

# ATLAS OF THE LAKES AREA

## MINISTRY NEWSLETTER MARCH 2024

### 1. PASSING THE BATON

- ROLAND SCHMIDT,  
BOARD PRESIDENT

### 2. RETIRING FROM ATLAS

- THE END OF A SEASON  
- DAVE BUTTERWORTH

### 3. SAME BATON, SAME MISSION, SAME HOPE

- TONYA KURANDA,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## PASSING THE BATON

It has been an honor to serve on the board since it's foundation, which began in 2019.

We, the Board of Directors, have witnessed the overwhelming need for this ministry to be here, in our area. As COVID wrapped up, we started to notice a shift in client numbers... they were rising.

Dave Butterworth was the only Atlas full-time volunteer and made this ministry his priority. One-by-one, he helped clients struggling with very unique issues and it became apparent that God was leading the way for more help.

We are so deeply grateful for everything Dave has done for ATLAS and especially the clients. As Dave moves on as the Lord leads, he will always be remembered through this area for the help he has given. That's just Dave. Whether he was wearing an ATLAS hat or not, he was always ready to extend a hand.

As Dave passing the baton over to Tonya Kuranda, he has great confidence that she will continue to lead the ministry by following God's leading every day. As the President of the Board, I have witnessed Tonya's growth in the ministry and her understanding regarding ATLAS. We, as the Board, know that Tonya is well prepared and ready to direct the ministry. ATLAS, without a doubt, is a God-driven ministry and will continue to be so for years to come. I am humbled to be a part of something that in many ways is still fresh and new and excited to see where the Lord takes us.

### ATLAS BOARD:

Roland Schmidt: President  
Clay Norris: Vice President  
Sandy Krout: Secretary  
Greg Jorgensen  
Satcey Ahrenstoff

### ATLAS STAFF:

Tonya Kuranda: Executive Director  
Kathy Norris:  
Administrative Assistant

Thank you for your involvement in this unique and much needed ministry. Through your support, we are able to serve more people in our community that need help! WE ARE TEAM ATLAS!

# RETIRING FROM ATLAS - THE END OF A SEASON

**THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING,  
AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER THE HEAVENS:  
ECCLESIASTES 3:1**

---

---

## **BY: DAVE BUTTERWORTH**

My retirement from Atlas of the Lakes Area was announced locally on March 12th. Many of you may not have seen it. In my resignation letter, I stated, “It is with a mixed sense of personal sadness and ministry hope that I offer my resignation from my current position as Volunteer Assistant Director of Atlas of the Lakes Area.....My initial hope in 2019 was that we could start a new ministry, find my potential replacement early, and together grow a thriving ministry. Through God’s leading, all of my hopes have been reached. And so, in this season of my life, I fully pass the baton to Tonya with confidence that she will continue to lead Atlas of the Lakes Area by every day following God’s leading as she serves.”

I have complete and total trust that Tonya will begin where the Atlas ministry is today and move it forward with her special God-given skills. Her gifts are different from mine, and Atlas of the Lakes Area is where it is today because of God’s use of our combined assets. He will use her special talents to continue with the ever-changing nature of the ministry as she leads Atlas into the future.

My personal journey since the decision has been an evolution of trying to understand God’s will. This caused me to re-evaluate the priorities of my life. My expressed list has always been God, spouse, family, job (ministry), and everything else. (Our whole life is our ministry.) As I reviewed my priorities, I found that Atlas (the job) had taken an unhealthy place in my life. As with any big decision, I have struggled with my retirement, asking God why He has led me in this direction. He has gradually revealed His leading to me, and now I am at peace as I wait for what He has next for me.

## **RETIRING FROM ATLAS - THE END OF A SEASON**

**THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING,  
AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER THE HEAVENS:  
ECCLESIASTES 3:1**

---

---

### **PAGE 2, BY: DAVE BUTTERWORTH**

Thank You for an Amazing Four Years of Support:

Atlas' main connection to most of you has been this monthly newsletter. Many of you have deeper connections to past relationships or to local ties due to your resident status in the Lakes Area. I cannot express the full extent of my gratitude for the many ways this group of people has supported Atlas in the past. You have sent encouraging emails and letters. You have remained interested in Atlas and have worked at staying informed. You have shared the ministry with others in your circle. You have prayed. You have provided many in-kind donations that made such purchases unnecessary for the ministry, and you have supported us financially as well. Your presence is felt strongly not only from around Northwest Iowa, but also from across the United States, and indeed from all around the world.

From the bottom of my heart, I am eternally grateful for the part, big or small, that each of you has had in the ministry of Atlas of the Lakes Area. We have all been a part of the amazing growth of this ministry which has so generously been blessed by God in every way. The past four years have been the best retirement job a person could ever ask for. Thank you for joining me for this amazing ride!

I, along with Tonya and the Atlas Board of Directors, ask for your continued support for the Atlas Ministry as it grows and serves the residents of Dickinson County and beyond. May God bless each and every one of you and may you see and know Him better each day.

## **SAME BATON, SAME MISSION, SAME HOPE!**

**...PERHAPS THIS IS THE MOMENT FOR WHICH YOU  
HAVE BEEN CREATED. ESTHER 4:14**

---

---

**BY: TONYA KURANDA**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is crucial to know that the same God who began this ministry is leading it. I would be a foolish soul to think that I can do this alone because I am now the Director. But wait... If we continue to press forward and do all things in Christ, we can do all things (Phil 4:13).

Now that I have been at ATLAS for over a year and a half, I am in tune with the overwhelming need in our community. I understand the need for love, care, and support. I see the results when a hardened heart breaks open and starts to let the light in. I believe our God will continue to sustain this ministry through His Army.

Most of you know that I served in the military for 7 years and I also want to share that my husband served for 23 years. Together, we have 30 years of service to our country. I do not say this in any way to brag or boast, but I want you to know that I understand how a mission this big must work. We need a team and we need to support each other. We can approach helping people in the Lakes Area together as ONE TEAM, ONE FIGHT.

For us to continue to share hope with every client and pray that each of them would see a little beacon of light that reflects His love for them, we are in need of your support. We now have 2 employees here at ATLAS on the front lines and we are praying for God to provide more. As the clients continue to come in and our numbers continue to grow, so must our support. Will you join us?

## **CONT... SAME BATON, SAME MISSION, SAME HOPE!**

**...PERHAPS THIS IS THE MOMENT FOR WHICH YOU  
HAVE BEEN CREATED. ESTHER 4:14**

---

---

### **PAGE 2, BY: TONYA KURANDA**

As Director, I pledge to communicate client stories, give you the perspective of being “on the front lines,” and ensure that you are well-informed regarding this ministry that you believe in and support.

One of the small changes you will see happens to be in our Newsletter. Every quarter, we will send out a longer quarterly Newsletter to keep you well-informed regarding all aspects of the ministry. Starting in April, you will receive a monthly client story or feature because we want you to be connected as much as possible. The men and women God brings through the doors have tremendous hearts and circumstances, and it’s essential for you, as a supporter, to experience that.

I feel so honored to have an Army of ATLAS Warriors willingly give to help others in need. My prayer is that:

- You know how essential your role is.
- That I do not take you for granted. The steady, silent service is propelling this ministry forward, dear friends.
- You will trust God through this transition and season

Please feel free to contact me if you want to meet me and Kathy Norris, our Administrative Assistant. If you are far away, I am a phone call away. George Bernard Shaw captures the essence of this season we are in very well, “Progress is impossible without change.”

Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart,  
Tonya