



(l to r) Jose Velasco, Vice President, SAP Labs, a Brighter Futures award-winner, who flew in from California for the ceremony; Denise T. Patterson, Director of IDS; Arthur C. Evans, Jr., Ph.D., Commissioner of DBHIDS; and Councilman Dennis O'Brien, who presented a proclamation in honor of the Transformation Decade and the Brighter Futures 23rd Annual Award Ceremony.  
photo by Bonnie Squires



DBHIDS Wellness Expo table  
photo by Bonnie Squires

# BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION

## BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS INSPIRE

by **Bonnie Squires**  
(Originally published: March 18, 2015, Main Line Times - Reprinted with permission)

There are many national observances in the month of March, but one of the most important ones has to be National Intellectual disAbility Awareness Month. And one of my favorite activities this month is always the Philadelphia Intellectual disAbility Services Brighter Futures Awards event. You will notice a capital "A" in "disAbility," as the focus is on what people can do, not on what their limitations are.

This year's day long event, with its Wellness Expo, was also dedicated to the Department of Behavioral

Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) Transformation Decade, marking the tenth anniversary of Arthur C. Evans, Jr., Ph.D., and his having been named Commissioner of the Department.

Dr. Evans really transformed the department, focusing on recovery for those with behavioral health challenges, and self determination for those with intellectual disAbility. Gina Calhoun, from The Copeland Center for Wellness, who assisted in creating the W.R.A.P program, standing for Wellness Recovery Action Plan, probably demonstrated it best in her keynote address at the awards luncheon.



Points of Transformation Winners 2014  
photo by Mark Brooks

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## BRIGHTER FUTURE AWARDS INSPIRE

Gina held up a \$20 bill and asked the 700 people in the Sheraton Downtown Philadelphia ballroom if they would like to have that money. Almost every hand shot up. Then she crumpled up the bill, showed it again, and asked who would like to

have it. Still hands were raised. Then she stomped on it and held it up, in its mangled glory. Again, almost every hand was raised.

So she told us that there was value in that twenty dollar bill, even though it had been crumpled and stomped on, and people have even more value, even if they have been trampled.

She called her new W.R.A.P. booklet a plan for “people with developmental distinctions.” And she used pictures for those who do not have the words to describe what they would wish for their lives.

She said that we are shifting from a focus on what’s wrong, to a focus on what’s strong. There was



Gina Calhoun  
photo by Mark Brooks

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# Calendar and Repeatables

Meeting dates and times may change, so please call ahead to confirm that meetings will take place.

**The PersonLink Consumer/Family Advisory Committee will be meeting bi-monthly at changing locations. Please call Betty Harrigan at 267-295-3841 for details.**

### Mondays

- 1st Mon 5:00 pm-7:00 pm **Speaking for Ourselves**, 701 Market Street, 5th Floor, Suite 5200 (Phila IDS). Contact: Debbie Robinson at 215-313-6392 for more information.
- 1st Mon 10:30 am-12 pm **Quality Progressions Advisory Meeting**, 1339 Chestnut Street, Suite 700, Contact: Susan Fellows, 267-765-2000 x209.
- 2nd Mon 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm **West Philadelphia Parent Support Group**, The Free Library of Philadelphia 56th Street & Haverford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, 19139, Doreatha Davis, 215-303-3501.

### Tuesdays

- 2nd Tues 6:00 pm-8:00 pm **Roxborough Parent Support Group**, Andorra Library, 705 Cathedral Road, Philadelphia, PA 19128 Contact: Carol Costello, 215-487-1240.
- 2nd Tues 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm **NW Family Support Group** at Northwestern Human Services, 27 E. Mt. Airy Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119, Room 321 Contact: Verna Edwards, 215-248-4415.

### Wednesdays

- Every Wed 1:00 pm - 4 :00pm **Free legal advice and representation on general legal problems**, By Appointment Only - except criminal or traffic court matters. Temple Legal Aid Hotline: 215-204-1800.
  - 1st Wed 7:00 pm **Consumer/Family Advisory Committee, Partnership for Community Supports**, Contact: Mary MacAvoy, 267-350-4513. Please call to confirm.
  - 2nd Wed 10:00 am - 1:00 pm **Abriendo Caminos a los Latinos con Familias Excepcionales** (Latino), “Opening Paths for Latinos with Exceptional Families,” COMHAR, 3825 Whitaker Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, 19124 Contact: Marisol Ramos, 267-777-1291. Meets September through June.
- Meeting dates to be determined**
- PIN Bilingual Support Group**, 4501 Rising Sun Ave. Philadelphia, PA, 19140, Contact: Michelle Sanchez, 267-507-3869.

# Congratulations to the 23rd Annual My City, My Place Award Recipients!



You are all models of excellence, compassion, commitment, growth and achievement.

## Honorable Mentions

John Glenn, Give.Voice, Willie Dawson, Justin Berndlmaier, Stephan Jones, Barbara Redmon, Kathleen Caldwell, Tyree Jennings, John Wallace, Yanira Anderson, Doreatha Davis, Homewood Suites and Hilton Garden Inn of Audubon, Angela Ashford, Chris McKendry, LaShawna Reddy, Dr. Anne Hunter, Dr. Glenn Rosen, Springside Chestnut Hill Academy, Donna D'Andrea, Virginia Simmons, Glenn Cohen, and Pauline Omelchuk

## Thursdays

- 3rd Thurs 10:00 am **Consortium Family Advisory Committee**, 5825 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA  
Contact: Darlene Gonzalez (215) 472-1707 X-1162. Meets September through June.
- 3rd Thurs 6:00 pm-8:00 pm **PIN Parent Educational Support Group**, Bethana, 1212 Wood Street, Philadelphia, PA  
Contact: Cynthia Garrett, 267-507-3871
- 4th Thurs 10:00 am – 12:00 pm **Community Support Group Central/South Central Philadelphia**  
Meets at Vision for Equality, The Cast Iron Building, 718 Arch Street, 6N, Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Contact: Sharon Duckett: 215-937-5129

## Fridays

- Every Fri 1:00 pm-3:00 pm **Training on Accessible Public Transportation, Liberty Resources**  
For appointment, call Conor at 215-634-2000 Ex.337
- 1st Fri 6:30 pm-9:30 pm **First Friday Gotta Dance at SpArc**, 2350 W. Westmoreland Street, Philadelphia, PA  
For more information call 215-229-4550.
- 3rd Fri 1:00 pm-3:00 pm **Consumer Connection**, Liberty Resources, Contact: Shawn Tucker, 215-634-2000 x-245.
- 4th Fri 10:00 am-12:00 pm **There's A Place for Us Parent Support Group**, Warren E. Smith (WES) Center, 1315 Windrim Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, 19141, Contact: Cleo Dupree, 215-329-5219.

## Saturdays

- Every Sat 1:30 pm **Special Teens (13 and older) Bowling** at Bristol Pike Lane, Croydon, PA.  
To sign up contact Harry Essling, 215-788-6383.

For more upcoming events and trainings go to: [www.visionforequality.org](http://www.visionforequality.org)  
and click on Events/Trainings

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applause and much cheering when she said this. Her sister Rachel was the inspiration for the new W.R.A.P. workbook.

Philadelphia City Councilman Dennis O'Brien, who initiated the Philadelphia Autism Project, presented a proclamation in honor of the event and the Transformation Decade.

O'Brien is a long time advocate and supporter of funding and services for citizens who need an extra hand. Councilwoman Cindy Bass, who is usually in attendance but had a conflict this year, is another strong supporter. And Loraine Ballard Morrill, of what is now called IHeartMedia Inc., formerly ClearChannel Media, is the perennial Mistress of Ceremonies for the awards luncheon. She listens carefully to the life story of each person who is receiving an award, and she

has the "heart" that her network indicates.

These are the people who, along with Denise Taylor Patterson, the director of IDS, fight every year for funding from Harrisburg so they can continue services for people with disabilities, as well as getting people off the waiting list. Denise has one of her staff people, Wendy Williams, who is a trained social worker, serving as coordinator of the IDS Public Awareness Committee,

which plans the Brighter Futures awards event and selects the winners from a pile of nominations.

The point of the awards is to showcase people who go out of their way to include the vulnerable in the daily life of the community. Think about it. When was the last time you saw someone with an intellectual disability at your doctor's office, your dentist's office, your grocery store, your beauty salon?

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## Dennis' Success Story

### Submitted by: Community Integrated Services (CIS)

Dennis graduated from Swenson High School in 2007, and started working at Wawa while he was still in high school. Dennis was an incredibly dedicated employee, but after working at Wawa for 6 years, Dennis wanted more of a challenge, more independence, and more working hours.

Dennis turned to CIS for help in looking for a job with more hours where he could grow in responsibility and self-sufficiency. Soon after the job search began, Dennis was hired at Olive Garden in February 2013. CIS staff initially supported Dennis at work, but after just two months, the only support Dennis needed was a monthly-check in – a fact that speaks to Dennis' hard work, motivation, and self-sufficiency.

Dennis began by bussing tables, but when the managerial staff saw how hard-working Dennis was, they quickly increased his tasks to include answering the phones for take out orders and performing food preparation - and Dennis now works upwards of 25-30 hours per week. Not only does he excel at his tasks, Dennis is an incredibly reliable employee: this past winter, during the brutal snow storms, Dennis made it in to work because he did not want to let his coworkers down.

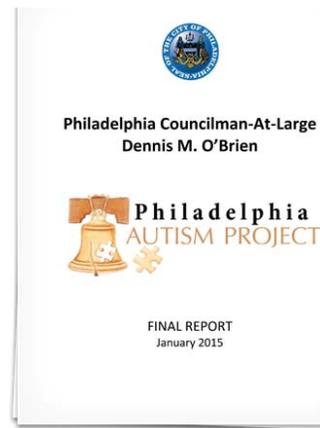
Dennis' story illustrates the power of a great job match to a great job candidate, something that CIS strives to find for every one of its job-seekers. Dennis' job is an ideal fit for him, as he loves the work and is proud of his increased hours and responsibility, but it's also an optimal fit for Olive Garden: the staff have come to rely

on Dennis' hard work, dedication, and skill to help the restaurant run smoothly.

Dennis' hard work and dedication have been recognized by Olive Garden, by CIS staff, and most recently, by Networks for Training and Development. In October 2014, Networks awarded Dennis the Octavia Green Dream Job Award for Dennis' contributions to his workplace and his community.

For more CIS Success Stories, go to: <http://www.cisworks.org/>

## Philadelphia Autism Project



The Philadelphia Autism Project is a citywide initiative led by Philadelphia Councilman-At-Large Dennis M. O'Brien and conducted in partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS). The goal of the Philadelphia Autism project is to examine the services and supports for individuals and families who are living with Autism in Philadelphia.

Please visit [www.phillyautismproject.org](http://www.phillyautismproject.org) for more information.

### Philadelphia Infant Toddler Early Intervention Intake Referral Unit - Call 215-685-4646

Philadelphia Intellectual disAbility Services (IDS) coordinates the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program in Philadelphia! The Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program serves children from birth to three years of age who have a developmental delay. This program is a state and federal entitlement for eligible children and is provided at no cost to families in Pennsylvania.

Referrals come directly from parents or family members, and from hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics, and other agencies serving children. Once a child is referred, an IDS Early Intervention Intake Coordinator contacts the family to complete the intake application. The Coordinator then assigns the child and family to service coordination. ChildLink, the service coordination organization, works closely with the family and the Early Intervention Provider Agencies to identify and deliver the needed services. See Sections II-D and V of the 2014 IDS Directory of Services and Supports for more detailed information.

<http://dbhids.org/divisions/ids/ids-service-directory-2014/>

# The Power of a Friend

By Sheila McLeod



Michael and Ellie

This article is to celebrate the energy and effort two providers shared in reconnecting two long time friends who had lost their way to one another. When the residential providers learned about this long-term friendship and what it meant to each of the individuals they supported they immediately went to work reconnecting Ellie and Michael and establishing a plan to keep them in each others life.

What a joyous moment for the two of them to once again embrace their kindred spirits.

What this all boils down to is we don't have to have all of the extravagant things life has to offer, but we each need to be connected to others in relationships that sustain us through the good days and the bad- this would be our FRIENDS.

Unfortunately folks within our service system seldom receive help cultivating or maintaining friendships in their lives, and as a result it leaves them a little more vulnerable and a lot more lonely.

My challenge to you today is help someone you support to develop or maintain a friendship. It is one of the most rewarding things that you could do!

Kudos to Tracie Gardner, Barber National Institute and Bill Schoppe, PATH for responding to the Power of Friendship.

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## BRIGHTER FUTURE AWARDS INSPIRE

Pay attention, and you may be able to nominate a special person who displays compassion and creativity, and gets to include someone who might ordinarily be left out.

This year there were some amazing people who received awards, people like nurse practitioner Bonnie Giordano at Abington Memorial Hospital, who does ob/gyn exams for women who often fear such procedures. Nurse Giordano even designed a chair which converts to a table, so her patient does not have to get up and change seats. She even makes house calls!

Then there was the Father Judge ice hockey coach and teacher, Bill Connors, who saw that a young man with Down Syndrome, Kevin Karcher, loved coming to the hockey games. Connors included him with the team and made him a part of his own family, driving him to the games and including him in the St. Patrick's Day parade each year.

Laura Princiotta, of Merion Station, the CEO of SpArc Philadelphia, a family of organizations which provides services and advocacy for people with intellectual disAbility, nominated two of the award winners who have done extraordinary things for the people her agency serves: Jose Velasco, of the giant global corporation SAP, headquartered in Newtown Square, who runs the Autism at Work initiative for his company worldwide and has already hired five individuals here with autism as IT professionals who were trained by Sparc Philadelphia. And Miranda Clark Binder, the Curator of Education and Public Programs at LaSalle University's Art Museum, who collaborates with the Cultural Arts Center at Sparc, designs lectures on paintings and sculpture that their clients can understand, and then helps them create their own art work based on what they have seen at the museum and learned from her lectures.

**The Brighter Futures Awards day reminds us that everyone has value.**

**Save the Date for the Next Brighter Future Awards on March 18, 2016**

## PEP BOWL: HAVE FUN & SUPPORT OUR MISSION

Conveniently located in South Philadelphia just minutes from Center City, PEP Bowl offers a state-of-the-art bowling experience in an authentic "vintage" bowling alley dating back to the 1950s. You can feel good bowling at PEP Bowl knowing that you are helping support PEP's mission of providing much-needed employment and services to people with intellectual disabilities.

Whether you want to rent a lane, or our whole facility, PEP Bowl can accommodate your affair and help make it unforgettably fun! Bring your own food and beverages, or let us help you arrange catering. Pep Bowl has a B.Y.O.B. policy: Call for details.

PEP Bowl is a USBC-sanctioned bowling facility, offering six well-conditioned Prolane synthetic lanes for your bowling pleasure. We offer shoe rental and brand-new house balls, so all you'll need to bring is yourself and your friends!

For more information about PEP Bowl, please contact Dan Ciecka at 215-952-BOWL or [PEPBowl@pepservices.org](mailto:PEPBowl@pepservices.org).

# RESOURCES

## Free Summertime Activities in Philadelphia

Many of Philadelphia's historical attractions are free, including Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Christ Church, Elfreth's Alley, Franklin Court, and the Edgar Allen Poe House. The U.S. Mint is also free.



### Other free activities include:

- First Sunday of the Month and Wednesdays after 5pm:  
Pay as you Wish at the Philadelphia Museum of Art [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)
- Sundays Only: During summer, The National Liberty Museum [www.libertymuseum.org](http://www.libertymuseum.org) is offering free Sunday admission. This small museum, located near Independence Hall, celebrates the concepts of freedom, diversity and nonviolence, and displays some interesting glass sculptures.
- Free Self-Guided Walking Tours <http://www.theconstitutional.com/tours/self-guided-tours>
- Free Outdoor Sculpture Tour <http://museumwithoutwallsaudio.org/>
- Free Festivals at Penns Landing <http://www.delawareriverwaterfront.com/>
- Visit the Race Street Pier, also on the Delaware, for a unique perspective:  
<http://www.visitphilly.com/museums-attractions/philadelphia/race-street-pier/>
- You can also take a free Ranger tour of various sites in Independence Mall area with the National Park Rangers <http://www.nps.gov/inde/index.htm>
- The Settlement Music School, 416 Queen Street in Philadelphia <http://www.smsmusic.org/calendar/index.php?t=1&k=1> has a great calendar of free music concerts. What's terrific about the school, too, are the thousands of students who are assisted financially by the school. The best and brightest of the young musicians can find their way to the Philadelphia Orchestra by sheer talent alone. This is worth a listen to the professionals who play at the school, for free, as a donation to the community. Concerts include events such as "An Intimate Evening of Music for Cello and Piano," as a typical type of event.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**ADA** **DISABILITY**  
**RIGHTS**  
**ARE**  
**25** **CIVIL**  
**RIGHTS**  
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT  
1990-2015



The Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities  
The office of Councilman-At-Large Dennis M. O'Brien



and the  
present

**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER**

*The 25th Annual Celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act*  
**Saturday, July 25**  
**11 am - 3 pm**  
**City Hall**

To include an event or submit an article for publication in the Family Forum,  
please email [familyforum@visionforequality.org](mailto:familyforum@visionforequality.org)

# THE PATHWAY SCHOOL

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Finding a summer program for your child that is educational, engaging, and fun, can be challenging! Consider The Pathway School's Extended School Year Program (ESY) for students ages 6-21. Pathway offers a 6-week program with enriching activities that include problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Students ages 7-15 will look forward to the "Around the World in 30 Days" program where "experience counts," and students 16-21 will be focused in on moving "E3 Forward" to "explore, expand, and experience!"

For over 50 years The Pathway School has served children with neurological impairments, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, psychological disorders, and serious emotional disturbances. Our summer program was created to help students maintain curricular performance; improve social skills and relationships with others; expand areas of interests, awareness, and competencies; as well as cultivate community-based knowledge, experiences, and responsibilities, all while enjoying fun-filled summer activities.

For more information on Pathway's programs please, please visit [www.pathwayschool.org](http://www.pathwayschool.org) or contact Diana Phifer, Director of Admissions & Marketing at 610-277-0660 ext. 289, or via email at [dphifer@pathwayschool.org](mailto:dphifer@pathwayschool.org)

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## SAVE the DATE!



### Disability Awareness Night with the Camden Riversharks

Saturday, June 6, 2015 @ 5: 35 pm

Tickets: \$13

Come out to Campbell's Field with  
Vision for EQuality

to see the 'Sharks take on Long Island.

For more information or to purchase tickets,

Please contact: Maria Melendez

[Mmelendez@visionforequality.org](mailto:Mmelendez@visionforequality.org)

267-765-0309

Go to <http://www.visionforequality.org> to purchase tickets online

## Save the Date!

### 15th Annual Points of Transformation Awards

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Community Behavioral Health

801 Market Street, 11th Floor Conference Room, Philadelphia, PA

A celebration of Direct Service Professionals & Supports Coordinators who  
exemplify our motto: "It's all about community!"

For more information contact:

Wendy Williams (215) 685-4680 [Wendy.Williams@phila.gov](mailto:Wendy.Williams@phila.gov)



## Keep Your Cool in Hot Weather

Take these steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths during hot weather:

- Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
- Pace yourself.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Do not leave children or pets in cars.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates.



Extreme Heat: Info for Specific Groups

- People aged 65 and older <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/seniors.html>
  - Spanish (en español) [http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/seniors\\_esp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/seniors_esp.html)
- Infants and children <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/children.html>
  - Spanish (en español) [http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/children\\_esp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/children_esp.html)
- People with chronic medical conditions <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/medical.html>
  - Spanish (en español) [http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/medical\\_esp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/medical_esp.html)
- Low income <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/poor.html>
  - Spanish (en español) [http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/poor\\_esp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/poor_esp.html)
- Outdoor workers <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/workers.html>
  - Spanish (en español) [http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/workers\\_esp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/workers_esp.html)
- Athletes <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/athletes.html>
  - Spanish (en español) [http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/athletes\\_esp.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/espanol/athletes_esp.html)