

PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR MORROW VALLEY FARMSTEAD

The first generation of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the 1940s and 1950s are now becoming older adults. Autism Spectrum Disorder is a life-long condition and yet, by far, the majority of research, funding, services, and available information focuses on children with ASD. Very little consideration has been given to practice models, services, needs, longitudinal research, the developmental trajectory and the various challenges faced by those aging with ASD. Over the course of the last five years, GHA Autism Supports has discovered that there is no precedence for services for aging individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and current long-term care models do not meet the unique needs of this target population.



GHA Autism Supports is pleased to announce the development of Morrow Valley Farmstead, a state of the art 10-bed facility which will create specialized long-term medical care for aging individuals with ASD and other developmental disabilities that are North Carolina residents. Planning began with the creation of an endowment fund earmarked for long-term medical care for people with autism. The endowment fund was initially funded through a lead gift made by Chet and Elaine Gurski in 2011, and the fund is still managed by Foundation For the Carolinas (see fund information below). Thanks to the support of the Cannon Foundation, a grant of \$400,000 was used to purchase 50 acres of land just outside Morrow Mountain State Park in Albemarle. In addition, other grants are being sought to assist with project funding. "These services will benefit the aging with autism, but will also serve as a model to revolutionize long-term medical care support to other aging individuals, their families and health care systems," said GHA Autism Supports CEO Dawn Allen.

How Can I Support Morrow Valley Farmstead?

1. Consider a gift to the "Foundation for Long-Term Care of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders" Endowment Fund:
 - Fund #2086 at Foundation For The Carolinas – 220 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28202
 - Phone - 704-973-4500
 - Giving options include cash gifts, stock, real property and others
 - Enjoy the ease of giving through a one-time gift or consider a reoccurring gift through a bank draft or a credit card payment.
2. Consider a gift to GHA Autism Supports to invest in Morrow Valley Farmstead:
 - Contact Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri to devise a giving plan that works for you!
 - Phone - 704-982-9600, ext. 125
 - Email – betholivieri@ghainc.org

2017

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GHA Autism Supports

P.O. Box 2487

213 N. Second St.

Albemarle, NC 28002

704-982-9600

704-982-8155 (fax)

www.ghautismsupports.org

MISSION

GHA Autism Supports provides quality, community services to meet the unique needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



LOADS OF FUN AT WAKE THE WORLD

Special thanks to local volunteers Robin and Melissa Lemons for organizing this year's **Wake the World-Lake Tillery** on July 13th. Several of the individuals that GHA supports participated in a day full of water related activities. Wake the World (WTW) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that consists of a large group of boat owners that provide watersports opportunities to abandoned, abused and neglected children, as well as for the special needs population.



"Captain Adam" loved honking the boat horn as other boats passed at the 2017 Wake the World-Lake Tillery activities!

Scholarship Provides Exciting Camp Experience

Congratulations to Mark for receiving a scholarship through First In Families of North Carolina to spend a week at Camp Harrison, located in the Bushy Mountains between Lenoir and North Wilkesboro. Camp Harrison is part of a network of camps organized by Camp Blue Skies to provide opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities, including people with mild to moderate autism, to enjoy the experience of camp. The scholarship provided Mark a wonderful opportunity to attend camp from September 30th - October 4th. Along with recreational and outdoor activities available to campers, Camp Harrison offers activities to increase independence. Campers have opportunities to challenge themselves in a safe environment to enhance their interests and abilities while developing their social skills.





GHA Autism Supports CEO Dawn Allen received the 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award during Pfeiffer University's Homecoming festivities in late September. Congratulations Dawn!



Dallas, Trey, Charles and GHA staffperson Derrick Williams stand alongside Norwood Site Director Lisa Coone for serving as "Volunteers of the Month" for the Stanly County Meals on Wheels Program. Congratulations and special thanks to the Stanly County Senior Services Department for continuing this wonderful partnership that benefits so many!

The GHAzette is a quarterly publication. If you would like to submit story ideas, please contact a member of the GHAzette Editorial Team:

**Beth Olivieri, betholivieri@ghainc.org
Denise Drye, denisedrye@ghainc.org**

Staff Recognized for Direct Support Professionals Week

In appreciation of the vital role direct support workers have in the lives of the individuals they serve, Governor Roy Cooper declared September 10-16 as Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.

To celebrate our outstanding Direct Support staff, GHA partnered with the North Carolina Alliance

for Direct Support Professionals (NCADSP) to sponsor "Direct Support Professional Appreciation Week: Let's Celebrate!" This 2-day conference and celebration of Direct Support Professionals in North Carolina was held Sunday, September 10th and Monday, September 11th at Great Wolf Lodge in Concord. One lucky Gaining High Achievement nominee was randomly selected to represent GHA at this conference.

Congratulations to Regina Crump, who celebrated with other DSPs and learned from leaders in our field. In addition, congratulations to Brandi Brus and Johnny Sturdivant who were randomly selected to win \$25 gift cards. Other Gaining High Achievement nominees were the following: Anthony Jones, Monica Cox, Dorothy Allen, Dylan Nadeau, Kimberly Cook, Shenita Davis, Jerod Greene, Melinda Graham, Teresa Graham, Allison Nance, Ameshia Smith, Samantha Allman, Bertha Smith, Essence Burns, Madalyn Blalock, Amanda Forrest, Gus Fesperman, Eric Baldwin, Brittany Blalock, Barbara Hatley, David Horne, Marcus Ingram, Holly Murphy, Tylisha Walker, Asia Grady, Jeannine Redmond, Courtney Warren, Marquis Horne, Cindy Moore, Carrissia Irving, Samantha Hamby, Lisa Eudy, Jutta Benjamin, Maurice Burns, Karen Crump, Teresa Gaddy, Patty Helms, Derek Hill, Laura Hoelzle, Cherie Karnes, Donte Gray, Maurice Watkins, Wincey Marshall, Chicaraw Meaders, Melissa Rivera, Ben Roundtree, Doyle Rowan, Sandy Shankle, James Steele, Santilena Sturdivant, Tina Sturdivant, Derrick Williams, Trina Burgdoff and Jackie Poist.

Congratulations to all of our nominees for a job well done!



Antwain Hamilton and Regina Crump attended the conference at Great Wolf Lodge as part of Direct Support Professionals Week.

GHA and First Presbyterian Church Partner for Art Show



Under the leadership of Creative Arts Coordinator Kyoko Bruton, individuals supported at the licensed day services program located in Albemarle always enjoy having a creative outlet to spotlight their “inner artist”. Many of the works of art were placed on display at the First Presbyterian Church Art Gallery in downtown Albemarle for the last several months. In addition, church members, along with members of the greater community, were invited to view the fall art exhibit at a reception the Church hosted on September 19th. GHA has partnered with First Presbyterian Church for a number of years, including the creation of numerous volunteer opportunities to

assist with art classes, meal preparation and the church bulletins. In return, church members have donated numerous art and other activity supplies to keep the creative juices at the Albemarle Day Services Program flowing!





HOLIDAY POP-UP MARKET

Jewelry, Accessories, Candles, Baked -
Goods, Christmas Ornaments & More!

All items handcrafted by
GHA Individuals

Door Prizes and Refreshments

Time to Shop!
At GHA Day Services
December 21st
1PM- 4PM



GHA Receives Speedway Children's Charities Grant



GHA recently received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the Charlotte Motor Speedway Chapter of Speedway Children's Charities (SCC) in Concord. The funds will be used to continue day camp activities for the individuals at Marie G. Smith Children's Home during the summer of 2018. The organization was founded in 1982 by Speedway Motorsports and Sonic Automotive



Chairman Bruton Smith as a memorial and legacy to his son, Bruton Cameron Smith, who passed away at a very young age. Speedway Children's Charities is focused on funding a

wide range of programs that focus on children in need and their families. Dollars are raised annually by the organization through the hosting of events and promotions geared around race weeks and other activities at Charlotte Motor Speedway, as well as events within the Charlotte community. GHA Autism Supports is pleased to have received on-going support through SCC's grant program for more than ten years.



INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATE IN FARM FEST FIELD DAY

Wilmington Christian Academy (WCA) held its second annual Farm Fest Field Day on November 8th in partnership with the local chapter of the Special Olympics. Over 350 Special Olympics athletes, along with 200 WCA teachers and teacher's assistants helped to organize the event. According to Tanya Upton, Wilmington Christian Academy's High School Activities Coordinator, high school students chose to host a field day for the special needs community in New Hanover County this year as opposed to their usual field day for themselves. The students helped make the

nearly 20 games, including 'I Spot the Cow,' 'Dress the Scarecrow,' and 'Needle in a Haystack,' in the months leading up to the event, and ran the activities during the field day. GHA values the partnerships that benefit the individuals that we support in both the Wilmington and Albemarle communities.



We strive to assist the individuals we support in securing meaningful employment opportunities. Congratulations to Chris for receiving his 5 Year service pin at Walgreens in Wilmington!



Congratulations to Creative Arts Participant Alex whose work was recently featured in the Slumpy's catalog. Slumpy's is one of the largest distributors of glass supplies in the



nation. The company recently conducted a contest in which Alex entered his work of art featuring a beach scene. As a result of his piece being chosen, he was given a \$25 credit towards more supplies, as well as a new mold valued up to \$50 for free. Numerous pieces of art handcrafted by Alex is sold in the Second Street Sundries Gift Shop. Way to go Alex!



GOING FOR THE GOLD—INDIVIDUALS FROM STANLY AND NEW HANOVER COUNTY PROGRAMS WIN MEDALS AT FALL SPECIAL OLYMPICS EVENTS

More than 1,000 athletes were in Charlotte on November 3-5 to participate in six different sports, and over 1,000 volunteers assisted in a variety of ways. GHA Autism Supports has had a rich history with Special Olympics for a number of years. Participants supported by GHA have excelled in bowling, basketball, bocce ball, soccer, track and swimming to name a few. More than 40,000 adults and children with intellectual disabilities are trained by Special Olympics North Carolina all year long.

Congratulations to the following participants from both our programs in Stanly and New Hanover Counties who participated in the fall games:

Jayman H. - Silver medal in the Golf Level 1 Individual Skills

Jonathan M. – Silver medal as a member of the Stanly Lightning Bocce Team

Clint P. – Silver medal as a member of the Stanly Lightning Bocce Team

John P. – Silver medal as a member of the Stanly Warriors Basketball Team

Chris W. - Gold medal as a member of the New Hanover Tide Crushers Soccer Team



Congratulations to Samantha who was crowned *Miss Beyoutiful North Carolina MAR USA 2017!* In addition to winning the queen title in the Beyoutiful division, she was also awarded the titles “Most Photogenic”, “Best Eyes”, “Best Smile” and won the “LOVE” Award for her autism awareness poster presentation. Way to go Samantha!

Culture Day is always a hit with a variety of international foods, display boards from different countries, games and prizes!



STAFF APPRECIATION EVENTS

During the months of October and November, all GHA staffers were honored at appreciation events in both Albemarle and Wilmington. Both groups enjoyed food and a wide array of prizes. Thanks to the generosity of the GHA families, all GHA employees received Wal-Mart gift cards just in time for the holiday season. Staff service awards were also given at both locations.

Congratulations to our grand prize winners Brett Ridenhour, who won a \$200 bonus prize, and to Jason Wall who won a \$100 Visa gift card. On behalf of all of the GHA employees, we send special thanks to our families for the gift cards and for your show of appreciation throughout the year.



Sensory Garden Nears Completion

Upon receipt of grants totaling \$7,000 from Speedway Children’s Charities in 2014 and 2015, GHA began the first two phases of the development of a sensory garden at Carolina Farms. This process included laying out the bed space and installing a crushed rock base for walkways. The area was excavated for a large fish pond complete with several sensory water features. With additional funding from The Jack Fanning Memorial Foundation in the amount of \$5,000, a pergola complete with a water misting feature and a bridge connecting sections of the garden were constructed. In addition, many other features that address all of the senses; touch, taste, auditory, vision, balance, and coordinating the movement of the eyes, head, and body through space and body movement have helped to develop the sensory garden for people to enjoy for years to come. Each element of the garden has a specific purpose and addresses one of the sensory challenges faced by many of the individuals that GHA supports.



The development of the sensory garden has provided lots of volunteer opportunities. Most recently, volunteers from Wells Fargo spent a fall afternoon providing their time and talents to spruce up areas of the garden.

GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS: CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

GHA serves and employs individuals with many different beliefs from many different backgrounds. Race, ethnicity, gender, age and many other characteristics create individual diversity and cultural differences. As an organization, we aspire to treat all cultural needs with respect and sensitivity. Though survey research, the Quality Management Department regularly checks to see how GHA is doing in this area.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY INDICATORS	INFORMATION SOURCE
100% of parents-guardians indicated they <i>strongly agree</i> or <i>agree</i> that GHA is sensitive to cultural differences among individuals.	2017 GHA Parent-Guardian Satisfaction Survey/ June Survey
100% of community supporters <i>strongly agree</i> or <i>agree</i> that GHA provides culturally sensitive services.	2017 GHA Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey
100% of community supporters <i>strongly agree</i> or <i>agree</i> that GHA does not discriminate in the provision of services.	2017 GHA Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey
99% of GHA employees <i>strongly agree</i> or <i>agree</i> that GHA creates and maintains an environment that respects and supports individual diversity.	2017 GHA Employee Satisfaction Survey

Artists at Work!



GHA is pleased to have the opportunity to attend free therapeutic art classes sponsored by Carolinas HealthCare System - Stanly. Each month, class instructors teach a class on a variety of topics including the art of embossing, die-cutting and greeting card making.





Charlie enjoys volunteering each week at the Badin Volunteer Fire Department.



Pumpkin picking at Carolina Farms—a great time was had by all!!



We value our partnership with our Japanese visitors each year! Kazuki is midway through his 9-month stay at GHA through a student exchange program and enjoys spending time at a number of different residential programs.