret Demko (left) and Arian Smedley (right) after he was formally presented with the Workplace Hero Award, one of Red Cross’ Hometown Hero Awards.



**American Red Cross**

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**— Margaret Demko  
ACBDD Board President**

# ACBDD approves updated mission, vision, values

After several months of work incorporating input from staff and all of our stakeholders, the ACBDD board has officially approved its updated Vision, Mission and Values Statements. The new Vision is “An Integrated and Inclusive Athens County.” The new Mission is “to serve our community with compassion, innovation and transparency.” The values include “respecting everyone, spending responsibly, thriving communities, working together, new ideas, openness, honesty and reliability.” These are part of the 2019-2021 strategic plan, which can be found on the ACBDD’s website.

Vision, Mission, Values



**Vision**  
An integrated and inclusive Athens County



**Mission**  
To serve our community with compassion, innovation and transparency



**Values**  
Respecting Everyone, Spending Responsibly, Thriving Communities, Working Together, New Ideas, Openness, Honesty, Reliability







## ACBDD takes part in Crisis Intervention Team training



Both David Sincoff, Behavior Specialist; and Beth Atherton, MUI Coordinator, took part in a recent Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for new police officers in the region. The CIT program is an innovative, community-based approach to prepare officers to better manage an individual who may be suffering from a mental health crisis. These programs have improved communication, helped connect individuals to needed resources, and ensures officer and community safety. Thanks to David and Beth for helping to educate our future law enforcement officials.

## Please welcome our organization’s recent hires!



**Stephanie Kendrick**  
SSA Specialist



**Cressie Chaney**  
Instructor Assistant



**Layna Rodgers**  
Substitute Driver



**Tina Wilson**  
Integrate Athens Coordinator



**McKenzie Rader**  
Substitute Lifeguard



**Nicole Taylor**  
Substitute Instructor/Instructor Assistant

**Welcome, everyone! We are glad to have you.**



## Join us for Breakfast with Santa 2018

Get ready for one of our favorite events of the year! Beacon School will be hosting the 8th annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 8, 9 a.m.-noon. Tickets are just \$5 (those 3 and under are free). The event includes breakfast, entertainment, chance auction, a sit-down with Santa, bake sale, craft sale, and spending time with some wonderful people. Join us!



## “Polar Plunge Freezin’ for a Reason” to benefit PTA

We are excited to announce that the Albany VFW will be organizing the 2019 Polar Plunge Freezin’ for a Reason on Saturday, Jan. 26, 10 a.m. at Lake Snowden. We are also very honored to say part of the proceeds will go to the Beacon School PTA.

You may register online by visiting [athenscbbd.org/polarplunge2019](http://athenscbbd.org/polarplunge2019). You may register as a “plunger” or as a donor/pledger. Downloadable registration forms (along with instructions on how to submit the form) can be found on the website, as well. You must register by Jan. 11 to be guaranteed a t-shirt.

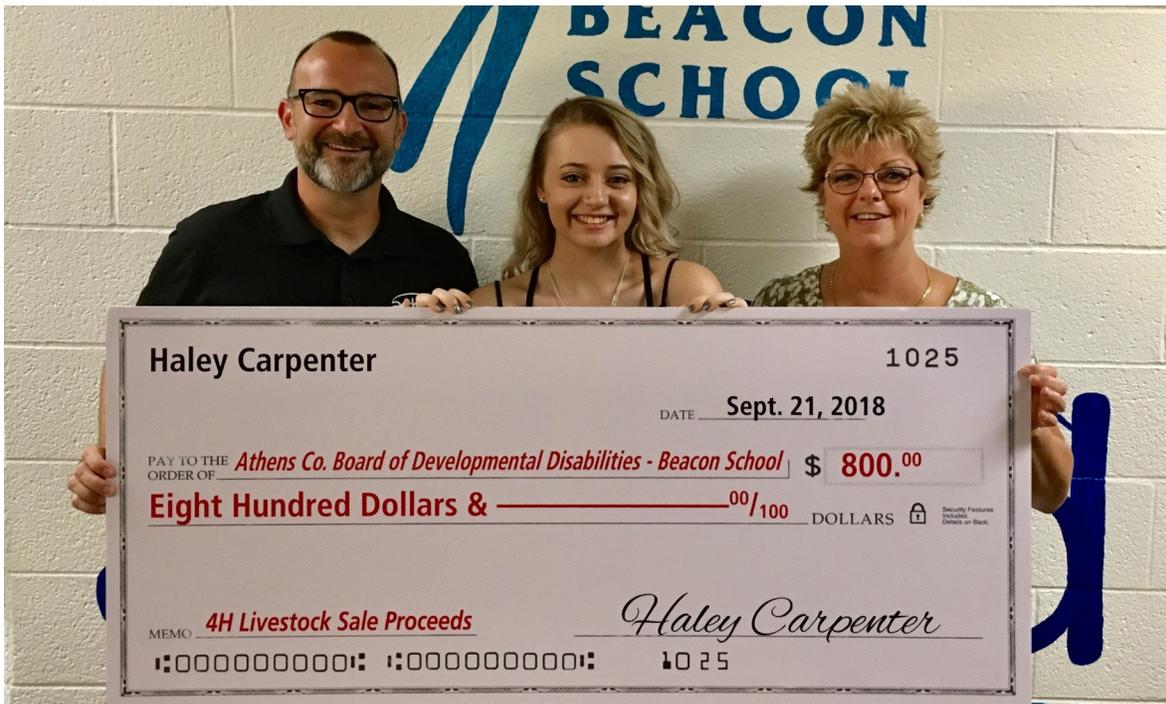
More details about the event can be found online. If you have additional questions, you may contact the lead organizer, Brian Johnson, at (740) 856-9404.





## High School senior donates \$800

Beacon School received an \$800 donation from Haley Carpenter for the students at Beacon School. Haley is a senior at Federal Hocking, and has volunteered at Beacon. She donated all of her proceeds from the sale of her rabbit at the Athens County Fair this summer, which was her 4H Project. We are incredibly grateful for Haley's donation from her proceeds. We understand the hard work and dedication that 4-H projects require. More importantly, we are impressed with Haley's selfless act. It takes a very kind, compassionate, and thoughtful person to do what she's done. She can be assured her efforts will benefit the children at Beacon School in positive ways.



## Beacon School gives thanks to Myrdith Sherow



During our Thanksgiving lunch, Becky Martin took the opportunity to give thanks to Myrdith Sherow for her generous donations to our school. If you haven't had an opportunity to visit the model apartment lately, we would encourage you to do so. Myrdith, daughter of Beacon's first teacher, has purchased several pieces of art from Passion Works to spruce it up a little. She also donated a chair rail made for the wall in the living room area of the apartment. We are grateful to Myrdith for all she has done and continues to do for Beacon School.



## Grandparents/Special Friend Day

We had a great turnout for Grandparents and Special Friends Day. Students and honored guests enjoyed taking pictures, making picture frames, and eating ice cream sundaes. Thanks to Carissa Trunzo and the Intermediate II classroom for planning the event.



## Fire Safety Week at Beacon School



The students enjoyed a visit from the Athens City Fire Department to kick off Fire Prevention Week. The firefighters spoke to the students about fire safety inside, and then took them outside to explore the trucks. The students' favorite part was having the opportunity to shoot water from a real fire hose. The firefighters also provided fire safety packets for each student.

## Passion Works hosts Beacon School students



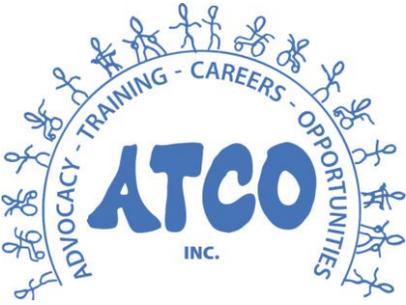
Passion Works Art Studio collaborated recently with Beacon School for their art therapy program. The students participated in art-making projects that allowed them to expand their creativity. Special thanks goes to Barb Ery, our school's Art Instructor, and Mallory Valentour, of Passion Works (along with her pup Rocko), for making this happen.



## ATCO festival celebrates fall

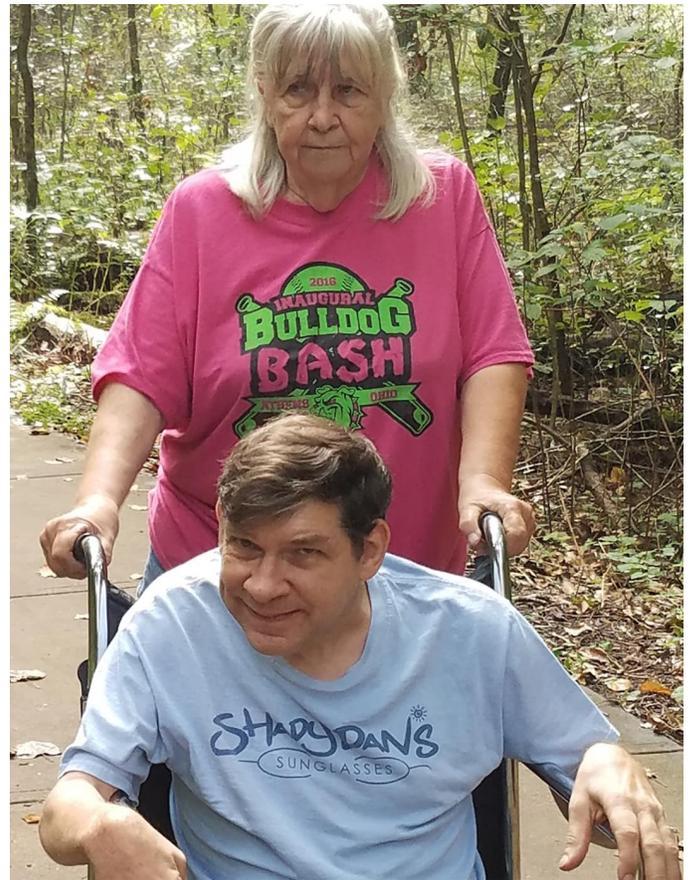
ATCO hosted a grand Fall Festival and invited all friends from nearby day programs to join in the fun. The event included a Sloppy Joe luncheon, a crafty pumpkin patch, a draft horse wagon ride, and a fall photo booth so friends could get their pictures together.





## ATCO team making the most of fall with all sorts of wonderful fieldtrips

Fall is a special and busy time of year in Athens County. Just like everyone else, the folks at ATCO are taking full advantage of all there is to do. Getting out in the nice weather and participating in the community is something that benefits everyone. So far this fall, just to name a few, the folks at ATCO went on the scenic railway ride, visited several pumpkin patches, and have toured just about every state park in the area. They also took a trip to the Circleville Pumpkin Show.





The PersonnelPlus Advocacy and Advisory Council (PPAAC) voted recently to donate funds to help the victims of Hurricane Florence. Dale Ellis, PPAAC Treasurer, presented the donation to the American Red Cross. Pictured at right, Jane Patton, the Regional Director of the American Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio, accepted the check at their main office.



Service & Support  
Athens County Board of DD

### 4th annual SSA Chili Cook-Off

The SSA Department recently held their 4th Annual Chili Cook-off! There were so many great entries. The top prizes went to Kathleen Carlson and Bethany Rivera! Special thanks goes out to our exceptional panel of judges for volunteering.



### New SSA sign installed at Harper Street location

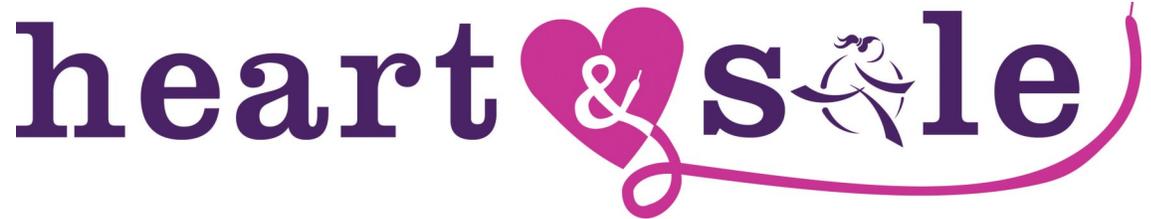
The new SSA sign served as a finishing touch to the new office at Harper Street. Here SSA Director Dick Suehrstedt poses in front of the it.



# Community Events

## Team Heart & Sole competes in Race for the Cure

Team Heart and Sole competed recently in the 2018 Susan G Komen Race for a Cure event on OU's campus. The team had over 30 community members with and without disabilities. Everyone enjoyed the community event TOGETHER! Even the cold and the rain that day couldn't stop Team Heart and Sole Athens.



# Community Events

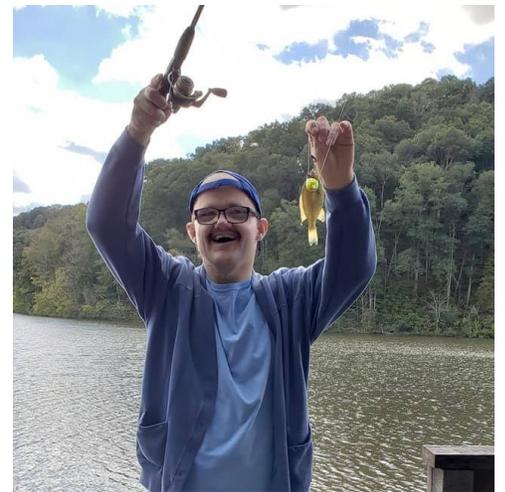
## Special Olympics Bowling Team scores big once again

The Special Olympics bowling Team had another great outing recently in Columbus. Many medals and ribbons were won. As always, the bowlers showed great sportsmanship and effort and everyone had a great time. Way to go, everyone!



## Blackhaw Accessible Trail officially opens at Strouds

It was so wonderful to see everyone enjoying Blackhaw Trail, the new accessible trail at Strouds Run, during its recent official unveiling. This new trail and fishing dock will help more people enjoy the woods and a beautiful view of the lake. We are so grateful to our community for working so hard to make this trail a reality.



## Congratulations, Passion Works, on your 20 years!

Congratulations to Passion Works on its 20th anniversary. If you have not yet had the chance, be sure to check out their art exhibit at the Kennedy Museum of Art. Congrats to all the artists!



## ACBDD in the news

### Goodwill activities center opens

The Athens NEWS—Nov. 11, 2018

### PersonnelPlus celebrates 35 years of helping people with disabilities find jobs

The Athens Messenger — Nov. 1, 2018

### Disabilities board labor contract approved, strategic plan discussed

The Athens Messenger —Nov. 1, 2018

### PersonnelPlus gala celebrates 35 years of helping people with disabilities find & keep jobs

The Athens NEWS — Oct. 31, 2018



## December & January Work Anniversaries:

Megan Stack —5 years

Heather Buckley —2 years

Richard Suehrstedt — 2 years

Tim Jones — 2 years

Amy Fronck —2 years

Mark Cullison —6 years

Cale Hagen —3 years



Everyone here at the ACBDD wishes you and your family a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season!

