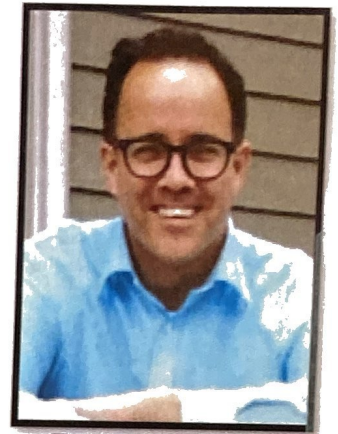


## ATLAS OF THE LAKES AREA – November 2023 Letter

### Board President Roland Schmidt Announces a Change of Atlas Leadership

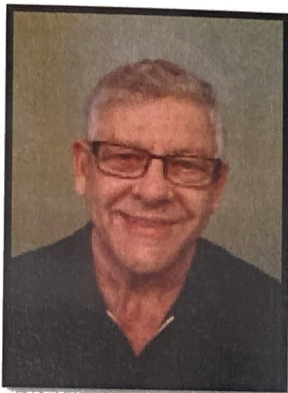
Wednesday, November 8th, the Atlas Board of Directors met and conducted a personal interview with Ministry Director Tonya Kuranda to consider her appointment as the Executive Director of Atlas of the Lakes Area. Following the interview, the directors voted unanimously to approve her promotion. They also accepted the title change for Dave Butterworth to Assistant Director. Dave will continue his involvement with Atlas much as he has for the past two and a half years. The official date of this change will be December 1, 2023.

This hoped-for leadership development plan when the board authorized hiring Tonya over a year ago has now become a reality. At that time, we totally trusted God with that decision when no real commitments could be made. That trust not only included His provision for the additional funding needed but also to fully continue to guide the direction of the ministry. We now place that same trust in Him for the growth and expansion of the Atlas ministry under Tonya's leadership.



Roland Schmidt

### Atlas Non-traditional Process Seeking First Employee



Dave Butterworth,  
Founder

When a ministry is founded by a 74-year-old man, the thought of replacing him becomes an immediate consideration in establishing the ministry. I trusted God to provide my replacement in His own way and time. However, I immediately began looking for people who were interested in getting into full or part-time Christian ministry. The need for ministry help was becoming more evident each week.

My desire to have God lead His choice into the life of Atlas has been meaningful and rewarding. In the first year and a half of Atlas operation, I talked with about a dozen people who were seeking work in a Christian setting but didn't find the right person. I was fully aware that most times, God provides guidance through a human approach. I shared my reluctance with the board but was encouraged by them to advertise the position.

I placed our only advertising for a position in one simple ad in area papers. The ad ran only one time producing only two calls from people seeking information about the possible positions. I met with both of them to learn about their qualifications and to share the Atlas ministry with them to see if we could design a position that would be of benefit to everyone involved. Tonya was one of them, and we engaged in seven hours of conversation over three meetings. Her interest grew with each meeting and both of us became hopeful "designing a position" to grow into the Atlas future. Although neither of us could commit to that possibility initially, we both had to be willing to commit to that as a goal. I waited for her to confirm her willingness and interest in pursuing this opportunity together.

Tonya agreed to the Ministry Director position with the intent to work with me as co-director and toward her eventual role as my replacement. This process was not the norm because I relinquished my normal responsibility of hiring the Ministry Director to the Atlas Board. In reality, they were potentially hiring the future Executive Director of Atlas. The board, Tonya, and I have teamed in the development of this ministry as God has guided us. With this history, Tonya became the sole candidate for the Executive Director position. Her approval was verification of our original hope fourteen months ago when she was initially hired.



**Atlas of the Lakes Area is a Christian Ministry**

seeking applicants who may be sensing God's calling to full or part time Christian Ministry to love their neighbors by helping area residents who are struggling with difficult life challenges.

The opportunities available are  
**Ministry Director & Administrative Assistant.**

These positions will be tailored to fit the calling and skills of the applicant.



Contact  
**Dave Butterworth**  
at 712-320-2572  
for more information  
and/or an interview.

## Surprised by God! Called to Serve Through this Atlas Opportunity



**Tonya, New  
Executive Director**

Since I committed my life to Christ, God has always called me to serve Him in each current life situation. Not all were powerful callings but with each season of life, I knew that my calling was being fulfilled. For 23 years, my family and I moved all around the country and overseas with the Air Force. With each move, I have become more alert and aware of the God-given gifts he's put in this little vessel.

After living in many places, my family (God decided) established roots in the Lakes Area. We still have friends who wonder, "Why Iowa?!" It's cool to share how God brought us to this area where we were tourists while stationed in Omaha. This area is so special, and we were delighted to be part of the "perfect community."

The exact time of the calling to serve through Atlas came as I was finishing up my job in Missouri and pursuing employment here. After a few applications, my husband saw an ad in the Shopper regarding a local ministry hiring two different positions. Honestly, I felt overqualified for one and underqualified for the other!

My dear husband urged me to call because he knew the job was right up my alley. Helping people. Encouraging People. Sharing His hope and love with people. After my third lengthy discussion with Dave, I knew this was to be my next calling. But it wasn't until I began serving with Atlas that I began to see the specific needs of God's children struggling in this community. Working at Atlas for the past year, I have witnessed God continue to unfold and develop this ministry with His intentions...for His children.

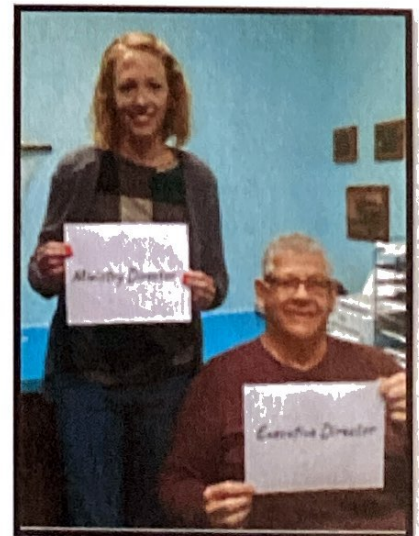
Personally, this ministry calling has confirmed why I was made with certain traits, traits that are sometimes misunderstood by my friends and family. As a part of Atlas, God has allowed me to embrace these gifts and use them for HIS glory. I have found joy in this calling that stems from something much bigger than myself. As He allows, I will continue to dive into this calling with great purpose and commitment. I will end with the verse I shared when I was first hired, **Here I am Lord; send me" – Isaiah 6:8.**

Like Isaiah, I am unworthy, unclean, and need hope because of my sinful condition. Through God's grace, love, and forgiveness, I am screaming with excitement, as Isaiah did...enthusiastic to serve a God who loves us beyond our wildest comprehension.

### Co-Director Role – Training or Indoctrination?

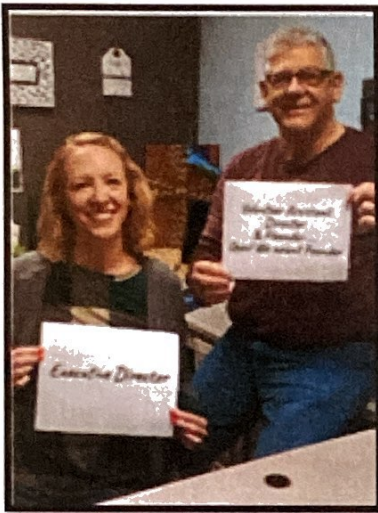
When Tonya was hired in September 2022, she came to the job with experience and educational attributes that far exceeded those of her new boss. But I also had the experience of years to which Tonya has not yet been exposed. **We agreed to co-direct Atlas as we learned together** what God wanted from this ministry. We trusted Him to lead us as we helped those who came through the door at Atlas.

We have shared 14 months of very special cross-training as we have learned from each other and grown together with the expanding ministry. We shared a deep personal love of God through the gift of His son Jesus. We also both possessed a heart devoted to helping others and, in that way, sharing the love of Christ with them. Very few ministry teams get this extent of "on-the-job" training, and we are blessed to be in total lockstep in regard to our devotion to the Mission and Vision of Atlas. This long period of intense cross-training has moved the Atlas Mission and Vision Statements off the written page and into the interwoven fabric of the ministry. It is no longer the mission or vision of Tonya or me but is now what Atlas of the Lakes Area indeed is.



**Tonya and Dave**

## What Does This Leadership Change Mean for Atlas Today?



**Tonya and Dave**

As I assume my new role as Executive Director, I am excited about what God has been doing in the Atlas ministry and how Dave and I will continue to experience His daily presence together going forward. Dave has relinquished the responsibility for the final decisions to me with this change, but we will be continuing our current roles as co-directors. We will continue to seek God's will for the ministry as we together chart the ever-changing movement of this Atlas ministry. We will continue to teach each other as we learn together. I will try to internalize Dave's 100% faith in God to provide for the needs of the ministry. He will support me in sharing the ministry in a way that reaches a broader cross-section of the community. We will discuss, maybe argue a little, but will come to shared decisions for the good of the ministry.

Amazingly, I know that Dave will be fine with wherever God leads me if we occasionally do not agree. I still need him as my right hand as long as he will stay. He says he isn't going anywhere until God stops him from coming in the door or I fire him. I do worry a little about his "blue office" but he says that if people share their lives openly in the blue room the color must have been chosen for that purpose. Dave will continue to be the 24/7 presence of Atlas on evenings and weekends. We have become an amazing team.

## Concluding Remarks from President Roland

2023 has proven to be a pivotal year for Atlas of the Lakes Area. As our footprint continues to grow, more and more people are becoming aware of the needs that exist in our communities. Being on the board has offered me a front-row view of the difference Atlas has made in the lives of our clients. Whether their struggles are financial, relational, or spiritual, Atlas has stood in the gap, walked alongside them, and shared God's love with them. From the beginning made possible by the tireless efforts of our founder, Dave Butterworth, Atlas has taken important steps toward ministry growth. Since the addition of Tonya Kuranda to the staff, the ministry has undergone continuous development. Atlas will now continue to develop under Tonya's leadership. Her heart for serving and sharing the love of Jesus made her the perfect ministry leader to continue the expanding reach of Atlas.

As we prepare for the transition to Tonya as the executive director, the board is excited about what God has in store for us. Tonya shares Dave's commitment to following God's leading with a heart devoted to helping those in need. As we look forward to growing this ministry and adding staff and volunteers, Atlas remains committed to following God's leading as we seek to continue to stand in the gap and meet the needs of those around us in the Lakes Area.

## Atlas Board of Directors



**Greg Jorgensen, Roland Schmidt, Clay Norris,  
Stacey Ahrenstorff, Sandy Krout**

**As the Board of Directors, we thank you for the many types of support that you provide for Atlas.  
We sincerely appreciate you all as a part of the Atlas of the Lakes Area ministry team.**