

AWARD PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forsyth County Schools Assistive Technology Team Wins Tools for Life Excellence in AT Service Delivery Award During Annual IDEAS Conference

St. Simons Island, Georgia | June 18, 2019 – The Division of Developmental Disabilities within the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) was awarded the prestigious 2019 Tools for Life Innovation Award on June 6, 2019. The team won the prize over other nominees throughout the state of Georgia. Members of the team include Ron Wakefield, Director of Division of Developmental Disabilities; Amy Riesdesel, Director of Community Services; and Nicki Wilson, Family Support and Participant Direction Manager.

The Tools for Life Assistive Technology Awards Ceremony has been a tradition within Georgia for over 20 years. The Tools for Life Innovation Award recognizes the outstanding design of a program, project, product, building, space and/or inclusive classroom. This award was created by Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Program, to recognize creativity and encourage assistive technology and universal design principles for equal access for all people.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities was awarded the Tools for Life Innovation Award during the Institute Designed for Educating All Students (IDEAS) Conference. This annual conference is attended by more than 1,000 educators and assistive technology professionals from across the state of Georgia.

The team rose above the other nominees for a variety of reasons, including the collaboration with Tools for Life in their innovative approach to serving individuals in Georgia on the "waiting list" for Medicaid Waivers. Together, DBHDD and Tools for Life looked for ways in which assistive technology could help individuals with developmental disabilities become more independent, be better able to express their thoughts and desires, or be better connected to their family and community by using a person-centered approach.

Each member of the DBHDD Division of Developmental Disabilities team will receive a unique handcrafted bowl created exclusively for the Tools for Life Assistive Technology Award winners by Georgia artisans *In the Woods, LLC*. These beautiful pieces serve as a reminder of the knowledge, skills and abilities that overflow from each person's "bowl" as he or she assists students and other individuals with disabilities in achieving their educational and lifelong goals.

About Tools for Life:

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, is dedicated to increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they may be able to live, learn, work and play independently and with greater freedom in communities of their choice.

Visit www.gatfl.gatech.edu for more information.

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