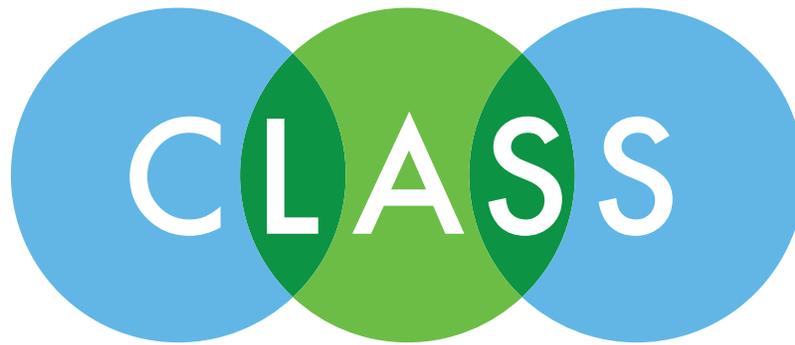


# The Road Map To Success Includes **All** People



Annual Report  
2016



# Board Leadership Of Our Community

Dear Friends,

CLASS has just completed our 65th year of serving individuals of all abilities in our communities. What an exciting accomplishment! While this year has not been without its challenges, we are happy to reflect on the community that CLASS built this year. For 65 years now, CLASS has traveled and, at times, paved the road to inclusive communities. Like any other road on a map, this journey has had some sharp turns and a few bumps, but at the end of the day, our communities are becoming more welcoming to all people.

In this annual report, you will see how CLASS is helping your friends and neighbors navigate their own routes to community. Whether it is providing services and support to individuals and families or connecting people to the natural support within their own communities, CLASS continues to lead the charge of creating communities where all people can participate.

Consider these figures:

- 710,649 hours of services provided
- 2,281 people served
- 78 new referrals

For CLASS, these figures symbolize the number of steps we have taken toward creating a community where all people can thrive.

Friends, we cannot thank you enough for supporting CLASS as we continue to strive to meet our mission of, *“Working Toward A Community Where Each Belongs.”* While the course ahead may be uncharted and could have unanticipated detours, the Board of Directors, leadership, and staff will continue to provide the individuals CLASS supports with the tools needed to locate the communities of their choice.

After all, the road map to a successful community includes all people.



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Chief Executive Officer



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CLASS Board President

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# Explore Our Community

Community Living and Support Services (CLASS) offers quality, individualized programs to individuals with disabilities and their families through six different program areas. Since its inception in 1951, CLASS is consistently making strides toward the organizational mission of **Working Toward A Community Where Each Belongs**. CLASS serves all people with disabilities who aspire to live, work, and play in the communities of their choice.

Through programs and services, CLASS provides individuals with the valuable tools and support to make vital connections within their communities. The 2016 Annual Report will highlight the stories of the individuals CLASS serves in their communities.

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**A Community  
Where Each  
Belongs**

## In 2016, the MSES

### Program:

- **Provided 825 visits to 42 individuals**
- **Accepted seven new referrals to the program**
- **Supported 54 people through four social and support groups**
- **Provided information and referral services to 1,181 people**



## Kyni's Community

For many people, places of worship can be the key to community. People often benefit from many different types of support through their faith. For Kyni, this is especially true. Faith plays a major role in Kyni's life, and she loves reading the Bible and playing gospel music on the piano at her apartment complex. As an active member of her church, Kyni also receives valuable support from fellow church members. Knowing a friend at her church who worked for CLASS, Kyni decided to ask about the different services CLASS offers. Based on Kyni's description of her needs, her friend referred her to the Multiple Sclerosis Exercise and Support(MSES) Program.

When Kyni first contacted CLASS, she was in need of services that would help her remain as independent as possible in her own home. She wanted to explore personal care services and increase her mobility and independence in her home and community. Joyce, the MSES Program Supervisor, and Kyni began by working to build Kyni's strength and balance by working on range of motion exercises. Kyni stated, "One day Joyce and I took a walk outside with my walker. The more I walked outside, the stronger I felt. I now have much better control over my arms and legs."

As Joyce became more familiar with Kyni, she came to realize that Kyni could benefit from understanding the implications of having MS. In addition to her exercises, Kyni and Joyce have discussed how decreasing stress and improving nutrition also play a role in controlling the symptoms of MS. With Joyce's help, Kyni now loves to exercise and understands the importance of exercising regularly. She shares, "CLASS has promoted me to stay active – If you don't use, it you'll lose it."

In addition to the services provided by the MSES Program, Joyce referred Kyni to the Community Partners Program to help ease some of the stress Kyni was experiencing. Kyni works with her Community Partner, Peggy, to develop strategies to manage her home, including applying for assistance services, organizing finances, and promoting better nutrition. Initially, Peggy and Kyni worked together to organize Kyni's living space, creating an area where she could exercise.

Through both the MSES and Community Partners programs, Kyni feels less anxiety in her home. With her increased mobility and balance from working with the MSES Program, she likes to walk through her neighborhood. As Kyni continues to remain active in her community, her next steps are to work with Peggy to establish attendant care support in her home and prepare healthy meals.

Kind, caring, and quick-witted are terms that are often used to describe Lydia. Living all her life in Mt. Lebanon, Lydia has always loved her community. She enjoys cooking and baking, fashion, crocheting, and crafting. Lydia loves animals, especially her cat, Sam.

At the age of 15, Lydia was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and had to learn to walk again. She currently receives support through the In-Home Services Program, so that she can remain as independent as possible in her own home. Her attendants, Terrie and Shannon, really enjoy spending time with Lydia. Terrie describes Lydia as an expert cook. Lydia sometimes has difficulty standing for long periods of time, so she coaches Terrie on how to prepare her meals. Terrie admits that Lydia really sparked Terrie's interest in cooking. With Lydia's knowledge and guidance, Terrie's skills have become so polished that her own family is appreciative of what she has learned from Lydia.

Over the last year, Lydia decided it was time for her to move from the four-story home she had been living in for 42 years to a smaller, more manageable home. She rarely ventured from the first floor of her home. Lydia even began to feel isolated because she was staying home instead of doing things she enjoyed to save money for anticipated repairs. Lydia was fortunate to find a one-level, accessible home only three blocks from where she lived. Excited she could still reside in the area she is familiar with, she needed assistance with the transition, especially with planning, packing, and organizing for the move to her new home.

Terrie and Shannon were very supportive through the transition. They helped her determine what she wanted to keep versus discard, and helped her pack boxes. When Lydia became overwhelmed with the moving process, Terrie and Shannon would acknowledge her concerns and remind her of all of the opportunities the new home would bring. Terrie shared that she wanted Lydia to feel confident throughout the moving process, and these discussions seemed to help Lydia through this bittersweet time in her life. Of the support from Terrie and Shannon, Lydia shared, "I couldn't have made the move without my attendants. They make my life easier and when I am down they bring me up. They help keep me organized."

In the two short weeks in her new home, she already has new friendships and has attended two social gatherings with neighbors. Lydia's new home is located close to shops and restaurants in her area and she looks forward to the spring when she can venture out to lunch and visit the shops. She is especially happy with her new accessible kitchen and plans to have Terrie assist in making her famous Scandinavian Almond Cakes to share with her new neighbors (and hopefully with her friends at CLASS)!

## Lydia's Community



### ***In 2016, the In-Home Services Program:***

- ***Provided 237,000 hours of support***
- ***Supported 258 individuals***
- ***Enrolled 41 new individuals to the program***

Reading, watching the Steelers, and movies; these are just a few of Lamont's favorite things. He is not much different than you or me, and if the truth be told, our differences are perhaps only in what we have experienced.

While outside on a fall day in November, Lamont's life changed at age 21, as an innocent bystander to gun violence. After spending several months in the hospital, followed by extensive rehabilitation, Lamont was able to come home. With little knowledge of resources available to him, Lamont spent the next decade occupied with building his strength by working out and helping his grandparents, who he lived with at the time. Nearly fifteen years later, someone shared information with him about a waiver program and Lamont began to work with a service coordinator to find services that would assist Lamont in working toward his GED and gaining vocational experience. After touring the Community Skill Building Program, Lamont decided to attend the program two days a week.

Lamont really enjoys working with the vending machines at CLASS. When helping to organize the machines, Lamont checks for expiration dates, refills the machines, counts the profits, and loads a refreshment cart he and his peers through the building, allowing staff and visitors to purchase their favorite snack items twice per week. (Lamont has admitted that CLASS staff favor Swedish Fish).

Lamont has become the leader in these tasks, assisting others make change and take orders, as well as updating everyone on new items. He enjoys taking the time to visit with each person he meets.

To enhance his job skills, Lamont wanted to participate in the volunteer opportunities at CLASS. Lamont volunteers at Mattress Factory in the North Side. While volunteering, Lamont folds papers, assembles informational packets, assists and greets guests of the museum. He enjoys learning new tasks and meeting new people. Lamont has stressed how welcoming the staff at the Mattress Factory has been to all the volunteers and has built meaningful relationships with the museum director and staff. Lamont shared, "It keeps me busy and keeps me learning while I am busy. The staff treats me very well and I finally have the opportunity to be in the community, volunteering and helping others."

Lamont lives with his grandmother, Ella, who is very supportive of his efforts and enthusiasm. His sister and aunt are both very involved with his life. Lamont is also very proud of his son, Lamont, who is currently attending Geneva College.

Lamont is a role model for others, setting an example by way of personal perseverance. He is a great example of how CLASS programs, combined with determination, can allow more people to participate in the community.

### ***In 2016, the Community Skill Building Program:***

- Provided 70,000 skill building hours and 400 hours of case management to 82 individuals***
- Accepted twelve new referrals to the program***

## Lamont's Community



# Help CLASS Grow Our Community

*"Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree long ago."*

*- Warren Buffet*

Established in 1951, Community Living and Support Services (CLASS) has filled the roles of caregiver, supporter, advocate, and friend in the lives of many men, women, and children with disabilities throughout the years. With great determination, CLASS has worked tirelessly so that all people, regardless of ability, can lead fulfilling lives as active members of their community.

It is through the supporters of the organization that CLASS can continue to play such valuable roles in the lives of the individuals we support. CLASS invites you to make a donation to The Giving Tree, receiving a leaf or a dove to recognize your family's role within the organization. Donations for leaves or doves can be made in honor or memory of loved ones.

Can we count on you to continue supporting CLASS's mission of Working Toward A Community Where Each Belongs? Your gift will enable individuals to receive care in their homes, the opportunity to participate in the community, support volunteer and vocational efforts, and provide affordable, accessible housing.

*We hope you will join us in leaving your legacy, so that we can continue ours.*

Each legacy gift will be prominently displayed on CLASS's Giving Tree that will be located on the top floor, outside the elevator.

Each leaf comes with four lines of text. Spaces count as one letter. Doves have only three lines of text.

Your legacy gift will be recognized in the following ways:

- \$1,000 - Soaring Dove
- \$500 - Gold Leaf
- \$250 - Silver Leaf
- \$100 - Bronze Leaf

- Line 1: 26 Characters
- Line 2: 19 Characters  
(Should Contain Name)
- Line 3: 27 Characters
- Line 4: 17 Characters

Use the lines below for the desired message on your leaf.  
Please print clearly to avoid typos.

Line 1:

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Line 2:

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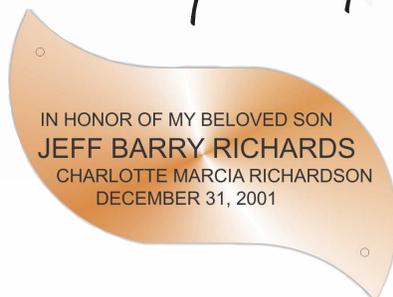
Line 3:

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Line 4:

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## Sample Leaf



Please fill out this page and remit with payment or billing information to CLASS using the envelope provided in this Annual Report.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Shannon McCarty, Development Director, at 412.683.7100 extension 2158 or [smccarty@classcommunity.org](mailto:smccarty@classcommunity.org).

When you meet Susan, you may find her with her nose in a book or attending classes on Creative Writing. For Susan, being in the community was challenging. She admits that much of her contact with the world was by phone or social media because she was fearful of crowds and felt as though her every move was being judged by others. Apprehensive of formal services, Susan turned to the Community Partners program for assistance. With Community Partners, Susan wanted to locate the resources necessary to increase and maintain her independence, including transportation, as well as assistance locating and applying for online courses and completing the coursework.

Diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Susan was familiar with services she needed, but faced challenges when she tried to apply on her own. Admittedly, the confusing application process led her to give up because of the anxiety she experiences when she becomes frustrated. Community Partners is the perfect fit for Susan because she collaborates with Peggy, her Community Partner, to work toward her goals. Peggy assists Susan to develop strategies in overcoming her self-doubt and anxiety, providing cues when Susan begins to experience anxiety with a task.

In only four short months, Susan has accomplished both of her main goals. Working in collaboration with Peggy, Susan contacted Landmark Home Health Care for housekeeping services while she explores her eligibility for additional attendant care services. She also applied for ACCESS, completed the evaluation and was approved for services. Susan has also begun the application process for medical assistance.

In addition to initiating services to help increase her independence, Susan had applied for creative writing classes and would like to explore classes in journalism. Susan has been accepted to CCAC and will begin classes in the Fall of 2017. She has contacted Student Supportive Services and is aware of the services they offer to help her navigate her coursework.

With these supports in place, Susan is more confident in herself and navigating her community. Susan shared, "CLASS has opened doors for me that I thought were closed." As her goals evolve and change, Peggy and Community Partners will continue to support her. Susan excitedly looks toward a future full of visiting friends, shopping at bookstores, attending classes, and exploring volunteer opportunities.

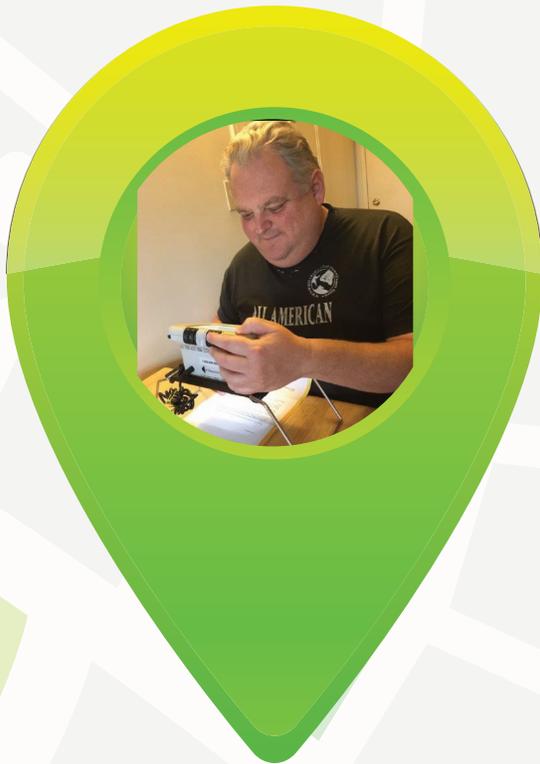


## Susan's Community

### ***In 2016, the Community Partners Program:***

- ***Provided 7,500 hours of support to 47 individuals***
- ***Enrolled fifteen new individuals into the program***

***In 2016, through CLASS, Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT) assisted 568 individuals through the Lending Library with demonstrations, device loans, information, and assistance.***



## Glenn's Community

When Glenn was eighteen, he was involved in an automobile accident. Fortunately to have escaped serious injury from the accident, Glenn had a stroke one week later. After extensive rehabilitation, Glenn regained his ability to walk and perform activities of daily living. Following rehabilitation, Glenn attended a school for the blind in Kentucky, where he learned mobility and cooking skills. After completion of his classes, Glenn worked at the Galt House, a luxury hotel in Louisville; President Carter and President Reagan were guests during Glenn's employment. From being a dishwasher, Glenn moved into the role of "Houseman," in which he performed cooking, catering, and room service tasks.

When Glenn moved to Pennsylvania to live with his aunt, he wanted to see what services were available to him. They heard about CLASS through a friend and Glenn requested support through the Community Partners Program. Community Partners has worked with Glenn through the years on several of his goals, including applying for waiver services to receive attendant care and is currently working to increase his computer skills.

While working with Community Partners, Glenn's Closed Circuit Television(CCTV), a device that enlarges printed materials, began to malfunction intermittently. Glenn wanted to find a replacement that was more portable to carry in the community to read grocery lists. Glenn was referred to Christina, the Assistive Technology Coordinator at CLASS. Through the Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT), Christina scheduled an assistive technology demonstration with Glenn so he could see some of the newer low vision equipment available. After the demonstration, Glenn decided he wanted to borrow something through the PIAT's Lending Library, so he could ensure the device would work for him before purchasing it. After the trial period, Glenn made his choice and decided to pursue funding for the device that worked best for him.

In the meantime, the Reused and Exchanged Equipment Partnership (REEP) through PIAT notified Christina that they were giving away CCTVs that were part of the Lending Library. These devices only required the individuals to pay for shipping. Christina consulted with Glenn and he chose two devices; a flat-screen, tabletop CCTV, and a smaller, hand-held device similar to what he had borrowed through the Lending Library. Community Partners helped Glenn set up the equipment when he received it. Glenn was excited about how the devices helped him increase his independence. He shared, *"I can read my mail. I don't have to wait for people to read stuff to me. I can read things myself."*

Through the PIAT Program at CLASS, Christina assisted Glenn and helps other individuals with finding affordable assistive technology that helps each person enhance their independence.

## ***In 2016, the Residential Services Program:***

- ***Provided 394,900 hours of support to 49 individuals***
- ***Enrolled three new people in the program***



## ***A Traveling Community***

On a cold February morning when most Pittsburghers were faced with gray skies and snow in the forecast, Paul, Jason, Jay, Eric, and Tom were headed to the warm breeze of the Caribbean. After almost a year of planning and saving their money, the day had finally come to board their cruise ship.

With help from staff members, Beth and Nickisha, the five gentlemen planned the trip of a lifetime that included their “must-see” moments. They decided on an itinerary that included a Disney Cruise with stops in the Caribbean. Staff researched the different types of activities the group could do, then met with the guys to develop their official travel schedule. Some of their must-have items or experiences included renting a private cabana on one of the excursions, a great view from the ship’s balcony, and time to enjoy the parties on the ship.

A highlight of the trip was when the travelers rented a private cabana on Castaway Cay for the day. The cabana was fully stocked with food and beverages. Tom could be seen relaxing in a hammock, while Jay and Jason used the pier of the cabana to access the beach where Paul and Eric were sitting. Beth shared, “The cabana was the highlight of the trip for the guys. They thought it was really neat to be able to go close to the ocean.” The group explored the different ports the trip had to offer. When the weather cooperated, everyone enjoyed going shopping for souvenirs and eating at local restaurants. When the weather did not cooperate, there were plenty of activities on the ship.

The ship had something for everyone to enjoy from bingo to attending a pirate-themed party. Of the trip, Jason stated, “It was a lot of fun. I liked interacting with all of the different people from all different backgrounds. Everyone was so welcoming and friendly. No one ever treated me differently because of my wheelchair and I really liked that.” The travelers cannot wait until the next trip.

Traveling can be stressful for anyone, but especially for people of varying abilities. Staff worked with service coordinators to increase the number of hours of support the gentlemen would receive to cover the amount of care they would need during the trip. They also ensured that the crew on the ship were aware of the needs of all who would be traveling in their party. The crew was then able to make any necessary accommodations for their rooms. Staff worked with a company to rent the lifts and durable medical equipment needed for the trip, which were delivered directly to the ship. Disney was extremely helpful in providing advice and information needed to ensure they would have a safe and care-free trip. While this is something that is not done yearly, CLASS is proud to support individuals as they check places off their travel bucket lists.

# New To Our Community

## The Good Use Program

Similar to the Reused and Exchanged Equipment Partnership (REEP) offered by PIAT, the Good Use Program allows individuals to donate or obtain gently used assistive technology devices. Through this program, Pennsylvania residents who may not have the funds necessary to acquire assistive technology devices are able to receive the equipment for little to no cost. To view the list of items that are currently available, visit the CLASS website at [www.classcommunity.org](http://www.classcommunity.org).

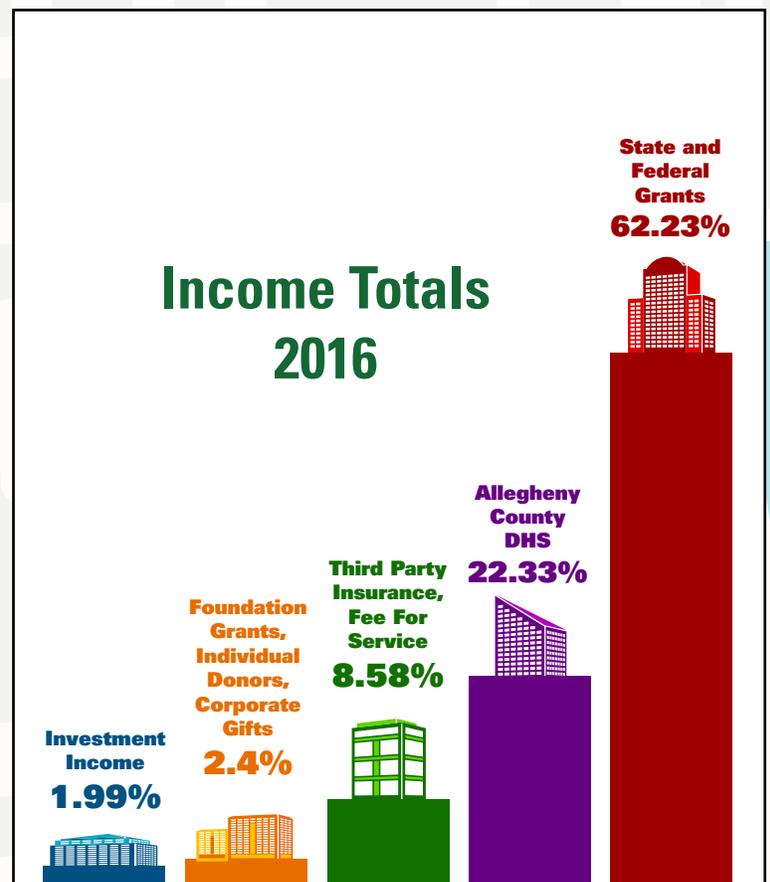
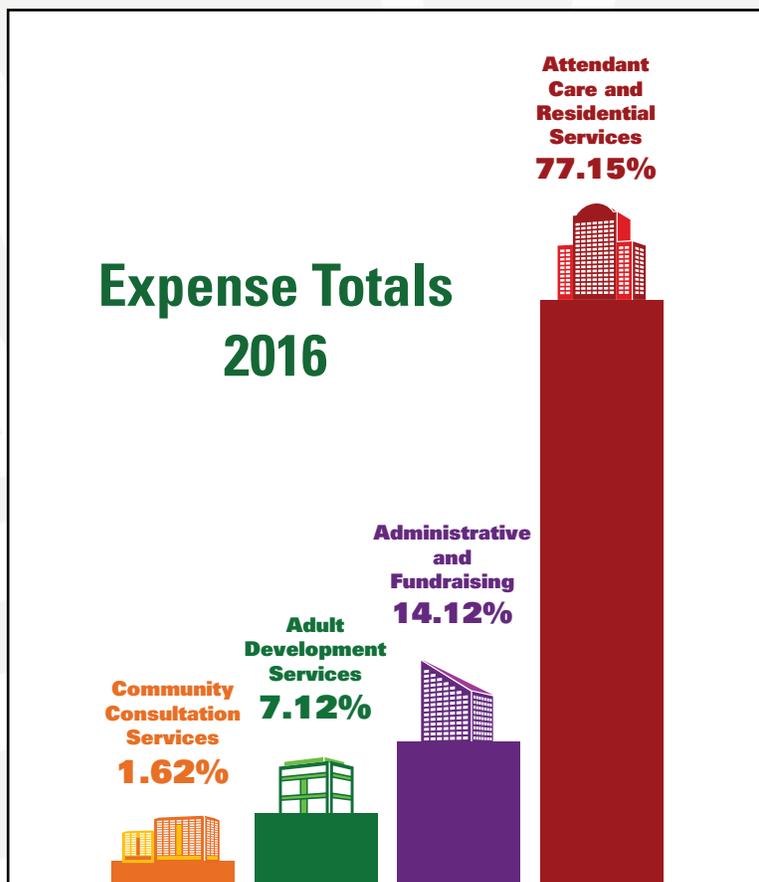
There are no age requirements to participate. If you would like to obtain or donate gently-used equipment to the Good Use Program, contact Christina Chamberlain at 412.683.7100, ext. 2179.

## Options Services

In 2016, CLASS has expanded the In-Home Services Program to include the OPTIONS Program. Awarded the OPTIONS Program from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, CLASS now offers housekeeping and personal care services to seniors in our community. Currently, CLASS supports over 50 seniors in our community.

CLASS is looking for caregivers and housekeepers in your area to support adults with disabilities and seniors who live independently in their own homes. Positions are full or part-time, have flexible hours, and benefits may be available

If you or someone you know is in need of these services or would like to apply for one of the open positions, contact Rebecca Miklos at 412.683.7100, ext. 2170.



# Join Our Community

## Attend An Event

Highmark Walk For A Healthy Community  
May 13, 2017

South Side Summer Open  
June 2017

Alby Oxenreiter Golf Classic  
August 7, 2017

25th Annual  
Community Heroes Awards Dinner  
October 2017

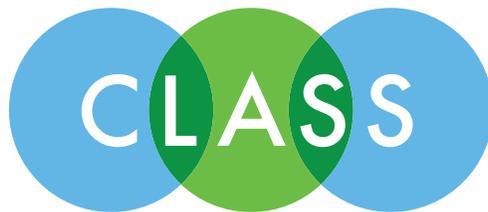
## Be Social

Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/classcommunity](http://www.facebook.com/classcommunity)

Twitter  
[@classpgh](https://twitter.com/classpgh)

Google+  
<https://google.com/+classpittsburgh>

YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/CLASS1951>



1400 South Braddock Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

[www.classcommunity.org](http://www.classcommunity.org)

