

MARCH 2023

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of GHA Autism Supports

Community Partnership Groups Treat Residents to a Night Out

Individuals we support at GHA Autism Supports danced the night away at both the Night to Shine in Wilmington and the Annual Sweetheart Dance in Albemarle. The Night to Shine is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation in cooperation with local churches and the Sweetheart Dance is hosted by Pine Grove United Methodist Church and other providers that serve individuals with special needs. We appreciate both hosts and their entire network of volunteers for providing such fun and memorable gatherings for the people we support. From selecting the perfect outfit to hair and makeup, individuals were all dolled up for these special events where many danced the night away! A special thank you to the direct support staff that helped our individuals shop and select their finest wear and accompany them to these wonderful events. We also appreciate students at Stanly Community College's Cosmetology Program for providing services for hair and nails. The Night to Shine and the Sweetheart Dance added to the quality of life for many and served as a time to reconnect with old and new friends post pandemic! Check out scenes from events on page two. We look forward to continuing these partnerships in 2024!



This issue:

Residents Enjoy a Night Out
PAGES 01-02

Memorials & Honorariums
PAGES 03-05

Manager Spotlight, Tailored Plans
PAGE 06

Quality Management Update
PAGE 07

Morrow Valley Farmstead Gifts
PAGE 08

Whole Person Care &
Special Olympics
PAGE 09

15th Annual Rubber Duck Derby &
Speedway Grant
PAGE 10

Spring Candid's
PAGE 11

AED Grants
BCBSNC Visit &
Master Gardners Program
PAGE 12



sweetheart dance

SCENES FROM

NIGHT *to Shine*



"Meaningful partnerships are central between our community and the people we support in creating positive outcomes for all."

DAWN ALLEN,
GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS
CEO



GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between December 1, 2022 and February 28, 2023. 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, x125.



In Honor of Julian Allard
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Memory of Ellen Brooks
Shawnee Sundquist

In Memory of Linda DeYoung
Phil Ponder

In Honor of Ms. Lynn Allard
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Johnny Bullis
Lori Bullis

In Memory of Michael Forrest
Rick & Penny Brown

In Honor of Macy Allard
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of
Carolina Farms Home #3 Staff
Craig & Ulla Skeffington

In Honor of Paula Gates
Sue Gates

In Honor of Dawn Allen
Paul & Brooke Childress
Chet & Elaine Gurski

In Honor of Jason Cory
Steve Cory

In Honor of
GHA Autism Supports Staff
Mike & Carla Shinn

In Honor of "Flash" Allen
Phil & Susan Hinely

In Honor of Cannon Cowles
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Norwood, Jr.

In Honor of Maria Gurski
Angela Birchler

In Honor of Dr. & Mrs.
Mike Bohnsack
Dr. & Mrs. John Kilde

In Honor of Ange Craft
Suzanne S. Surratt

In Honor of
Mr. & Mrs. JT Hinton
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of
Dean & Mindi Bowers
Nadine Bowers

In Honor of Macy Allard
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Paula Gates
Sue Gates

In Honor of
Stan & Donna Bowers
Nadine Bowers

In Honor of Day Program Staff
Larry & Martha Hupp

In Honor of
David & Carroll Holbrook
Jessamine Holbrook

In Honor of Kayleigh Boyd
Steve & Susan Boyd

In Honor of Scott Denton
Mimi Denton

In Honor of Liza K. Howell
Thomas S. Kenan, III

In Memory of Lee Boyd
Steve & Susan Boyd

Rusty & Patsy Duke
Daniel & Donna Harris

In Honor of
Dr. & Mrs. Eric Johnsen
Doug & Susan Stokes

(Continued from page 3)

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In Honor of Drew Julian
Paul Boileau

In Honor of
Mr. J. Henry Julian
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of
Dr. Jennifer Julian
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Memory of Reuben Klammer
Bea Pardo

In Honor of Ty LaRocco
Julia S. Ewing

In Memory of
Michael P. Laton, Sr.
Neil & Brooke Senter

In Honor of Charlie Lawrence
Winifred Helton

In Honor of Ashley Lowder
Ronnie Michael

In Honor of Zach Lowder
Tony & Martha Lowder

In Honor of Travis Luxenberg
Jim Gibbons, Jr.

In Memory of Jack Macon
Boyd Jordan

In Honor of
Winney Marshall &
Durrett Home Staff
Larry & Thea Gardner

In Memory of Jan B. Martin
Sue Martin

In Honor of Caleb McElreath
Jimmy & Shirley Bayne

In Memory of Ginny McGee
Steve & Susan Boyd

In Memory of Roger Moore
Brian & Beth Farmer

In Honor of Justin Morrell
Clare Casale
Janie FitzGerald
Diane Hartill
Patrick & Clay Morrell
Mary Ragsdale
Ray Rockwell

In Honor of Maureen Morrell
Janie FitzGerald
Martha Webb

In Memory of Rob Morrell
Mike & Linda Riley

In Memory of
E.H. & Joanne Morton
Mary Russell

In Honor of
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Norwood, Jr.
Doug & Susan Stokes

In Honor of Beth Olivieri
Gina Martin

In Honor of Alexandra Phillips
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Claire Phillips
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of
Mr. & Mrs. Matt Phillips
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Will Phillips
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Braden Poplin
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Norwood, Jr.

In Memory of Eric Roberts
Beverly Roberts

In Memory of Florence Rorie
Maureen Morrell

In Honor of Kyoko Rorie-Bruton
Gina Martin

In Memory of David Sadowsky
Bea Pardo

(Continued from page 4)

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In Honor of Ryan Sadowsky
Gwen Roberts

In Honor of
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Swanner
Kay Cochran
Doug & Susan Stokes
Suzanne S. Surratt

In Memory of Edward G. Scott
Tom & Sue Jasinski

In Honor of Lake Snyder
Margaret Snyder

In Honor of
Taylor Home Staff
Larry & Martha Hupp

In Honor of
Mrs. Margaret Snyder
E. Lake I. Snyder

In Honor of Emily Whichello
Amy Whichello

In Honor of
Mike & Karen Snyder
Margaret Snyder

In Honor of Cody Zeller-Townson
John Townson & Jane Zeller

In Honor of
Thomas Southerland
Paul Gerald, Jr.

In Honor of
Ms. Heather Stafford
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of
Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Stafford
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Nicky Sundquist
Dick & Mary J. Mason



Manager Spotlight with Santilena

Celebrating 14 years of service to GHA Autism Supports, Residential Manager Santilena Sturdivant began her career in 2009 as a direct care substitute staff at the Holbrook Home in Albemarle. She was promoted to a Residential Manager of both Taylor and Martin Homes in 2011. During her career, she has also supported individuals and their families at the Morrell Home, Thompson Home, Starr Apartments and Carolina Farms Home #3. Currently, she serves as a Residential Manager of Taylor Home and Martin Apartments.

When asked to reflect upon her time at GHA Autism Supports, Santilena shared, "Having been in this field for over 27 years, I love most making a difference in the daily



lives of the people I support." Santilena resides in Polkton and enjoys family trips with her son, daughter and three grandchildren in her spare time!



Medicaid Transformation Continues

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has delayed the implementation of the NC Medicaid Managed Care Tailored Plans. The launch was scheduled for April 1 and is now targeted for October 1, 2023. The delayed start of Tailored Plans allows Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), which will operate the Tailored Plans, more time to contract with additional providers to ease the transition for people using the plans and their care providers. Until the Tailored Plans launch, individuals will continue to receive care through their existing plans. Families will continue to receive notifications from their MCO about the transition.

If you receive any Medicaid correspondence or have any additional questions, please contact GHA's Quality Management department at 704-626-2340.

TRANSITIONING TO TAILORED PLANS






For more detailed information, visit
medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/transformation.



Applying Results of GHA's Individual Satisfaction Survey

Every fall, Quality Management surveys all persons we serve—asking how happy their lives are. The survey is available in written and picture forms. The Chief Quality Officer, with the involvement of Managers, matched the form with the communication needs of each individual. All individuals supported by GHA had an opportunity to participate or decline to participate in the survey process. For the 2022 Individual Satisfaction Survey, 100 surveys were distributed. The written survey was completed by 48 individuals while 51 individuals completed the picture survey, a combined return rate of 99%. For individuals completing the written format, six questions were presented with Yes, No and No Answer as choices. In all instances, Yes represented the positive response. Emoji accompanied each choice to engage the participant and to add visual appeal to the project. The accompanying table summarizes the results.

2022 Individual Satisfaction Survey Results For Written Survey 48 participants	 Yes	% Yes	 No	 No Answer
1. Are the people you see every day nice to you?	47	98%	1	0
2. Are you happy with what you do every day?	47	98%	1	0
3. Do you feel safe almost all the time?	46	100%	0	2
4. Do you know who to tell if someone is mean to you? If so, who?	47	100%	0	1
5. As a result of services with GHA, is your life better?	46	100%	0	2
6. Overall, are you happy with your life?	47	98%	1	0

The predominant answering pattern reflected a high number of positive responses to all survey questions. After analyzing answers from the picture survey, similar positive patterns emerged. In all cases, Quality Management followed up on individual responses reflecting a need for greater positivity as well as when individuals identified activities they would like to include in their lives. The survey project fulfilled Quality Management's most important roles: gathering vital data and applying that data in a valuable way!





Residents Benefit from Recent Gifts



Summers in North Carolina can be hot and humid, and it was quickly realized that there was a need for shade on the back patio area at Morrow Valley Farmstead. Through generous donations made by parents and grants received, we were able to secure funding to install a permanent sunshade recently. The Superior Shade hanging cantilever sunshade measuring 24 ft. by 12 ft. will cover much of the back patio providing substantial shade and blocking 98% of the sun's harmful UV rays. The shade can also reduce the temperature of our outdoor space by as much as 25-30 degrees, allowing residents of Morrow Valley Farmstead to enjoy the back patio during hot summer months.

Funding was recently received through an Autism Speaks grant that allowed for the installation of a concrete area with a fence for washing and grooming animals, as well as grooming supplies and equipment. Individuals at Morrow Valley Farmstead will be involved in the regular feeding and grooming of animals. Moose, our miniature therapy pony, three Great Pyrenees dogs – Elsa, Riley & Brea, and goats - Bonnie & Clyde, are loved by all and are sure to be a highlight with the individuals supported.



The West Stanly High School Woodworking Department recently built two wheelchair-accessible raised beds to be used in the new sensory garden at Morrow Valley Farmstead. The students did a fabulous job building the beds from plans developed and provided by Gardens for Humanity (www.gardensforhumanity.org). Extension Master Gardener Volunteers designed the native plant sensory garden plan. Look for future updates on the sensory garden coming soon!



Whole-Person Care Approach Kicks Off With Yoga

Through grant support provided by the Duke Endowment, Morrow Valley Farmstead was recently the first site to kick off a whole-person integrative care approach. The focus is to integrate physical, behavioral, and social health in an effort to maintain health and prevent and treat chronic diseases. On March 2nd, residents participated in their first chair yoga session with Cindy Brewer Purser of Mindful Yoga, Pilates & Art. One participant shared that it was "the best day", and she couldn't wait until the following week's yoga activity! Through sessions at Morrow Valley Farmstead, Cindy will develop training videos that can be used throughout the organization during the two-year grant span, as well as for use during many years to come with the individuals we serve at GHA Autism Supports.

Special Olympians Representing GHA Soar In Competitions

Stanly County Special Olympics athletes have hit the ground running this spring in a variety of sporting events! Individuals supported at GHA have been active participants with Special Olympics for a number of years, as many GHA staff have cheered them across the finish line.

The Stanly County Aquamen, coached by Volunteer Coach LaRhonda Watkins, participated in the Swim Invitational held at the Huntersville Aquatics Center on March 18, 2023. Three of the ten swimmers are residents of GHA, and all three men medaled in all of their heats!

Congratulations to Michael Francis:
Mixed Open 50 yd. and 100 yd. Freestyle - Level 3

Congratulations to Adam Hupp:
Mixed Open 25 yd. and 50 yd. Freestyle - Level 2

Congratulations to Jonathan Martin:
Mixed Open 25 yd. Backstroke - Level 2
Mixed Open 50 yd. Freestyle - Level 2



Sam Poplin has perfected his skills on the basketball court!



Don't "Duck" a Chance to Win \$3,000!

Make plans to join the fun at the 15th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby presented in memory of Ellen Books on Saturday, May 20th at the Stanly County Family YMCA Park in Albemarle! Most importantly, adopt your rubber ducks now for a chance to win \$3,000 and numerous other exciting prizes. All ducks sold will plunge into the YMCA pool on event day at 1:00 pm. A complete list of prizes and event rules can be found at www.ghaautismsupports.org. Purchase your ducks by visiting the website or by calling (704) 982-9600, ext. 125. Grab a duck nest, flock, flotilla or invasion now before they are going, going gone!



Speedway Children's Charities Continues Support

Many of us looked forward to a summer camp experience while growing up, and at GHA Autism Supports, our children and youth had a jam-packed 2022 summer filled with lots of fun and educational activities. Adolescents and youth participated in art activities, field trips to Dan Nicholas Park & NC Zoo, yoga and meditation at local parks, scavenger hunts, picking a variety of yummy fruits, and swimming at Carolina Farms just to name a few. Themed weeks planned by Kyoko Rorie-Bruton, Creative Arts Director, kept them busy all summer long. Summer 2022 was a blast, and we look forward to many new adventures in 2023. Funding through the Charlotte Chapter of Speedway Children's Charities Grant Program helps support "Camp Puzzle Piece", and we were fortunate to receive funding once again for the 2023 Summer Camp. Development Coordinator Lori Ivey (left) and Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri (right) attended the Speedway Children's Charities Awards Ceremony in December to receive a \$2,000 check for this summer's camp fun!



Development Coordinator Lori Ivey (left) and Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri (right) attended the Speedway Children's Charities Awards Ceremony in December to receive a \$2,000 check for this summer's camp fun!

STAY CONNECTED

Follow our programs on social media outlets including the Facebook and Instagram pages for GHA Autism Supports and Second Street Sundries!



Instagram

Sign up and encourage others to enroll in the electronic delivery of our GHazette newsletter on our website at ghaautismsupports.org. Complete the Constant Contact form at the bottom of the opening page!



OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

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

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loriivey@ghainc.org

Beth Olivieri, Chief Development Officer
betholivieri@ghainc.org

Creating Memories at



BINGO!



Funds Received Additional AEDs

GHA was recently awarded several grants to install automated external defibrillators (AEDs) inside several programs owned and operated by GHA Autism Supports. Grants from both the Landfall Foundation and the Mitchell Foundation allowed for the installation of an AED at both the Hollinger Home and the McGee-Hudson Home in Wilmington, along with the purchase of a new training device for our Wilmington support staff.

In addition, a grant from the First Lutheran Church Endowment Fund in Albemarle funded the installation of an AED at Second Street Sundries. Private donations were also received to install AEDs at Carolina Farms Home #3 and the Day Program in Albemarle. An AED at each of these sites will allow staff to be better equipped should a cardiac arrest emergency occur.

BCBSNC Executives Visit GHA Autism Supports



Executives from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina made a visit to Stanly County on March 22nd, and GHA Autism Supports had the privilege of highlighting our organization over lunch! Touring GHA and other highlights of Albemarle were the following from Blue Cross Blue Shield: Dr. Tunde Sotunde, President & CEO; Kelly Calabria, Chief Marketing & Corporate Social Responsibility Officer; Dr. John Lumpkin, President, Blue Cross NC Foundation; Angela Boykin, VP Operations, Government Markets; Cheryl Parquet, Director, Community Engagement & Marketing Activation; Fran Gary, SVP Government Markets; Melissa Biediger, Sr. Program Manager, Community & Diversity Engagement; Tom Wallis, Sr., Communications Advisor and John Fulton, Sr., Multimedia Design Analyst.

Spring Planting Kicks Off at the Day Program

NC State Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (EMG) from Stanly County recently visited GHA's Day Services Program. EMG volunteers Ellen and Mark McCarter taught the group about growing and seeding lots of plants!

