

SPEC prepares for next fiscal year; reviews 2017 accomplishments



During early June, the Stakeholder Partnerships, Education & Communication leadership staff gathered in the Atlanta headquarters office for their fiscal year 2018 strategic planning meeting. The three-day meeting recapped fiscal year 2017 accomplishments and lessons learned to begin planning for FY2018. The group discussed numerous topics, such as software enhancement plans, program expansion and more, in order to strategically plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

Indiana ITAS employee joins national beepball champs during Indy 500 parade

Individual taxpayer advisory specialist (ITAS) employee **Damien Piatt** recently participated in the annual Indy 500 parade with National Beepball team, the Indianapolis Thunder. “It was an honor and a privilege to walk in the parade with these players who I admire and respect,” Damien said.

Beepball is “beep baseball” for people who are visually impaired. It’s played similarly to traditional baseball with a few differences, some of which include speakers and sounds to queue players.

Damien first became involved with the Indy Thunder through co-worker **Gary Arbogast** three years ago. “It only

took seeing the team practice one time, and I realized this was a sport I wanted to be involved with,” Damien said. “The tenacity, poise and determination of these players inspired and motivated me.”

Damien feels his experiences at beepball and at the IRS are closely linked, and they help him excel at both. He learns, strengthens his listening skills and uses patience and optimism whether he’s helping a team member or a confused taxpayer.

“The biggest aspect is having the *can-do* attitude,” he explained. “When you see a blind person hit a baseball 150 feet, you realize anything really is possible.” This keeps him feeling upbeat. “I come to work with a smile on my face. The team reminds me that no obstacle is too big to overcome.”

Damien will join the team during this year’s national championship

ITAS **Damien Piatt** (left) poses with co-worker **Gary Arbogast**, who introduced him to the Indianapolis Thunder beepball team. Damien helps out with the team and marched with them in the Indy 500 parade.

in West Palm Beach, Florida. The Indianapolis Thunder team is defending their title, having won the 2016 World Series. “They are a living example that you can do anything you set your mind to,” he said.



Damien Piatt



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