



Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities 2018 Annual Awards



The Mayor-President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities recognized community members improving the lives of those living with disabilities. Honorees were celebrated on October 17 at the 11th Annual Awards Ceremony. Following the local event, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs presented the Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities Awards on November 28 at the Old State Capitol Building with several honorees from the Lafayette area.



The Lafayette Mayor-President's
**AWARENESS
COMMITTEE**
FOR CITIZENS WITH
DISABILITIES

2018 Annual Awards



Nicole Poencot – Vickie Nettles Advocacy Award

For selfless acts, going above and beyond to be a voice and advocate through her work with Louisiana Rehab Services for the disabled and the determination to make this world and our community a better place for all of those living with disabilities.





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Louisiana Rehab Services – Distinguished Merit

For extraordinary service in working to advance opportunities for persons with disabilities so they may achieve full participation in society, despite a fluctuating budget.





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Hilary Ragan – Educator of the Year

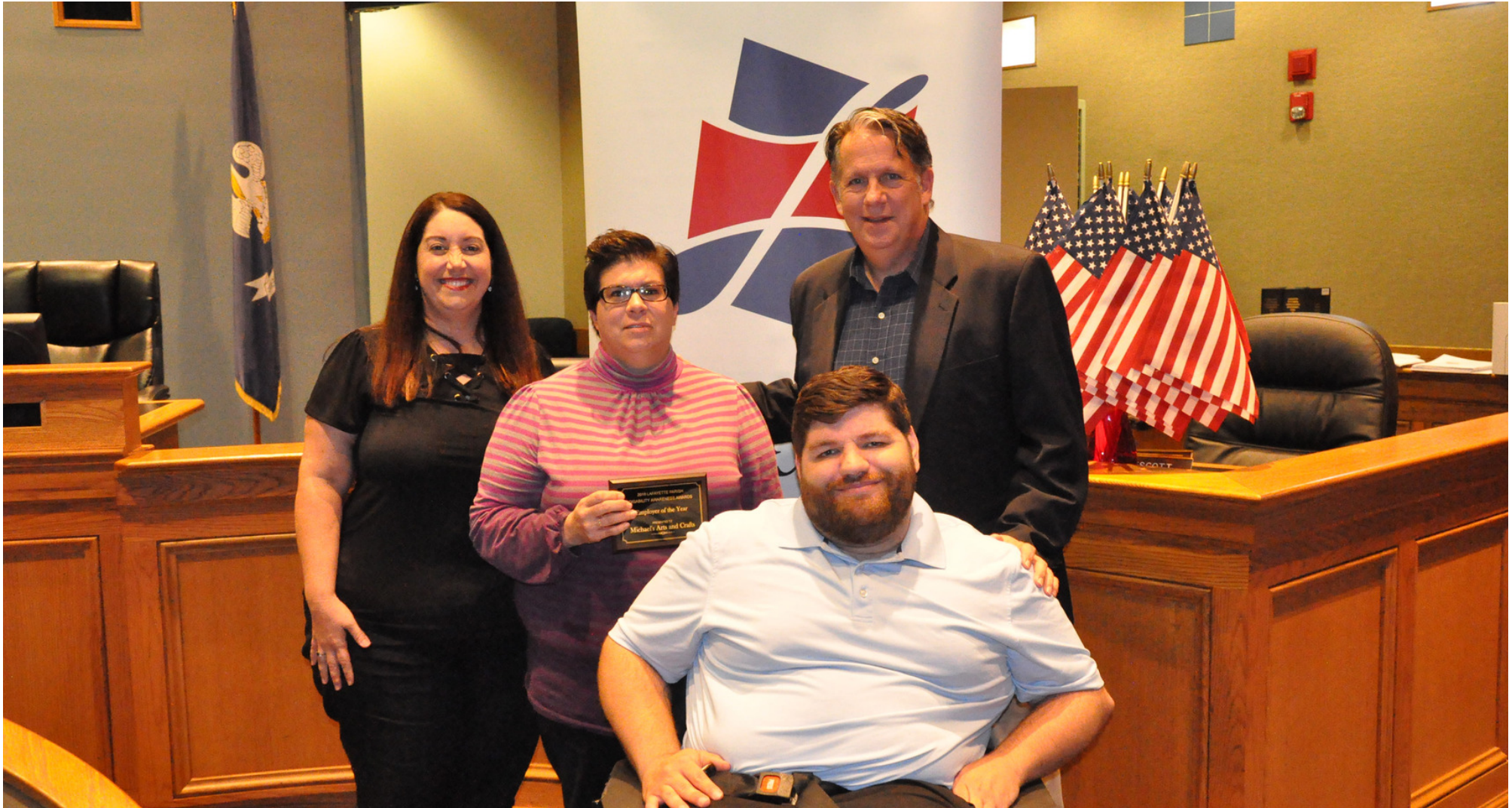
For her significant contributions in educating persons with disabilities in our community, particularly at Lafayette's STEM Academy.





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Michaels Arts & Crafts – Employer of the Year

For providing the opportunity of dignified work, offering long-lasting career and advancement opportunities, boosting confidence and providing stable income to individuals with disabilities.





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The Melara Family – Family of the Year

In recognition of involvement in the community and for serving as an example of courage, strength, and unity for other families living with disabilities.





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Robert Martin Whatley – Outstanding Individual with a Disability

For his exemplary legacy of care working with Louisiana Rehab Services and his never ending need to better the lives of all his clients.





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Taylor Trache – Media of the Year

For her excellent work on a series of stories on disability awareness efforts at the local and state level.





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Claire Carriere – Volunteer of the Year

For for her work with the UL Beacon Club, which she personally revived in order to bring inclusion and acceptance to the forefront for UL students with disabilities.





Governor's Office of Disability Affairs 2018 GOLD AWARDS

Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities honorees were also submitted for the 2018 State GOLD (Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities) Awards presented by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. Of the 14 awards, four were awarded to citizens of the Lafayette community. The GOLD Awards were presented by Governor John Bel Edwards in a ceremony that took place on November 28 in the Old State Capitol Building.

- **Harlon Cowsar II – Ken Vince Memorial Award**, for his work at the local non-profit Families Helping Families, as well as working to make Lafayette's public transportation route more accessible to the disabled community.
- **Hand Up Thrift – Employer of the Year Award**, for providing integrated competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- **Barry Guidry – Veteran of the Year Award**, for his work as a mentor for other veterans as well as his advocacy in the community for the disabled.
- **Mayor-President Joel Robideaux – Elected Official of the Year Award**, for creating Lafayette Consolidated Government's Office of Disability Affairs and his continued efforts to create legislation that serves Lafayette's disabled community.



Governor's Office of Disability Affairs 2018 GOLD AWARDS



Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities Awards

The GOLD Awards serves as an opportunity for Louisiana to pay tribute to the achievements, dedication, and extraordinary efforts of individuals who benefit the disability community.



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Entering its 11th year, the Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities was established to give a greater voice to citizens living with disabilities in Lafayette Parish. The committee's purpose is to serve in an advisory capacity to Lafayette Consolidated Government, and works to: develop and channel information regarding disabled persons to the citizens of the community through the introduction of special activities; work with all aspects of community life so that persons with disabilities will realize the rights and responsibilities afforded to all citizens; receive recommendations, requests, and citizen complaints regarding problems affecting the disabled and; help increase opportunities for employment for persons with disabilities.

For more information on the committee visit www.lafayettela.gov/dac.

