

Welcome to Atlantis Community Inc.

Visitor Guide & Disability Culture Resource

We are thrilled to welcome you to Atlantis Community, a disability-led Center for Independent Living that has served the Denver Metro area since 1975. This guide will help you become familiar with our rich culture and history.

Quick Facts / At a Glance

- Founded: 1975
- Mission: Advocacy and Independent Living for People with Disabilities
- Service Area: 7 Metro Denver Counties
 - Adams
 - Arapahoe
 - Clear Creek
 - Denver
 - Douglas
 - Elbert
 - Jefferson County
- Notable History: “Gang of 19,” founding of ADAPT, and early Center for Independent Living Industry leadership.

Accessibility Features of the Building

- Automatic door access, ramps/elevators, accessible bathrooms, and dog-friendly!

Contact & Social Media

General Email: info@atlantiscommunity.org

Main Line: 303.733.9324

Instagram: @atlantiscommunityinc

Facebook: Atlantis Community, Inc.

LinkedIn: Atlantis Community, Inc.

For more specific information, reach out to:

Cecelia@atlantiscommiunity.org, Chief of Staff

Cherish@atlantiscommunity.org, Director of Marketing and Communications

Curtis@atlantiscommunity.org, Tour Guide and Disaster Preparedness Coordinator

Watch List!

Dive into Disability History with a few videos before joining us at Atlantis Community Inc.

PBS: The Gang of 19 - ADA Movement

[Link to watch.](#)

Encouraged by civil rights movements of the 1960s, the Disability Rights Movement gained momentum, leading to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. Decades earlier, in 1978, 19 individuals tossed aside their wheelchairs and blocked city buses deemed inaccessible for the physically disabled. Discover how this *one act led to years of advocacy in Colorado and inspired the nation.*

Netflix: Crip Camp - A Disability Revolution

[Link to watch.](#)

A groundbreaking summer camp galvanizes a group of teens with disabilities to help build a movement, forging a new path toward greater equality.

Apply TV: DeafPresident Now

[Link to watch.](#)

Discover the story of the greatest civil rights movement most people have never heard about! During eight tumultuous days in 1988 at the world's only Deaf university, Gallaudet, four students must find a way to lead a revolution—and change the course of history.

Amazon Prime: MurderBall

[Link to watch.](#)

Murderball is a 2005 American documentary film about athletes who are physically disabled who play wheelchair rugby. It centers on the rivalry between the Canadian and American teams leading up to the 2004 Paralympic Games.

TED Talk: "I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much." By Stella Young

[Link to watch.](#)

Stella Young is a comedian and journalist who happens to go about her day in a wheelchair — a fact that doesn't, she'd like to make clear, automatically turn her into a noble inspiration to all humanity. In this very funny talk, Young breaks down society's habit of turning disabled people into "inspiration porn."

Tour Guide: Curtis Garrett (he, him) Bio

I identify as a disabled white man.

I am a third-generation native Coloradan. I grew up in Lakewood, Colorado, where I attended a segregated school for students with disabilities until high school. I was one of the first students to be mainstreamed in Jefferson County. I graduated from Green Mountain High School in 1979 and received my BA in Recreation Administration from Metro State Denver in 1988.

Currently, I am the Atlantis Community Disaster Preparedness Coordinator. Atlantis is a Center for Independent Living serving 7 metro Denver Counties. Our mission is to advocate for people with disabilities to live in fully integrated communities of their choosing.

I started working at Atlantis on June 1, 2020, after 27 years as a youth developer for Denver Parks & Recreation. In 2011, I attended the FEMA "Get Real Conference," where I heard the tragic story of a woman who drowned during Hurricane Katrina because she had no way of getting out of her home. It is my goal for Atlantis to become a national model in shaping and sustaining the culture of preparedness throughout our community.



Image Description

A photograph of Curtis Garrett, a middle-aged man with light skin, wearing a gray flat cap and a black-and-white plaid flannel shirt over a dark-colored shirt. He is seated indoors, smiling warmly at the camera, with a wooden bench and a dimly lit background behind him.

Disability Culture & History – short version!

We are thrilled to welcome your group to Atlantis! Atlantis is a disability-led Center for Independent Living (CIL) advocating for people with disabilities to be active members of their communities. Our staff is a diverse group of professionals with disabilities, and we are excited to share insights into Disability Culture and Language.

What is Disability?

Disability is a natural part of human diversity. While legal definitions focus on impairments, the disability community embraces a cultural and identity-based perspective that highlights lived experiences, rights, and pride.

History of the Disability Rights Movement

- 1975: Atlantis Community became one of the first Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in the U.S.
- 1978: The Gang of Nineteen protested for accessible public transportation, which led to the formation of ADAPT, a national disability rights organization.
- 1990: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed, prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

Understanding Ableism

Ableism is a system of oppression that values certain bodies and minds over others, often based on outdated ideas of "normalcy" and productivity. Audism, a form of ableism, specifically discriminates against deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Models of Disability

There are different ways society understands disability:

- Medical Model – Sees disability as a problem that needs to be fixed or cured.
- Social Model – Recognizes that barriers in society, not impairments, create disability.
- Cultural/Diversity Model – Views disability as a valuable and essential part of human diversity.

Language & Respectful Communication

- Person-First Language: "Person with a disability" emphasizes the individual first.
- Identity-First Language: "Disabled person" acknowledges disability as part of identity.
- Best Practice: Ask how someone prefers to be identified.

Key Takeaways

- Disability is a part of culture, not just a medical condition.
- Accessibility benefits everyone – Universal Design clears paths for all.
- "Nothing About Us Without Us" – Include disabled voices in decision-making.