

ATL Foundation News

Giving a lift to women in need since 1994

May 2019



What Comes Around Goes Around

By Becky Brinkman

Carolyn, the Community Engagement Director at Earthlinks, is a perfect example of this. Earthlinks is a wonderful brick and mortar organization that works with those who have experienced homelessness and whose income is below \$12,060/year. Earthlinks reduces isolation by providing community with hands on urban gardening and craft workshops, while assisting participants in finding stable housing, staying in recovery, getting adequate food, and achieving personal goals. In essence, Earthlinks is like a benevolent parent helping her child succeed! (Check it out. www.earthlinks-colorado.org You can support their goals by buying their craft products: bee boxes, honey, rain barrels, handmade soaps, candles, lotions, cards and more!)

Carolyn had been on staff at Earthlinks for 5 years, when at age 64, she discovered she had adenocarcinoma, with tumors in her neck, lungs and abdomen. She was treated aggressively with chemo and even with all the difficult side effects, continued to work parttime from home. Her insurance deductible was \$8000! Each PET scan cost \$3100. Co-pays were \$400-500 each month. Not much was left for food, transportation and routine monthly bills. Working in a non-profit organization, or any other organization for that matter, does not always provide enough income for this kind of unplanned health crisis. Obviously, there was a lot of emotional and financial stress to navigate in this scenario.

The ATL Foundation quickly provided a grant to help Carolyn with her medical co-pays and

mounting bills. Although she was told her cancer is not curable, it is treatable. She will have scans the rest of her life, but she is back to her old self again! Back to working fulltime at Earthlinks, elevating lives, providing support to those who benefit so greatly from their programs. She beams with pride when she describes all their activities in progress this spring.What comes around goes around!



www.ATLFoundation.org

And Keeps Going Around

By Becky Brinkman

How do we ever get from where we were to where we are without a very clear roadmap of our lives? And yet there are no such maps. We all struggle, meet challenges as they arise, and hope the struggles light our way. For some, the path is padded by support of family or lucky circumstances from birth, for others the quirks of culture, DNA, and poor choices leads to a more difficult path. Meet Cynthia.

Cynthia joined the military in the late 80's. She served as a records specialist in Desert Storm. She sustained low back and neck injuries, and has shrapnel in her left shoulder still. In 1991, a year before the passage of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" she was discharged on Section 8, article 32, for sexual activity.

It is no surprise she became addicted to pain medications. Doctors freely prescribed Percocet and Soma in those days. She needed pain relief and liked the euphoria that drugs provided. She admits she became "very cranky" when she ran out of meds. Eventually she moved on to meth and heroine, sometimes stealing to get money to buy drugs. That led to a drug possession



charge in 2005. She went to jail and served 3 years of an 8 year sentence. When released, she worked with homeless vets for awhile. But then her mother died and she relapsed, using harder, stronger drugs to manage her emotional pain. That is when she overdosed and essentially died in Penrose Hospital. After a period in detox, she was offered probation in a “recovery court” program, rather than incarceration. On the day she was to have a follow-up court hearing, the friend who was to provide her transportation to the courthouse did not show up. Cynthia had walked 2 miles when someone stopped and gave her a ride the rest of the way to the courthouse. But she was too late for her appointed court hearing, and was put in jail for another year. During that year, she made some serious decisions.

So why can't people just get off drugs and “fly right” sooner? Cynthia explained that when you get off drugs you are still in physical and emotional pain but don't know how to express it or handle it. All your friends and family are long gone, you have burned all your bridges. You have a record of incarceration with no recent employment history, no place to live, no transportation, maybe no phone, no possessions, no one trusts you, no one wants to hire you, and you may end up associating with similar people you got into trouble with in the first place. Your injuries, poor choices and the mistakes you have made follow you the rest of your life. And if you are not an incredibly strong person with the ability to imagine a different future, it looks hopeless.

In 2015, Cynthia was in transitional housing after coming out of prison for the second time. She had had several spinal surgeries due to her injuries and she was receiving Social Security Disability income. She is limited in her ability to stand or walk or sit for very long so was somewhat discouraged from seeking a job in an attempt to get off government assistance. But she was determined!

Two things made it possible for Cynthia to succeed. First, Cynthia became a client of the Empowerment Program that is specifically for women getting out of prison or off the street. They help women get their GEDs, find a trade, or go to college. Through them, she received a grant to become a Peer Counselor, being uniquely qualified by her “lived experience.” She was then trained to be a Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC), and went on to become the first woman to be a certified Peer Support Specialist.

Second, Cynthia discovered the ATL Foundation was willing to help her get into permanent housing by paying first and last month's rent in a basement apartment and to buy her essential furnishings (bed, table, etc.)

Cynthia is now employed at the University of Colorado in the ARTS (Addiction, Research, Treatment and Services) program within the Department of Psychiatry.

She uses her own life experiences to connect with clients. She runs a peer support group, an intro to 12 step programs and helps addicts and ex-felons get situated with housing or whatever is needed to get their lives on track.

Cynthia is another example of “what comes around goes around.” She recently referred a disabled elderly lesbian client to us who needed assistance with her deposit and first month's rent, and ATL was ready to help. That woman is now situated and safe. This is the power of the generosity of our donors!



Staying Connected

By Becky Brinkman

There are dozens of civic-minded groups within our community that are unknown to many of us. One such organization is **OLOC: Old Lesbians Organizing for Change**. OLOC of Colorado, started in 1993 as a chapter of National OLOC, is a 501c3 non-profit. It welcomes as members Old Lesbians who have reached their 60th year. (Isn't 60 the new 40? :->) Their purpose is to increase lesbian visibility and to confront ageism, as well as all the other “isms” in pursuit of social justice for all. There are three core values central to the Colorado chapter of OLOC: 1) We are all important, 2) We learn from each other, and 3) We support each other. They meet monthly to discuss current events and to stay informed politically, as well as to simply socialize. Dues are \$15.00 per year.

I became aware of OLOC because of the financial support they have given to the ATL Foundation over the years. Each quarter their membership selects a different non-profit organization to support through their

generous personal donations. ATL has provided assistance in the form of wheel chair ramps and payment for funeral services for a few OLOC members in the past.

Janet Gilmore and Sue Bracken, two long time members of OLOC, spoke with me recently about the organization. They said they joined to be with like-minded women, to appreciate the wisdom of older lesbians, and to enjoy a sense of community. They also endeavor to reduce the isolation of members as they age in place, offering them support by visits and phone calls. OLOC is a family to those who want connection.

If you would like more information about OLOC of Colorado, please contact Janet Gilmore at 720-350-1359.

THE CENTER on Colfax (the LGBTQ center) has a local chapter of SAGE-Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders. SAGE offers many classes and activities on site at the Center for people age 50+. But they also have two programs for outreach among elders who live independently or within care centers. The Friendly Visitors program matches a volunteer at the request of an elder, and weekly visits are then set up at times agreeable to both. The Phone-A-Friend program matches individuals with LGBT elders that are socially isolated, and would like weekly phone calls from a caring and compassionate volunteer.

If you or someone you know are interested in being a volunteer for a SAGE program, or if you are an elder that would like to participate in one on one communication with a volunteer, please contact the Director of Elder Services, Reynaldo Mireles at The Center at 303-733-7743, ext. 112.



Sooney!

You surely know Miss Piggy, Pumbaa, Porky Pig, Babe, and The Three Little Pigs? But do you know about the ATL Piggy Banks individually named by adopting donors? A couple of years ago we initiated a non-event fundraiser by distributing pink ATL Piggy Banks to anyone who wants one. Many of you have adopted and named your desk top companion pigs - Chris P. Bacon, Albert Einswine, Hamlet, and Sylvia Porkjolie (from NPR) to name a few. As my mother used to say, who raised pigs on a farm during the depression, "We used everything but the squeal!" And that's true about the

ATL pigs, too! We use every penny for the benefit of grant recipients. To date, we have raised \$3,636 by collecting all the loose coins you have tossed into your pigs and returned to ATL. If you have piggy money you'd like us to pick up at any time, just contact one of the board members or better yet, bring it with you to an ATL event. Just return the coins in a zip lock bag and use your piggy bank over and over.

Meet our new Board Member – Selene



Selene's early life was spent in Alaska. She moved to Colorado two years after completing her bachelor's degree in communications from Chapman University.

She moved to Colorado to pursue additional education and in 2011 received a masters in mass communications from the University of Denver and a masters in resource law studies from the University of Denver's Law School.

Immediately following graduation, Selene found employment with a nonprofit that focused on empowering young women. There, in addition to website management, she organized events and online fundraising campaigns. After leaving the nonprofit world, Selene's career has focused on medical marketing. She currently works at the Denver-based medical marketing firm, Vanguard Communications, where she assists private medical practices with website management, search engine optimization (where you land on Google search results), social media and other digital applications.

Selene is eager to put her current and past professional skills to work for the ATL Foundation. She was originally approached by current ATL Foundation Board member b Frank about joining the board. Selene is excited to be the first ally serving on the ATL Foundation's board, she enjoyed meeting many ATL supporters at last years wine tasting. She is looking forward getting to meet more supporters at upcoming ATL Foundation events.



A Late Summer Sip and Mingle

By Lynn Johnson

We had so much fun the first time that we decided to do it again. In August, ATL put on its second ever wine tasting event, held once again at the lovely home of board member b. Frank and her wife, Ronni. Supporters of ATL gathered on a beautiful late summer evening to chat and test their wine knowledge with a blind taste test of white and red wines from around the world. Many members of our sustained giving program, Friends of the Flock, were our honored guests. Several recipients of ATL grants spoke to the group about their experiences, while Paula Verdicchio provided entertainment throughout the event.



Many thanks to our sponsors –

Lynn Castelo at **Centennial Leasing and Sales**,
Kristy Tochihara and Noel Culberson at **Trailhead Wealth Management** ,
Sue Boynton from **State Farm Insurance**
Tim Beckman of **Movemasters**.

Thanks to all who came out and supported ATL!



What do you do with all your unwanted old stuff?

Recently a group of friends were asking that very question. They decided to pool all their no longer wanted “trinkets and treasures” and hold a group yard sale. They wanted to get the most exposure and the most foot traffic possible. They decided to hold the event at the home that was near a park and then they cleverly planned the event the same Saturday as the Easter egg hunt, to be held in the nearby park.

The word was sent out, and the night before the yard sale the trucks and cars starting arriving, unloading many years of wonderful items and memories. The assortment of old sports equipment alone was astounding; softball gear, tennis, racquet ball, golf, and camping gear. There was an array of old electronics and no longer wanted furniture and lots of other lovely trinkets. It filled a long driveway and part of the yard.

Then the selling began, and the bargaining was flying about. Items were clearing out and the dollars were rolling in. You see, they were letting the shopper know that the proceeds of the sale were going to a wonderful charity called ATL. They even had one buyer that went online and made a donation. The day yielded over \$600 donated to the ATL Foundation. It was a splendid day, basements were cleaned out, shoppers were thrilled with their “great deal” and those many items got new purpose. All for a great cause, to support women in need.

So, the next time you’re taking that item to the storage shed or down to your basement, put it in a box marked ATL and have your friends do the same. Then when you can all get together, have a sale. Helping women with your old belongings is a fitting end to the many items of our life. As they say...“one woman’s trash is another woman’s treasure”.

And that is what you do with your old unwanted stuff.

A Special thank you to Molly Barden and Amy Coffey for all their work in planning the community yard sale on behalf of the ATL Foundation. And a special thank you to all the friends that donated items for the sale.



Visit our Website for the next fun event— or to set up a donation — www.ATLFoundation.org



Introducing ATL ‘s New Board member – Jeannette

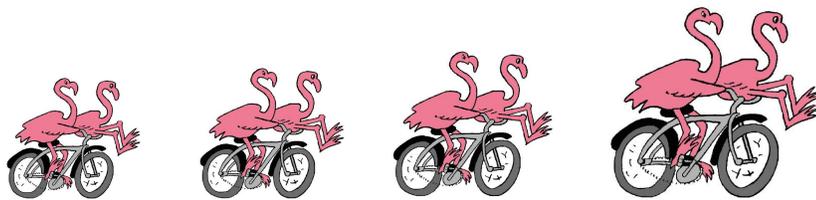
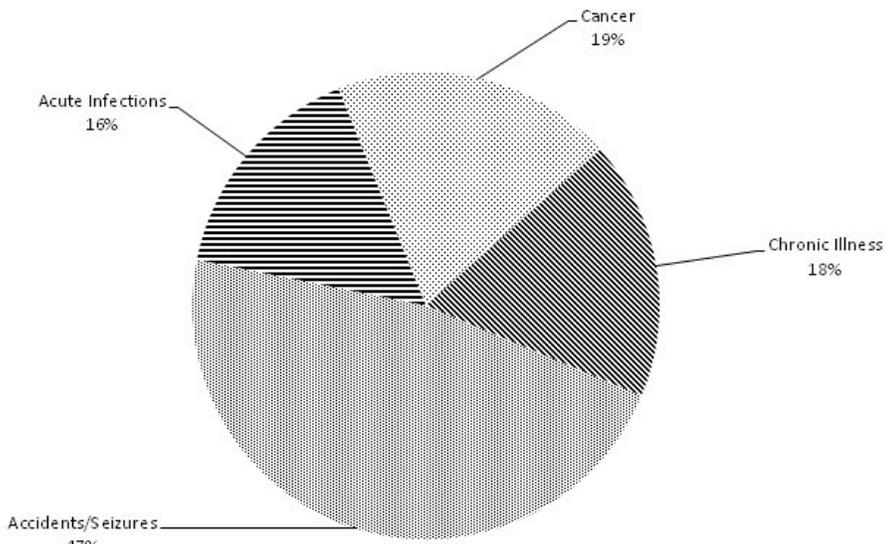
Jeannette Guerrasio is an internal medicine physician who, after 13 years of practice and teaching at the University of Colorado, has left her role as Professor of Medicine to practice primary care in the community. She is pleased and honored to offer her expertise by serving on the ATL Board.



Jeannette was introduced to ATL through her partner Lara Juliusson and friends in 2013, and participates in events as her schedule allows. When Jeannette misses events due to work, she at least makes herself available to be the designated driver after wine tasting events! Jeannette and Lara are Friends of the Flock.

Jeannette is originally from Long Island, New York, and earned her medical degree from Albany Medical College, completed residency in Connecticut and then moved out to Denver in 2006. She enjoys hiking and snowshoeing with Lara and their 2 dogs, hanging out with friends, running, reading and playing the oboe.

Grant Recipient Condition by Category 2018



Many grant recipients have complicated conditions with many overlapping co-morbidities such as- kidney disease and diabetes, or hepatitis C and cardiovascular disease, as examples. Below is a list of many of the conditions our recipient faced in 2018.

Cardiovascular conditions

- ◆ Brain aneurysms
- ◆ Chronic heart disease
- ◆ Diabetes

Musculoskeletal conditions

- ◆ Carpal tunnel syndrome
- ◆ Knee injuries
- ◆ Wrist injuries
- ◆ Reflex sympathetic dystrophy

Cancer

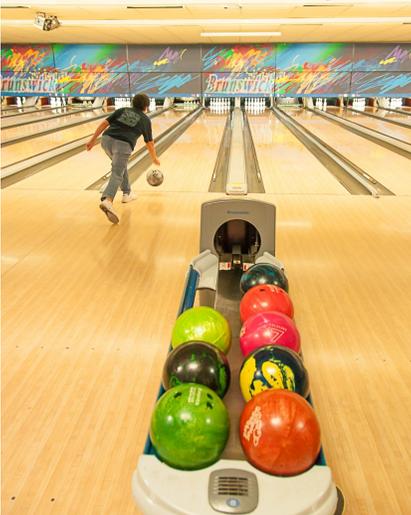
- ◆ Uterine
- ◆ Breast
- ◆ Colon

Systemic conditions

- ◆ Hepatitis C
- ◆ Liver disease
- ◆ Kidney disease

Bowling with ATL

Once again last November we held our annual Bowling event. We had almost 60 bowlers in attendance. The Bowling event has been a long standing tradition with ATL. Many of us bowl only once a year with the ATL Foundation, and we wonder why our game scores aren't better? You can sure tell the dedicated Bowlers every year, as their scores show it. Everyone enjoyed pizza and prizes after completing our three games. A fun time was had by all and we raised over \$3,000 for women in need. Check our website for our next bowling event this fall. Thank you for your support of the ATL Foundation!!



The ATL Board Members: **Becky Moore** - President, **Sue Boynton** - Treasurer, **Barbara "B" Frank** - Secretary, **Becky Brinkman** - Grant Coordinator, **Nancy Fritsch** - IT Manager, **Margaret Burd**, **Lynn Johnson**, **Selene Neuburg** and **Jeannette Guerrasio**

Scrambling for Fun at Hiwan Golf Club

by b. Frank, Project Manager, 2019 Chippin' In Golf Tournament

ATL's past three Chippin' In Golf Tournaments have been held at Hiwan Golf Club, and this year's tournament – held on **Monday, June 24** – is no exception. Hiwan Golf Club is a well-known private club in Evergreen, Colorado, with beautiful views and challenging holes.

To ensure a tournament that emphasizes fun while minimizing pressure, the chosen format for ATL's golf event is a scramble. One golf website (golfsoftware.com) compares the scramble tournament to a sped-up version of a Charlie Chaplin movie where a team of golfers tee off, chase their balls down the fairway and then gather in one location for their second shots. They all hit their second shot and again rush after their own ball – only to gather once again in one spot for their third shots. This process continues until one player puts the ball in the hole – and one score for the team is put on the card. The format encourages team members to interact and even strategize from hole to hole.

In addition to the scramble format, the Chippin' In tournament also includes a hole-in-one contest with a cash prize of \$20,000, plus contests for longest drive, closest to the pin, and putting. These contests are designed to generate a bit of excitement over the course of play. The ATL Board looks forward to welcoming all levels of golfers to join in the fun at Hiwan this June.





ATL Foundation
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A Colorado 501(c)3 Non-profit corporation

REGISTRATION IS OPEN
www.atlfoundation.org/upcoming-events
The ATL Foundation's
2019 CHIPPIN' GOLF TOURNAMENT
at
HIWAN GOLF CLUB
in Evergreen, Colorado
on
MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2019
7:30 AM Shotgun

*Join us for a day of premier golf, good food
and great fun on this private championship
golf course.*

