

APR 2021

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of GHA Autism Supports

13th Annual Rubber Duck Derby Scheduled for May 15th

The third Saturday in May is quickly approaching, and we are thrilled to be dumping rubber ducks once again in the Stanly County Family YMCA pool as we anxiously await to see who the owner of the "Lucky Duck" will be to win the grand prize of \$3,000! A number of other cash prizes are up for grabs including cash prizes of \$75, \$100, \$250 and a runner-up cash prize of \$1,000. Individual ducks can be purchased for \$5 each, with a number of packages available to purchase anything from a nest to an invasion of rubber ducks! All purchase details are available on the GHA Autism Supports website at www.ghaautismsupports.org/duckderby/. Make your purchase by Thursday, May 13th!



Presented by Tim Marburger Honda, make sure you check out the GHA Autism Supports Facebook page at 2:00 pm on Saturday, May 15th where we will be broadcasting the race via Facebook Live. We appreciate the support of the following sponsors:

Presenting Sponsor:

Tim Marburger Honda

Platinum Sponsors:

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Uwharrie Bank

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Southern Pharmacy
Ramon, Eman & Alley Sundquist

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Bronze Sponsor:

Deese Electric Co., Inc. Heating & Cooling

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Maureen Morrell
Terri Meyers
Dale & Sherry Poplin

Ann & Al Sadowsky
Craig & Ulla Skeffington
Thomas & Marie Southerland
Diane & Bill Stevenson
Linda & Jeff Stewart
Patricia Tripp



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April is Autism Awareness Month

Speaking from the Heart--The Southerland Family Shares Their Journey

What better way to make us all aware of autism than to share the story of Thomas Calvin, the oldest of two boys of Thomas and Marie Southerland of Lumberton, North Carolina. Mr. and Mrs. Southerland resided in Queens, New York where both Thomas Calvin and his younger brother Shaun were born just 21-months apart. At 2 years of age, Mr. & Mrs. Southerland noticed that their beautiful son Thomas Calvin had difficulty making eye contact or following voices and other objects of interest. Initially, doctors assured them that nothing was wrong. By 4 years of age, they observed very little developmental improvements including limited language and lack of engaged play with others.

Shortly thereafter in 1978, the family relocated to North Carolina in hopes of securing more resources to assist Thomas Calvin. Initially, the family learned that an autism diagnosis might be on the horizon at a diagnostic center in Florence, South Carolina. Shortly thereafter, the family learned of his official diagnosis of autism with some degree of intellectual disability at the Developmental Evaluation Center in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

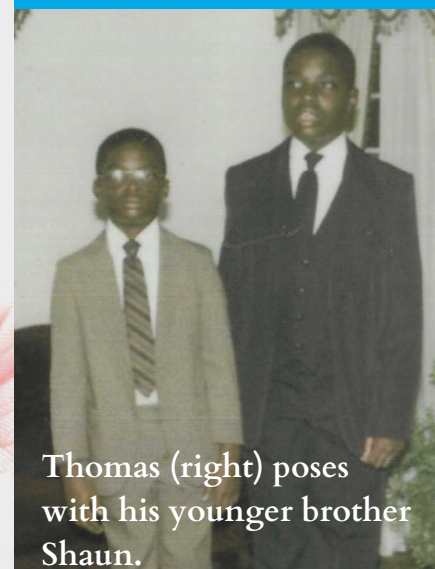
In 1980, Thomas Calvin was enrolled in the public school system in Lumberton, where school officials maintained that he needed to be "mainstreamed" in a regular classroom setting, a plan that proved to be unsuccessful. A TEACCH therapist advocated for the family that led to the school system providing a one-on-one teacher for Thomas Calvin.

While attending the Autism Society of North Carolina's Annual Conference in October of 1984, Mr. and Mrs. Southerland encountered Dr. Tom Mates from the Wilmington TEACCH program who informed them of a vacancy in a new children's residential program in Albemarle. After countless conversations and visits, Thomas Calvin moved into the GHA children's home in February of 1985, his new home for the next 2 1/2 years. He briefly aged out of the children's home, and spent the interim period back in Lumberton with his Mom and Dad and in a residential home in Greensboro, before returning to the Thompson Home, a new GHA adolescent home, in August of 1989.

As Thomas Calvin's needs changed as he matured and developed, he lived in several of the residential programs operated by GHA including the Thompson Home, Carolina Farms, the 4th Street Apartments and the Burress Home. Only a few short weeks ago marked Thomas' 36th anniversary with GHA Autism Supports! "To witness first-hand Thomas' journey from the moment he became a part of our GHA family has been an honor," shared GHA Autism Supports CEO Dawn Allen. "The entire Southerland Family has been so instrumental in the partnership to help Thomas meet his fullest potential."

"While at GHA Autism Supports, Thomas Calvin's progress has grown exponentially. Dawn Allen and her staff have more than provided aid and support for Thomas, but they have been therapeutic for the entire family."

--Mr. Thomas Southerland,
father to Thomas Calvin



Thomas (right) poses with his younger brother Shaun.



Thomas enjoys baking cookies at Burress Home.

GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between December 12, 2020 and March 31, 2021. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this list.

If you feel an error has been made, please contact Beth Olivieri at 704-982-9600, x 125.

In Honor of Lynn, Julian & Macy Allard
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Dawn Allen
Charles P. Brown
Dr. Michael Taylor

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

In Honor of Ellen Brooks
Shawnee Sundquist

In Honor of Dr. Anne J. Byrd
Geoff & Beth Olivieri

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

In Honor of Jason Cory
Steve Cory

In Honor of Scott Denton
Steve Denton

In Memory of Nicholas Finch
Samantha Fasul

In Honor of GHA's Team Tyler
Richard & Lynda Wilson

In Honor of Paula Gates
Jane Gates

In Honor of Olivia Hambley
Shelby Spradlin

In Honor of Bob Harwood
Charles P. Brown

In Honor of JT & Janice Hinton
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Drew Julian
Paul & Vicki Boileau
Gordan & Ruby Johnson
Howard & Frances Montague

In Honor of Dr. Jennifer N. Julian
Phil & Brenda Julian

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

In Honor of Ty LaRocco
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lowe, Jr.

In Honor of Charlie Lawrence
Winifred Helton

In Honor of Marian E. Leclerc
Patricia Economides

In Honor of Zach Lowder
Tony & Martha Lowder

In Honor of Marsena Williams
and Staff at Tanglewood Home
Dr. Linda & Mr. Eric Lawrence

In Honor of Dallas Meyers
Ernestine A. Cofield

In Honor of Terri Meyers
David & Sally Sloop

In Memory of
Betty Springer Michael
Benton H. Dry II

In Honor of David Montsinger
Dr. & Mrs. Robert M. Craft

In Honor of Justin Morrell
Thomas D. Kearns
Carol Majors
Maureen Morrell
Dolores Oakley

Zoya Raynes, Jewish Communal Fund

In Honor of Maureen Morrell
Beverly Clark
Thomas D. Kearns
David & Sally Sloop

Zoya Raynes, Jewish Communal Fund

In Memory of Dr. Rob Morrell
Sue Bohnsack
Beverly Clark
Ken & Diane Hartill
Thomas D. Kearns
David Laxton
Maureen Morrell

Zoya Raynes, Jewish Communal Fund

In Honor of Beth Olivieri
Dr. Michael Taylor

In Honor of Matthew Peele
Melanie Barfield

In Honor of Matt, Ashley, Alexandra,
Claire & Wil Phillips
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Memory of Glenn Riddell
Crystal Beal
Allison Garrison
Ben & Lauren Roney

In Memory of Dave Sadowsky
Reuben Klammer
Beatrice Pardo

In Honor of Ryan Sadowsky
Janet Hartman

In Memory of Edward J. Snyder, Jr.
Margaret Snyder

In Honor of Lake Snyder
Margaret Snyder

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

In Honor of Mike & Karen Snyder
Margaret Snyder

In Honor of Heather Stafford
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of
Phillip & Miriam Stafford
Phil & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Nicky Sundquist
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Mason

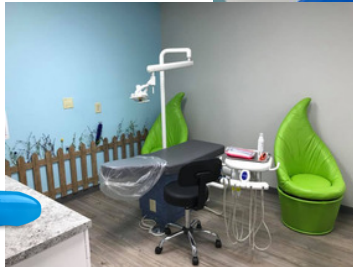
In Honor of
Ron & Beth Swanner
Kay Cochran
Steve & Suzanne Surratt

In Honor of Emily Whichello
Bob & Colleen Whichello



Top Row (L to R): Chelsea, Dr. Alison Katie, Kayla, Erin
Front Row (L to R): Breanna, Sarah, Aayliah

to the practice and provided for little to no waiting times. "Everyone at Locust Pediatric Dentistry is so friendly, caring and professional," shared GHA Autism Supports parent Martha Hupp. "Our son used to be fearful of a trip to the dentist, and then we found Locust Pediatric Dentistry, the best pediatric dental practice in the State! Adam's smile, along with the smiles of Dr. Allison and Erin, says it all!"



Medicaid Transformation—Keeping You In the Know

Medicaid Managed Care transformation efforts have restarted. Standard Plans are scheduled to go live July 1, 2021, while Behavioral Health I/DD Tailored Plans are scheduled to launch on July 1, 2022. Medicaid currently operates under a fee-for-service model, but will transition to Managed Care. Under Managed Care, the State will contract with insurance companies which are paid a predetermined rate to provide all the services that a person needs. Medicaid will change to Standard Plans for many individuals, such as low-income beneficiaries, in July, 2021. Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental disabilities, such as the individuals served by GHA Autism Supports, will transition to Tailored Plans July 1, 2022. The intent of Transformation is to provide more “whole-person” care that includes physical and behavioral health in a cost-effective way. As Medicaid Transformation progresses, GHA will strive to keep you informed about any changes that may impact your loved one’s care.

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



Spotlighting Our Heroes

For over a year, the entire GHA team of professionals has worked exceedingly hard to craft innovative approaches to keep the organization running smoothly in the face of a pandemic. However, this dedication to our organization and to the people we support goes far beyond the pandemic. Many of our devoted team members have careers with GHA that span over 25 years! We would like to use this edition of the GHazette and future issues to highlight the dedication shown by exceptional professionals!



Marsena Williams

This month, we are pleased to celebrate Marsena Williams and her 26 years of service to GHA Autism Supports! Marsena began her career as a 3rd shift direct support professional at the Marie G. Smith Children's Home in April of 1995. By 1998, she was promoted as a Team Leader, a role she served for two years before becoming the Manager of the home. Marsena provided outstanding leadership at our children's program for 17 years as Manager, not an easy task! Since that time, she has served as Manager of the Locust Home, Holbrook Home and Starr Apartments, becoming familiarized with both ICF and DD rules and regulations. Currently, Marsena is managing the Doby Home, Tanglewood Home and Martin Apartments. Upon reflecting on her journey with GHA, she is moved by the strides that many of the people she supported have made from 3-years-old to adulthood. "There is nothing



more rewarding than putting in the work with individuals and seeing the positive outcomes that follow," shared Marsena. "Always treat them as a person first, rather than just a person with autism." Marsena resides in Albemarle with her husband Mike, and loves spending time with her four children and one grandchild.



Phelexia McDonald

Celebrating 27 dedicated years at GHA Autism Supports is Phelexia McDonald! Phelexia began as a part-time substitute at the Thompson Home in 1994. After working as a substitute at Thompson Home, A. Jack Wall Home and the Marie G. Smith Children's Home, she took a full-time position as a Direct Support Trainer at the licensed Day Program in Albemarle. Over the course of the next 20 years, Phelexia worked at numerous residential programs including the Holbrook Home, Cowan Home, 4th Street Apartments, as well as the licensed Day Program. "The people I have supported grow on you and always have a big piece of your heart," shared Phelexia. "I have always accepted the challenge in helping them reach their fullest potential, and my overall experience has made me grow to nurture more people in my personal life." In her spare time, Phelexia enjoys her two daughters and is excited for her first grandchild that is expected to arrive in early May.



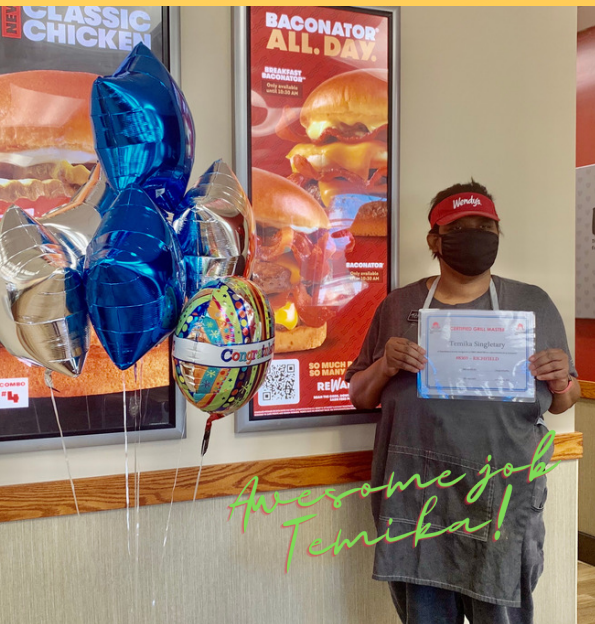
"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."

--Joseph Campbell, American Author & Professor

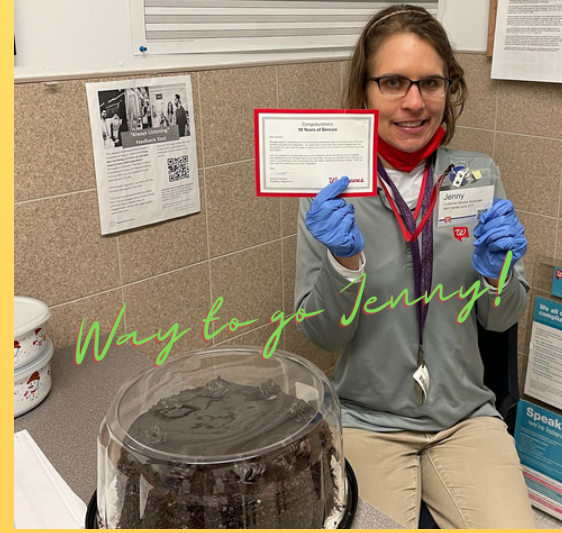
Employees Recognized for Outstanding Service

Securing employment opportunities for many of the individuals that GHA supports is a vital part of their day-to-day lives. Our organization values the partnerships with a number of employers in both Stanly and New Hanover Counties, and many employees have thrived as goals have been achieved and surpassed at their respective job sites. Hats off to jobs well done!

Stephen was recently honored at the Wendy's restaurant location in Richfield for 20 years of service! District Manager Doug Mahatha presented Stephen with a 20-year gold pin, along with an Apple Watch 6, balloons and an ice cream cake. He works diligently to keep the dining room and restrooms looking spic and span every shift. Congrats Stephen!



Temika received quite the honor from District Manager Doug Mahatha at Wendy's in Richfield. Of the eight restaurants he oversees in his district, Temika was selected as the "Grill Master" for her exceptional cooking skills! Temika was celebrated with a certificate, balloons and a cake, as well as a recognition plaque that will be housed inside the restaurant. Awesome job Temika!



Congrats to Jenny for 10 years of outstanding service at Walgreens in Wilmington! She has an incredible work ethic as she stocks, cleans, checks expiration dates and performs a number of other duties at the 17th Street location. Jenny was presented a pin, along with a cake to commemorate the special occasion by her fellow associates. Way to go Jenny!

2021 Board of Directors

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Al Sadowsky
Dr. Russ Sharples
Melissa Smith
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Celebrating Diversity

Creative Arts Coordinator Kyoko Rorie-Bruton uses a variety of themes when planning the activity calendars on a monthly basis. During the month of February, every program was encouraged to create a poster board representing the diversity in their homes. All posters were placed on display in Albemarle at the Day Program to promote the importance of and celebrate cultural diversity and inclusion in all that we do!



News from Quality Management Tracking the Numbers

At GHA Autism Supports, the Quality Management Department tracks the demographics of the individuals we serve. Demographics is a big ballpark encompassing all the characteristics of a group of people such as age, race or gender. Many agencies are interested in this information, including the US Census Bureau, Autism Society of North Carolina, as well as all of the organizations receiving our charitable requests and grant submissions. Our most important reason for keeping track of so many variables is being able to understand more about the individuals we support.

Interesting facts:

- On March 30, 2021, GHA supported 93 individuals: 25 females and 68 males
- If we classify by race, there were 13 African American, 77 White, 2 Multi-racial and 1 Asian American.
- Refer to the table below to see breakdown by age:

GHA Autism Supports: Age Demographics on March 30, 2021

Age Range	Number in Age Range	Percentage in Age Range
5-12	0	0%
13-18	6	7%
19-21	5	5%
22-30	28	30%
31-50	39	42%
51-65	14	15%
Older than 65	1	1%
Total	93	100%

SPRING

is in the air

THE WEATHER IS WARMER AND THE OUTDOORS IS
CALLING OUR NAMES!

