

JUNE 2024

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of
GHA Autism Supports



GHA Benefit to Include Car Raffle

Mark your calendars, purchase your tickets and join us on Saturday, June 22nd at Christine's Wood Fire in Albemarle for a fabulous evening including silent auction items up for grabs, a 4-course delicious dinner, DJ and dancing!

GHA Autism Supports is pleased to have been chosen as the beneficiary of an upcoming fundraising event in downtown Albemarle on Saturday, June 22nd. Christine's Wood Fire Restaurant is hosting "The Annual Gathering" to celebrate the establishment's 1-year anniversary. Tickets are available for \$75 each, and the winner of the 2024 Chevrolet Trax Car Raffle will be drawn promptly at 8:00 pm this evening. (Car raffle tickets can be purchased on the GHA Autism Supports website at www.ghautismsupports.org). Don't hesitate, purchase your tickets before they are sold out! Event tickets are available by utilizing the link below through Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/891706998637/?aff=oddttdtcreator> Hope to see you there!



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April Provides Opportunity to Spread Autism Awareness and Acceptance

April provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month by spreading awareness and acceptance about autism to a variety of groups in the communities in which we operate our programs. The Development Team was excited to serve as presenters at the First Lutheran Church WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) meeting and a luncheon at the Stanly County Senior Center. Both groups learned about programs that impact the more than 100 individuals that we support every day, as well as general information about autism. We also enjoyed reading *All My Stripes*, the tale of a zebra with autism

learning to embrace his differences, to eleven kindergarten and first-grade classrooms at Central Elementary School. In addition, GHA Autism Supports donated copies of *All My Stripes* to Central Elementary and five copies to the public library locations in Stanly County. The official Autism Acceptance Banner was displayed on First Street in Albemarle during the first two weeks of April as well. Many of our residential programs celebrated with opportunities to make hand-made decorations and artwork displayed in their homes. In addition, both Dee Pankey-Thompson and Lori Ivey were on hand representing GHA Autism Supports as the County of Stanly adopted an official proclamation declaring April as Autism Acceptance Month at a Board of Commissioners meeting.

"As Autism Awareness Month comes to a close, our team at GHA Autism Supports is reflecting on the incredible strides we've made in understanding and supporting individuals on the autism spectrum. April was an opportunity to celebrate neurodiversity and advocate for greater acceptance and inclusion."

**--DAWN ALLEN,
GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS
CEO**



Acceptance

EMPOWER ADVOCATE CELEBRATE

Scenes from

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH



"When you meet one person with Autism, you've met one person with Autism."

--DR. STEPHEN SHORE



GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between March 1, 2024 and May 31, 2024. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you feel an error has been made, please contact the Development Department at 704-982-9600, x 125.

In Honor of Aaron Andrews
Dorea Fisher

In Memory of Christopher Cook
The Rev. Dr. Cathy Cook

In Honor of Scott Denton
Christie Garner

In Honor of Seth Dickinson
Edward Dickinson &
Teresa Wagoner

In Memory of Lynn Durrett
Thomas & Judy Childress
Denise Drye
Bobbilynne Garner
Beth Olivieri
Carol Parker
Craig & Ulla Skeffington

**In Memory of Ervin "Mac"
Funderburk**
Albemarle Downtown Development
Corporation Board of Directors
Benny & Denise Drye
Bobbilynne Garner
Stan & Annette Leggett
Tony & Martha Lowder

In Memory of Nicholas Garner
Denise Drye
Bobbilynne Garner
Maureen Morrell
Beth Olivieri
Maureen Morrell
Craig & Ulla Skeffington

**In Honor of
Charles & Peggy Hughes**
Martha Cranford

In Honor of Lindsay Leggett
John & Taryn Williams

In Memory of Curtis Moore
Jeff & Debra Inscore

In Honor of Maureen Morrell
Raymond & Meredyth Champ

In Honor of Thomas C. Southerland
Thomas & Marie Southerland



Voices Together Provides Music Therapy



Thanks to support from The Duke Endowment, grant funding has been utilized to provide music therapy to participants at Port City Academy, GHA's licensed day program in Wilmington. Beginning on April 12th, music therapist Michaela from non-profit Voices Together began providing programming to carry out one of the organization's core values, to utilize "the power of music as a universal language that creates powerful

connections between people and opens pathways to expressing one's self." Michaela's visits have quickly become a favorite amongst the participants at Port City Academy!

Top-Notch Employee at Pilot House

The Pilot House restaurant in Wilmington has long been a favorite for locals and tourists for its superb food and scenic views along the Riverwalk. GHA Autism Supports also appreciates the partnership with The Pilot House for providing an employment opportunity for Wilmington resident Brittany. For some time Brittany has worked weekly on Wednesdays ensuring that every nook and cranny in the public areas of the establishment look clean and inviting to all of the customers. "Her attention to detail is impeccable, and the confidence that Brittany has gained through this employment opportunity is immeasurable," shared Melissa Rivera who serves as VP and Chief

Regional Officer for GHA Autism Supports.



Congrats Graduates!

We are extremely proud of all of our 2024 graduates of Albemarle High School! GHA Autism Supports is pleased to have entered a contractual agreement this past spring in which our organization provides the educational support staff in the classrooms that work with the individuals at GHA. This is a valuable partnership that has proven to provide the best structured experience for the students.

Special thanks to our awesome GHA Autism Supports team members who loved an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of all of our graduates at a special gathering! Lots of food, fun and other celebratory activities were enjoyed by all at Carolina Farms!



OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

The GHazette Newsletter is released quarterly. For feedback or to share story ideas, contact:

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16th Annual Rubber Duck Derby Huge Success

On May 18th, a few lucky ducks crossed the finish line for some fabulous cash prizes during the 16th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby! It was another record-breaking year, selling nearly 7,250 rubber ducks to support the many activities and programs at GHA Autism Supports. We appreciate the support of corporate and patron sponsors that assisted us in raising dollars that will be utilized to support our programs throughout NC. A big thank you is extended to the Stanly County Family YMCA for hosting our annual event and to the numerous volunteers that served as "duck dumpers". We look forward to another sea of yellow ducks next year!



16th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

\$75 WINNER - CONNIE EDWARDS-MOSHER

\$100 WINNER - AL & ANN SADOWSKY

\$250 WINNER - ROGER DICK

\$1,000 WINNER - PATRICK & KATHY O'BRIEN

AND THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER IS...

\$3,000 - JOCIE CREMISI

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Presenting Sponsor

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In Memory of Mildred & Henry Julian

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In Honor of Seth Dickinson by Teresa Wagoner & Ed Dickinson

Family of Kirby Moore

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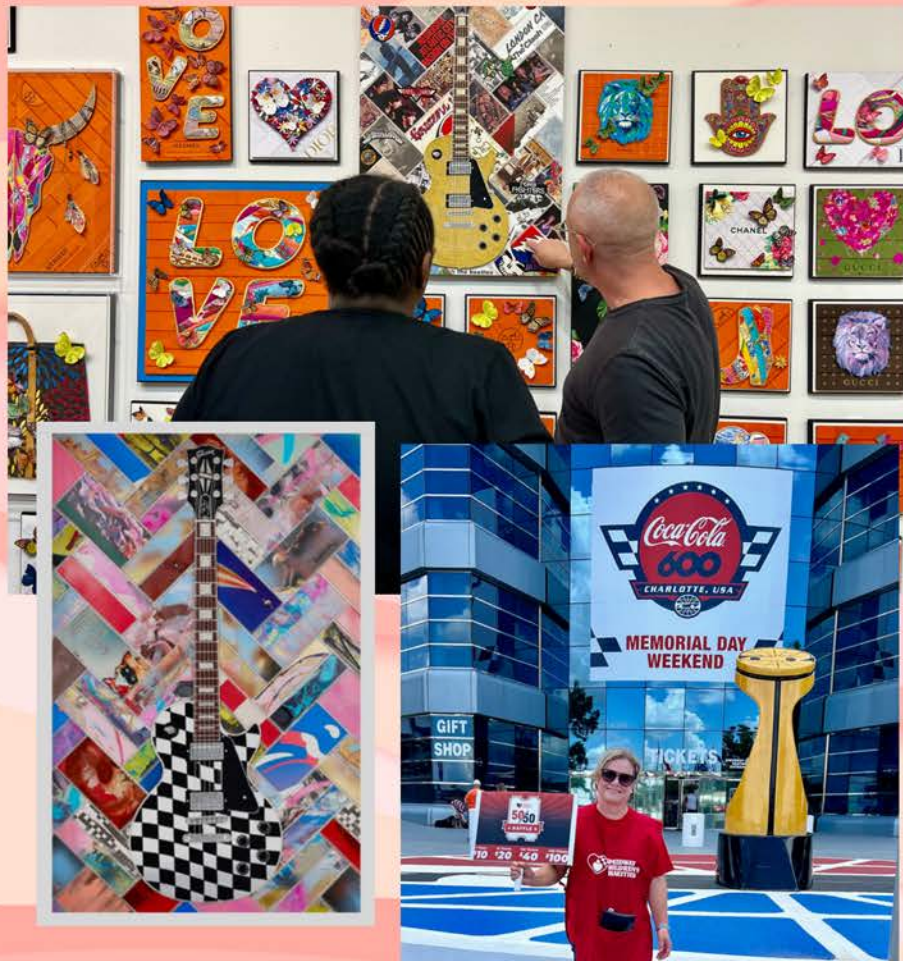
Reiki Introduced Thanks to Duke Endowment

GHA Autism Supports continues to pilot new modalities as a part of our Duke Endowment Grant Whole Person Integrative Care project. We are excited to have Corey-Beth Travaglini, a level two certified Reiki instructor, introduce reiki with the individuals at Morrow Valley Farmstead. Reiki is an energy healing technique that promotes relaxation and reduces stress through gentle touch. Reiki practitioners use their hands to deliver energy to your body helping you become physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually balanced. Data on blood pressure, pulse, and mood, taken before and after the Reiki sessions, indicate that it is proving very relaxing for most of the participants. Staff reports indicate that this soothing effect appears to last several hours, making it a very promising therapeutic intervention for our individuals.



Smith Home Residents Participate in Art Project

GHA Autism Supports has enjoyed a longstanding partnership with the Charlotte Chapter of Speedway Children's Charities. This spring, residents from the Marie G. Smith Home participated in an art project with Stephen Wilson Art Studio in Mint Hill, NC. The background was created with vintage album covers that were individually painted, then cut into pieces, collaged and then embroidered together to make a unique tapestry. The beautiful finished work of art was featured at the recent Speedway's Gala fundraiser. Following the art project, youth were treated to snacks, a pizza lunch, and a beautiful piece of personal artwork that each person handcrafted to display in their rooms. GHA receives funding annually through Speedway Children's Charities to help purchase equipment and supplies for our children and adolescent homes. The Development Team volunteers annually during race events to help raise funds that are distributed to charities serving children in our area, including GHA Autism Supports.





DO YOU HAVE A CAR, BOAT,
TRUCK, RV, JET SKI OR
SNOWMOBILE TO

DONATE?



YOU CAN DONATE TO GHA
AUTISM SUPPORTS AND
RECEIVE A TAX DEDUCTION!

**THIS NO COST, NO HASSLE PROCESS BEGINS WHEN YOU CONTACT OUR
FUNDRAISING PARTNER, CARS AT: WWW.CAREASY.ORG**

**YOU CAN SELECT GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS TO DIRECT THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF
YOUR DONATION.**

www.ghautismsupports.org

CAPTURING SOME FUN!



★FUN★

