

## **BLOG**

January 22<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Hello and welcome to the **City of Atlantic Beach's** new website section – **Learning and Living with Disabilities**. This section and associated blog aim to share local information and resources available at the Beaches and Greater Jacksonville. Although we will be including and linking you to events throughout Jax, this section will focus on activities and not-for-profits at the Duval Beaches.

For those families living in Atlantic Beach or hoping to move here, we want you to know that there is a vibrant, supportive community that can provide information and share the available resources.

There are inherent difficulties in navigating the world of disability, and there is also so much inspiration and joy that we will share.

The goals of this website/blog are to:

**Inform** - We will share links to resources found throughout the City of Jacksonville and the beaches, conferences, and not-for-profits that can support you and your family, as well as ways that you can make a difference.

**Inspire** - We will share heartwarming stories and “happenings” in our community, which (we hope) will warm your heart.

**Involve** - We would appreciate your feedback about information you would like to see included in this website section and become involved in this communication.

The initial team who will be writing this blog and creating content are:

- **Susan Peters** is the CEO and founder of **PossAbilities Plus**, a teen and adult vocational training site for individuals with special needs. Includes a tearoom “Cup of Dreams”, thrift shop, and garden -----  
**1079 Atlantic Beach Blvd, Atlantic Beach** – [possabilitiesplus@gmail.com](mailto:possabilitiesplus@gmail.com)  
904-472-8371 (please text)
- **Karen Demuth** is the director of the Music Therapy Expansion, **Cathedral Arts Project**. [Karen@CAPkids.org](mailto:Karen@CAPkids.org) - 305-299-9247 (please text)

- **Kara Tucker**, Chief ADA Coordinator, **Disabled Services Division, City of Jacksonville**  
904-626-5442 (cell) 904-255-5472 (office) – [karat@coj.net](mailto:karat@coj.net)
- **Kevin Hogencamp**, Deputy City Manager, **City of Atlantic Beach** – (904) 362-0043(cell), (904)247-5804, [khogencamp@coab.us](mailto:khogencamp@coab.us),

Please remember we are volunteers in this endeavor -wanting to **Inform, Inspire,** and **Involve** (Please share information that you would like included in this section)

*Please send all inquiries, comments, and suggestions to Karen Demuth, [Karen@CAPkids.org](mailto:Karen@CAPkids.org), who will share them with the team and respond. We welcome your ideas and collaboration*

*\* Due to the nature of this blog, we will only be able to feature not-for-profits, not private businesses. However, we value our local business owners and appreciate your ideas, feedback, and support!!!*

## **Important contact information**

- City of Jacksonville Kara Tucker, Chief ADA Coordinator, Disabled Services Division, City of Jacksonville  
904-626-5442 (cell) 904-255-5472 (office) – [karat@coj.net](mailto:karat@coj.net)  
COJ Mayor Disability Council = First Tuesday of the Month
- Comments and ideas regarding this section of the website- Karen Demuth, Director of Music Therapy Expansion, Cathedral Arts Project.  
[Karen@CAPkids.org](mailto:Karen@CAPkids.org) - 305-299-9247 (please text)
- Atlantic Beach- Beach wheelchair program –  
<https://www.coab.us/2079/Accessibility-for-People-with-Disabiliti>

## Inform

Did you know that there are many not-for-profits at the Beaches and in Greater Jacksonville? These organizations work collaboratively to provide services for children, teenagers, and adults with disabilities. *Please share related Beaches not-for-profits with us!!*

Each month, we will feature a local not-for-profit that impacts those navigating the world with a disability.

Atlantic Beach is proud to be home to an inspired not-for-profit. **PossAbilities Plus** is a local nonprofit at 1079 Atlantic Blvd, Atlantic Beach where teens and adults with special needs and unique abilities can receive job training, employment, and social opportunities to enhance their lives and opportunities. The program operates an upscale thrift store, tearoom, and garden that provides job training opportunities. PossAbilities Plus provides music therapy, art therapy, drama, social programs, and a family support group so that participants can build self-confidence, skills, and healthy relationships. In addition, we can provide on-the-job training and placement through Vocational Rehabilitation.

- For more information, contact **Susan Peters**- CEO and Founder, PossAbilities Plus - [possabilitiesplus@gmail.com](mailto:possabilitiesplus@gmail.com) 904-472-8371 (please text)



## Inspire

This month, we are featuring:

### **Neptune Beach Elementary School – Music Therapy Holiday**

**Performance – 2023-** Atlantic Beach Not-For-Profit, Connecting Thru Music- is now a part of [The Cathedral Arts Project- 501-C3](#) (CAP). CAP was the sponsor of this event and provides music therapy throughout our region.

*It was a packed house of parents, grandparents, and other family members who don't often get to experience their children having the opportunity to perform. The pride and joy in their eyes were palpable.*

*In addition, **Mayor Deegan, Mayor Brown, Mayor Ford, and Mayor Hoffman** were in attendance, along with the board chair of The Kids Hope Alliance, representatives from the PGA TOUR and THE PLAYERS, and DCPS. There were also quite a number of CAP board members, donors, and other guests.*

***But most of all, we had 80+ amazing children, many navigating life with the aid of wheelchairs, who lit up the stage in vibrant attire.** Under the guidance of UpBeat Music Therapy's music therapist, **Hembree Poindexter, MT-BC**, their rendition of holiday songs was a moving showcase of resilience and joy. Hembree's dedication deserves our deepest appreciation.*

*It was inspiring to watch what these children have managed to accomplish in just a few months and one could only imagine how much they have gone through to be able to get to this point.*

**Principal Kavanagh** was overcome with emotion when she thanked our community for their support, mentioning that the program had touched and changed lives. The music therapy program at Neptune Beach Elementary School (NBE) (which has ten classrooms for children with special needs ) was started in 2016 by Connecting Thru Music, an Atlantic Beach not-for-profit which is now a part of The Cathedral Arts Project, <https://capkids.org>.





**Music Therapy is the clinical & evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. Music therapy interventions can address a variety of healthcare & educational goals:**

**First Coast News covered the performance and provided this inspiring message!!**

**Click here to watch this short video**

**First Coast News Covers Music Therapy Holiday Performance at Neptune Be...**

The success of the music therapy program at NBE inspired grants, donors, and funding. There are now over 400 students at 15 sites receiving music therapy at public and private schools through [The Cathedral Arts Project](#) in Duval County.

However, with over 19,000 students living with disabilities, there is much work to be done. Because music is the only modality that impacts the entire brain, music therapy is especially beneficial in the learning and development of this population!!

**Together, we are making such a difference.**

**Involve – What would you like to see featured, included, and more?**

Comments, and ideas regarding this section of the website- **Karen Demuth**, Director Music Therapy Expansion, Cathedral Arts Project. [Karen@CAPkids.org](mailto:Karen@CAPkids.org) - 305-299-9247 (please text)

**Thank you for taking the time to read our first blog. Have a wonderful January! Below are a few local opportunities:**

**IN A GALAXY FAR FAR AWAY...  
WE WILL BE DANCING AT NIGHT TO SHINE!**

**JOIN US AS THE JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY TEAMS UP TO  
CREATE THE LARGEST NIGHT TO SHINE COLLABORATION  
TO DATE AND CELEBRATE PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL  
ABILITIES! SPACE IS LIMITED! RSVP TODAY AT  
LEANNE.POSSABILITIESPLUS@GMAIL.COM**

**WATCH & DANCE PARTY AT  
CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**MUSIC, FOOD, DRINKS, ENTERTAINMENT, PHOTO OPPS,  
CROWNS, LIGHTSABERS, A PARENT AREA, AND MORE...**

**WHERE:**  
400 PENMAN RD.  
IN NETUNE BEACH  
BEHIND WINN DIXIE

**NIGHT TO  
SHINE**

**WHEN:**  
2.10.24  
7-9PM

**A PossAbilities Plus EVENT**  
Creating Endless Possibilities For All Abilities



# SAVE THE DATE 29th ANNUAL TOOLS FOR SUCCESS FAMILY CONFERENCE

A CONFERENCE FOR AND ABOUT FAMILIES OF  
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Annual Tools for Success Family Conference is an inter-agency collaboration that supports families of children with special needs in Jacksonville, Florida and surrounding counties. This conference helps families obtain information on available resources and topics that affect their child's education and well being. This one-day conference hosts several breakout sessions on topics that include: transition, behavior, mental health, autism, IEP's and government programs.

## CONFERENCE INFORMATION

WHEN:

February 16, 2024  
from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

WHERE:

The Schultz Center  
4019 Boulevard Center  
Drive  
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT:

**Rebecca Skinner**

[SkinnerR@duvalschools.org](mailto:SkinnerR@duvalschools.org)

Or

**Henry Schmitges**

[SchmitgesH@duvalschools.org](mailto:SchmitgesH@duvalschools.org)

**Scan Here to Register for the  
Event**





A NEW OPPORTUNITY  
FOR YOUNG ADULTS...

# TUNEFUL TRANSITIONS

THURSDAYS 3:00-3:50



Tuneful Transitions is an exciting new music therapy-based group that promotes social skills for young adults

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- Greeting peers and coworkers
- Conversational skills: responding to others/listening/keeping the conversation going
- Cooperative recreation skills
- Setting boundaries/respecting others
- Spatial awareness

CONTACT SUSAN PETERS

[possabilitiesplus@gmail.com](mailto:possabilitiesplus@gmail.com)

904-595-5381



1079 Atlantic Blvd #1  
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233





# NEW YEAR, NEW YOU!

## Setting Goals in 2024

Join us for learning how to set goals for the New Year!  
Featuring: Budgeting, Time Management / Planning, Stress Management, and  
Health (Physical, Emotional, and Mental)

Classes are Saturdays Jan 20th, Jan 27th, Feb 3rd,  
Feb 24th, Mar 2, and Mar 16th from 5:30 to 7pm

Spots are limited REGISTER TODAY!  
Leanne.PossAbilitiesPlus@gmail.com

**Only  
\$90**

  
**PossAbilities Plus**  
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**Ages  
14 & up**