



ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Dear Friends:

It is with the most profound pleasure and excitement that SHOWAbility shares our 2024 annual report highlighting some of our many organizational, community and programmatic wins with you!

The last few years have been challenging due the need to navigate through, **pivot** and regroup after experiencing a worldwide pandemic. And, now the federal challenges, but GOD is able. Thankfully, we were blessed to come out on the other side wiser, stronger, more resilient and more determined than ever, to fulfill our mission and purpose through the work we do.

As the Founder and Executive Director of SHOWAbility, a human services nonprofit organization that **leverages music and performing arts** as our platform to **affect positive change and possibilities for artists and audiences with disabilities**, I am pleased to share the enlightened journey from where we began nearly **15** years ago, to where we are today. I am very excited about where we are **now headed, facilitating talented disabled artists in realizing their dreams to perform on stage or in film.**

This journey has not only been the result of many hard learned lessons along the way, but also the commitment of some truly hard-working, dedicated, forward-thinking individuals, who have comprised our board of directors, **advisors**, and supporters over the years. These individuals, some of whom have been here from our inception, serving in any capacity they could, are those who saw the vision and who have been generous with their time, talents, treasure, resources and connections. For that and more I am extremely grateful.

As a multidisciplinary, disabilities inclusive nonprofit organization, there is no other arts/human services organization like SHOWAbility in America. So, as we share a bit about the work we're doing in this our first annual report, I hope you will catch the vision, spirit, enthusiasm, potential and unrelenting determination to realize the dream of impacting the lives of individuals, families and communities across the disability spectrum. **We seek to increase career trajectories and improve life possibilities for a society with no exclusions, only inclusion of all abilities.** We also hope you're willing to lend your support, as we consistently push towards our North Star: to be for the arts and entertainment industries, what the Paralympics and Special Olympics are for the sports industry – showcasing talent and excellence. Because everybody deserves a stage!

Sincerely,
Myrna Clayton
Founder/Executive Director





CONSIDER THIS:

Many of us know what it's like to be the last to be picked on a team, have your capabilities wrongly judged because of a person's misperception of you, or been passed over for a promotion because "they" would have to make too many personal adjustments. Well, this is what people with disabilities go through every day - 24/7 - 365 - for life!

What if you had the ability to help someone's dreams come true who just happened to have a visible or non-apparent disability? What if there was a platform that could further visibility, accessibility, relatability and opportunity through the performing arts? SHOWAbility's raison d'être (reason for being), is to help the masses not only consider, but help them **give disabled artists the opportunity to answer these critical question!**



VISION:

At SHOWAbility, we envision a world in which performing artists across the disability spectrum (born, acquired, visible, non-apparent, physical or intellectual/developmental) achieve all of their dreams, unencumbered by policies, systems, resource constraints or mindsets that limit their potential.

Our North star is to be for the arts/entertainment industry what the Paralympics and Special Olympics are for the sports industry - showcasing talent and excellence.



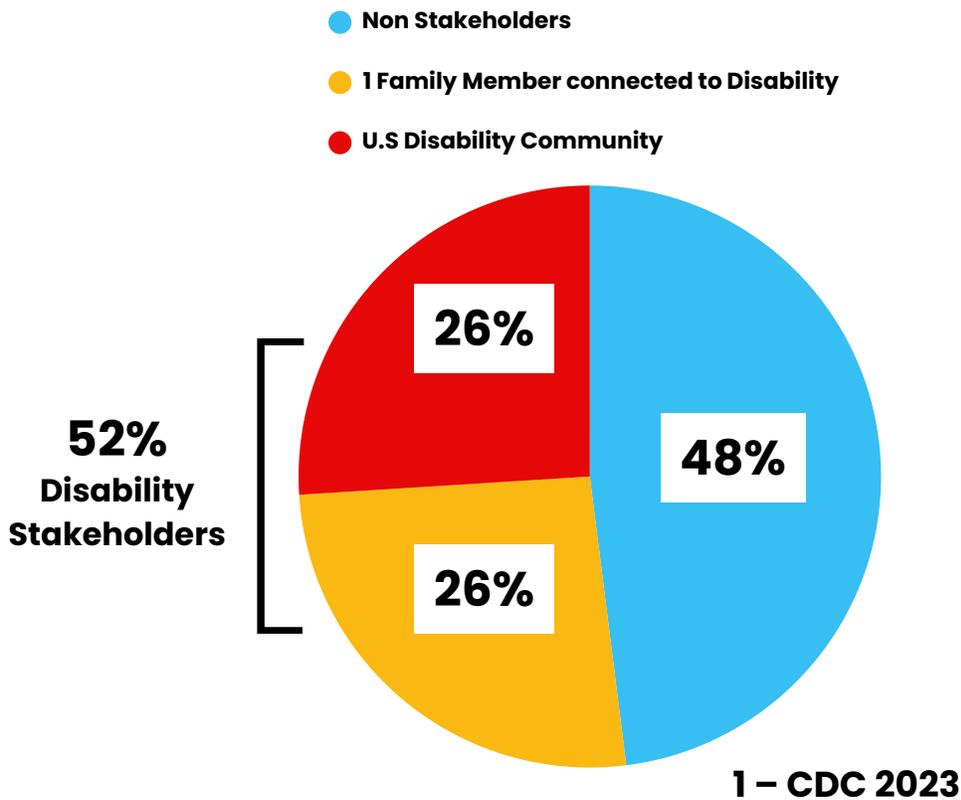
MISSION:

To create opportunities that empower performing artists across the disability spectrum to share their talents, both within the disability community and the wider world. At the same time, our mission includes breaking down barriers and advocating for much needed changes in accessibility, inclusion and equity for this vital and growing stakeholder community that includes parents/caregivers.

DISABILITY IMPACT

As stated earlier, one of the most under-served, under-represented and overlooked communities, The d/Disability* community is the largest minority group in the Country 26% representing of the U.S. population (1 in 4 Americans) with over \$500 billion in disposable income nationally. This does not include their significant network of family, caregivers and friends. If you add just one family/friend, this adds an additional 26 percent resulting in **52%** of the US population being directly connected to the d/Disability community!

Georgia has well over **1 million** people who identify as having disabilities. The disability community is the only minority group that any one can join at any time.



The d/Disability community crosses every demographic category including Age, Race, Gender, Income, etc.

* d/Disability: "D"- people who self-identify as Disabled
"d"- honors people who **choose not to self-identify as Disabled**

Since our inception,

SHOWAbility has... Performed in front of 15,000+

Served artists/actors, and audiences across the disability spectrum:

Born, Acquired, Seen and Non-apparent, with Physical, Intellectual, and/or Developmental disabilities.

Directly served **50** individual artists

Inclusive Chorus features **14** talented singers with and without disabilities

Artists/actors appeared in film/theatre – **20**

Disabled persons indirectly served – **325**



Qualitative insights reveal that SHOWAbility's work is rooted in:

- Transforming the lives of talented artists/actors with disabilities by creating opportunities to develop and reach their goals of self-expression, self-esteem, and self-sufficiency.
- Providing artists with the tools and platforms they need to thrive
- Championing accessibility and inclusion,
- Advocating for access beyond mere ADA compliance,
- Striving for true relatability and representation for disabled artists and audiences, from street to seat, backstage to front-of-house.
- Cultivating a strong sense of community among artists: offering support, collaboration, and mentorship. Increasing the visibility/relatability of disabled artists and their work
- Challenging perceptions and promoting nuanced understanding



SHOWABILITY PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS:

SHOWAbility's HIRING SUCCESS!

- Hired two part-time employees: Program Associate and Operational Assistant

ACCESSIBILITY BELOW-THE-LINE™ FILM EXPO

- Hosted the Southeast's first expo for accessibility in the film industry for actors and crew
- Collaborated with GA State University (CMII, IDEAL, School of Theatre, Arts and Film) on October 20, 2024 during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)
- Sponsored by NBC Comcast Universal and Georgia Films. Vendor – EEOC

FOUNDATION GRANT SUCCESS!

- Recipient of two "Unsolicited" Grants: **LuluMa Foundation** and **Genesis Inspiration Foundation**
- Grant Applicant Recipients from Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, Fulton County Arts & Culture and Georgia Council for the Arts

ADA 34th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION—A COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS!

- With Shepherd Center as the Presenting Sponsor, Collaborative partners included Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI), Southeast ADA, Georgia's State ADA Coordinator's Office, disABILITY LINK, and Fulton County ADA Coordinator's Office/C.O.D.A.

KENNEDY CENTER/VSA CONSULTANT SUCCESS!

- Consultative Conversations to guidance in planning process for our SPOTLIGHT Music and Acting Disabled Youth Academy

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH SUCCESS!

- Upgraded social media presence through daily posts on all platforms and more than doubled our followers
- Implemented a Year-end Social Media Fundraising Campaign

SHOWABILITY PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

ACCESSIBILITY VENUE AUDITS:

At SHOWAbility, we believe there should be accessibility at entertainment venues from the street to the seats, front of house (ticketing, lobby, etc.), backstage (halls and green rooms), tech areas, and getting onto the stage. As a result, we have been working to identify and address needs and issues in this arena, throughout the metro-Atlanta community. **SHOWAbility was the catalyst to Fulton County Arts & Culture being funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) being for the first ever feasibility study of arts venues, focused on disabled performing artists and staff with disabilities.**

BENEFIT CONCERT

- Serving as the Host was Former Miss Wheelchair International Dr. Yvette Pegues. Performers included Famed Jazz Violinist: Ken Ford; SHOWAbility's Inclusive Chorus; Rapper QuestionATL; Poet/Voice Actor Bridgette "B Suttle Baby" Suttle ; Actor Dana "MsDanaZ" Jones; and America's Songbird Myrna Clayton.

INCLUSIVE CHORUS – GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE SUCCESS!

- Added six new members
- Performed The National Anthem for Atlanta Gladiators, GSU Men's and Women's Basketball Team, and UGA Women's Basketball Team
- Invited to perform at The High Museum of Arts, Piedmont Park for Wounded Warrior Project, ADA34 Celebration Rally, and Music In The Park Community events

MEDIA COVERAGE SUCCESS:

By providing opportunities for these artists to shine, we are not just opening doors—we are breaking them down and building bridges to a more inclusive future. As a result, we have received coverage in hundreds of local and national print, broadcast and digital media outlets reaching millions. This included such media outlets as The Atlanta Journal Constitution, Atlanta CW 69; Atlanta News First, Channel 46; Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasting (AIB) The Atlanta Voice; Business Radio X Atlanta; The World Music Journal; Ability Magazine; Arts, Society and Me, Yahoo; AP News; ABC, FOX, CBS and NBC digital affiliates across the country, and much more.



THE INCLUSIVE CHORUS

SHOWAbility's Inclusive Chorus: Where Diverse Voices Ignite Inclusion Across Atlanta.

This dynamic and groundbreaking ensemble unites talented singers of all abilities, captivating audiences on diverse stages throughout metro-Atlanta. From schools and community events to iconic venues like The Buckhead Theatre and The HIGH Museum, the Inclusive Chorus is powerfully driving disability awareness and visibility. Beyond talented attention-grabbing performances of the National Anthem and popular songs, the Chorus acts as a vital catalyst for workforce development, building crucial soft skills, and empowering members with soaring confidence and artistry. Through their collective voice, participants become articulate self-advocates and passionate champions for broader disability rights, evolving into inspiring SHOWAbility ambassadors, who are showcasing the vibrant diversity within the disability community and encouraging others to embrace their own voices.



STAR COLLECTIVE

SHOWAbility's Star Collective: Amplifying Talent, Changing Perceptions, Launching Careers.

This dynamic and innovative program is a curated database and vibrant network connecting talented performing artists, actors, and crew with disabilities directly to real industry opportunities. Beyond career advancement and gig employment, the Star Collective fosters a powerful peer network and cultivates visibility through regular public meetups in Atlanta and beyond, normalizing disabilities and building genuine understanding within the broader community. Watch as participants' confidence soars, skills sharpen, and career doors swing wide, creating a pipeline of exceptional talent, potentially feeding into SHOWAbility's acclaimed Inclusive Chorus.



SPOTLIGHT

Igniting Artistic Brilliance and Empowering Talented Disabled Students To Become Tomorrow's Stars.

Now, more than ever, given the critical threat to dismantle vital resources like Title 1 and Title 4, SHOWAbility's dynamic Saturday SPOTLIGHT enrichment program is essential to transform lives, improve career trajectories, and increase life possibilities for talented exceptional middle and high school students with low incidence disabilities. This dynamic Saturday enrichment program cultivates their unique talents in music and acting, while also recognizing the crucial need for strong parental involvement, and providing resources to foster an effective understanding of how to best support their gifted child's artistic journey. By fostering self-awareness, honing skills, and building unwavering confidence within a supportive community, SPOTLIGHT illuminates pathways to artistic expression and future opportunities. The program ignites a strong sense of self and self-advocacy, empowering a generation ready to participate fully in the arts and champion disability rights, ultimately unlocking their full potential and fostering a belief that all artistic dreams are within reach.

ADVOCACY:

- Lobbying at Georgia's State Capital with Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD).
- Served as a Disability Consultant for True Colors, The HIGH/Alliance, and COLOR BOOK feature film
- Attended City of Atlanta's Accessibility and Inclusion Workshop
- Attended SouthArts/In Community Arts & Accessibility Webinar

SHOWABILITY SPOTLIGHT MUSIC AND ACTING PILOT PROGRAM:

- Kicked off the planning phase of "Spotlight: Music & Acting Pilot Program for Middle School Students with Disabilities"
- Coordinated a focus group with disability stakeholders to give feedback/input on curriculum
- Developed a Pilot Program Curriculum with a five-week test program , one week summer camp, and a 10-month pilot phase





Disability Awareness Career Day

Graves Elementary School in Gwinnett County, GA was the welcoming location where SHOWAbility hosted a career day featuring professionals with disabilities. For one full day the entire students body (K-2 graders in the morning and 3-5 graders in the afternoon) were able to meet and engage with each professional and ask them any question about their professional or their challenge.



SHOWAbility PATHWAYS

Masterclasses: 9 Virtual Zoom Conversations featuring Actors, Performing Artists, Legislators, and Disability Advocates

Job/Career Fair

Sought after by disABILITY LINK to have a booth at their Annual Career Fair or by area school systems to have a booth at their annual Transition Fair.

Film Fit:

Curated a spreadsheet of relevant casting opportunities for actors with disabilities; served as sought after talent source for LA casting agents seeking actors with disabilities; developing a collaborative relationship with SAG/AFTRA


SHOWAbility
 Presents
INCLUSIVE ARTS
 A MONTHLY VIRTUAL MASTERCLASS SERIES

FEATURING
 5X GRAMMY AWARD WINNING SINGER,
 SONGWRITER, CULTURAL ARTS
 ADVOCATE
RICKY MCKINNIE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29, 2021 @ 4PM EST
**INCLUSIVE ARTS: MASTERCLASS
 ON DREAMING:**
 I LOST MY SIGHT BUT I NEVER LOSS MY VISION
 RSVP VIA SHOWABILITY ON EVENTBRITE

ONE ATL
 #SHOWABILITY

EXAMPLES OF SHOWABILITY'S IMPACT:

Varsia Newman's Success Story

Varsia Newman came to SHOWAbility as a 25 year-old aspiring singer with a powerful voice, seeking to fulfill her dream of becoming a commercial artist like her role model, Fantasia. After auditioning and being selected as a soprano in SHOWAbility's Inclusive Chorus which features talented singers with and without disabilities, Varsia recognized the need to enhance her vocal skills. She decided to invest in herself by taking private voice lessons with SHOWAbility's Executive Director and professional singer, Myrna Clayton.

Varsia was alerted by SHOWAbility of an opportunity to participate in a movie background casting call that specifically included persons with disabilities. This exposure sparked a desire for acting, and the following year, Varsia submitted a video audition for a Valentine's Day performance with the Atlanta Workshop Players through a SHOWAbility opportunity. Not only was Varsia selected, but she was later offered the opportunity to join the Atlanta Workshop Players (AWP). Varsia is currently expanding her skills and is regularly participating in cast AWP productions.



Sivaun Scott's Journey

SHOWAbility was introduced to **Sivaun Scott** by one of our board members while he was on summer break from college. After hearing him sing, she connected him with SHOWAbility's Executive Director, Myrna Clayton. Recognizing Sivaun's potential immediately, Myrna arranged for him to perform at a community event hosted by the Music Education Group (MEG). His performance was a big hit, and soon after, MEG invited him to participate as a summer intern in their music tech program.

Sivaun impressed the leadership at MEG so much, that after graduating with a degree in Music Technology and Performance, he was offered a full-time position. Today, Sivaun serves as the Lead Tech for MEG, supporting 19 schools across metro-Atlanta.



Joshua Ward's Success Story

SHOWAbility Executive Director, Myrna Clayton, became aware of 12 year-old **Josh Ward** as a young pianist on the autism spectrum who showed promise, but needed the right level of teacher to challenge him. Ms. Clayton connected him with a professional teacher that exposed Josh to Jazz and classical music. Josh was inspired and began expanding his skills. SHOWAbility informed Josh's mom of a competition for artists with disabilities.



The SOOP organization hosts the Great Music Festival that Josh won the Grand Prize of \$2,000. Afterward, he went on to submit an application for the Kennedy Center/VSA Youth Talent Program.

Bridgette Suttle's Success Story

When **Bridgette Suttle** aka "B Suttle Baby" started her journey with SHOWAbility, she dove in headfirst with a 4-week acting class taught by Elizabeth Labbe-Webb, an acclaimed actress also with disabilities. Bridgette shared that the emotions that flooded her were like a storm. She experienced excitement tangled with apprehension, vulnerability, self-doubt, nervousness, and a sense of awkwardness as she stepped into a world that was completely unfamiliar. "I had no idea what to expect, and those early moments were a mix of thrill and intimidation," she shared.

"But SHOWAbility never wavered in their support," she continued. "They stood beside me, encouraging me to lean into the discomfort and trust the process to learn to believe in myself." SHOWAbility created a safe, inclusive space where Bridgette could shed her insecurities and build something she hadn't thought possible - real confidence. She developed empowering skills to command a stage, own her voice, master emotional expression, and tell stories that resonated.

From the humble beginnings of SHOWAbility's acting class, Bridgette went on to participate in Synergies Work and was awarded the top funding prize allowing her to walk away with a foundation to start her voice over agency, "Suttle Talks". This allowed her to embrace a role as both a creative and an entrepreneur. She then went on to compete in the Great American Speak Off, where she stood out as the only disabled person among 3,500+ participants from five American cities. Out of the hundreds competing in Atlanta, Bridgette was chosen to travel to Miami as part of the top 1% in the nation. In Miami Bridgette made it to the semi-final round with a standing ovation performance! Bridgette said "That moment, and every step leading up to it, was fueled by the confidence and courage SHOWAbility helped her build."



BOARD MEMBERS

MYRNA CLAYTON, FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A cultural ambassador for the U.S. State Department singing at embassies around the world, also known as America's Songbird, **Myrna Clayton** is an international jazz singer who has been performing for over 14 years. She has performed throughout Russia, Belarus, Germany, Nigeria, Great Britain, and France.



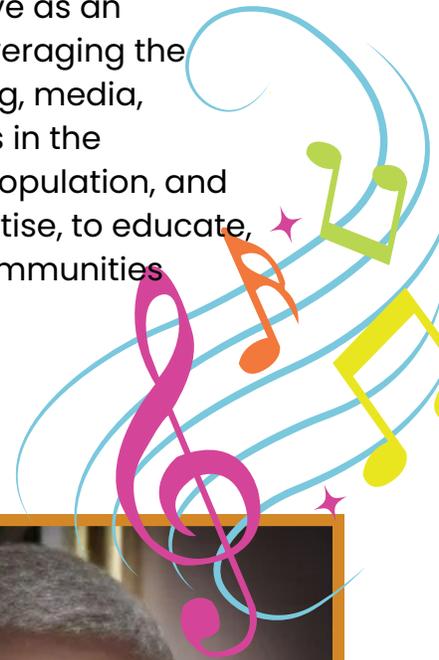
When she's not performing, Myrna is a dedicated community servant focused on executing her vision and mission of SHOWAbility, a 501c3 nonprofit representing performing arts excellence, equity, inclusion, accessibility and opportunity for performing artists with visible and invisible disabilities. Prior to establishing her career as a performer, Myrna was a successful corporate executive and adjunct professor.

NORMA STANLEY, BOARD CHAIR

Norma Stanley is founder/CEO of E.E.E. Marketing Group, Inc., where she serves as a speaker, author, trainer and award-winning multicultural marketing communications consultant, specializing in the Disability community. Wanting to ensure the many stories about the issues and accolades within the disability community get shared, Norma serves as the creator, producer/host of Disability World TV Show on the streaming PGN TV Network



The mother of an adult daughter born with intellectual and physical disabilities for whom she is the primary caregiver, Norma's mission is to serve as an international change agent for people with disabilities (PwD), leveraging the multimedia platforms of informational and inspirational speaking, media, strategic marketing communications and music. She specializes in the economically powerful, but significantly underserved disability population, and combines her personal lived experiences and professional expertise, to educate, enlighten and empower individuals, families, companies and communities around the nation and the world.



TWANDA BLACK

A highly celebrated local and nationally acclaimed media personality and journalist with nearly 30 years of award-winning experience, **Twanda Black's** sultry and silky voice is always in high demand as a mistress of ceremonies at high profile events and conferences. She spent 26 years of her career at Cox Media Group where she served as Public Affairs Director for WJZZ- Jazz Flavors and Kiss 104.1. During this time, Twanda produced and hosted several television shows including four years on public television while still on-air at the radio station.



Twanda currently hosts Good News Gospel every Sunday morning 7am-12 noon on WPGN Radio Atlanta, Business Matters and More Podcast on several platforms, Good News with Twanda Black on PGN TV and is the host of Inspirations Across America, syndicated in 29 markets in the US. She serves as a host, moderator and speaker/preacher wherever she is called.

TERRY MOORER

Born with cerebral palsy, **Terry Moorer** is one of the many success stories of people with disabilities who are not accepting anything less than equity in opportunity for their personal and professional lives. He is an author, speaker, consultant, and serial entrepreneur.



The author of two books, “How to Launch Your Music Career in 21 Days” and “Fearless Dreams-- How a Disabled Kid from Brooklyn Lived His Dream in the Entertainment Business,” Moorer now shares his entertainment industry business expertise, which includes working as a publicist for celebrities like Queen Latifah, LL Cool J, P Diddy, MC Lyte, etc., Moorer also worked with Billboard, NBA Entertainment, Walt Disney World, MTV, Atlantic Records, Virgin records, etc., and with new and rising independent recording artists.

MAIA MILLER

A Film Producer and Project Manager who prides herself on being the ultimate creative connector and collaborator, **Maia's** passion and commitment to the film industry is rooted in the moments that happen between takes, off stage, and when the cameras aren't rolling the planning process.



Admired for her unique producing style, Maia is known to lead with love and kindness, but runs a tight ship, grounded in her commitment to excellence, honest communication, and maintaining a growth mindset.

Maia has had the pleasure of working for film luminaries like Spike Lee (She's Gotta Have It), Lena Waithe and Melina Matsoukas (Queen and Slim), and Terence Nance, to name a few. Just last year, she became a multi-award winning producer through the success of the coming-of-age short film, "Glitter Ain't Gold", directed by Christian Nolan Jones. And in 2023, Maia was selected out of 1500 applicants to be one of four producers selected to be a part of Issa Rae and Deniese Davis' inaugural fellowship, the Color Creative Find Your People Program.

STAFF:



- Myrna Clayton – Executive Director



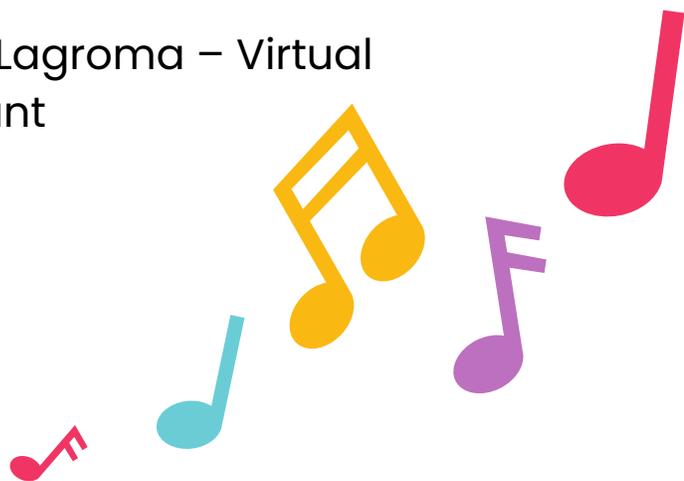
- David Fitzer – Operations Associate



- Paula Maddox – Grant Writer



- Shryle Lagroma – Virtual Assistant



- Sharonda Riley – Accountant

SHOWABILITY ADVISORY TEAM:

- Christy Priester – disability activist/author/poet
- Lionel Woodyard – disability advocate
- Rev. Calvin Peterson – disability legendary leader/activist
- David Bell – marketing consultant
- Ellen Hartman, communications consultant
- Elizabeth Labbe-Webb – acting instructor, art's administrator
- Douglas Scott – dance instructor, disability advocate
- Yvette Pegues – Mrs. Wheelchair International, speaker, activist

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:

GRANTORS:

- Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta
- Genesis Inspiration Foundation
- LuluMa Foundation
- Fulton County Arts and Culture
- Georgia Council of the Arts

COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE PARTNERS:

- The Shepherd Center
- Amazon
- NBCUniversal
- Georgia Films
- Bobby Dodd Institute
- Southeast ADA
- EEOC
- disABILITY LINK
- Disability:IN
- State of Georgia ADA Coordinator's Office
- Fulton County ADA Coordinator's Office/C.O.D.A.



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