



MAY 2022

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of
GHA Autism Supports



Promoting Understanding During Autism Acceptance Month

GHA Autism Supports was excited to recognize April as "Autism Acceptance Month" with a number of activities geared towards providing information and resources for communities to be more aware of autism, promote acceptance, and be more inclusive in everyday life. "With the prevalence of autism in the United States rising from being 1 in 125 children (2010) to 1 in 44 children (2022), the need for information is greater than ever," shared GHA Autism Supports CEO Dawn Allen. "Forward-looking organizations can do much better than having an outdated, performative Autism Awareness Day. Celebrating autism acceptance and inclusion rather than simply awareness can not only improve the well-being of the autism community, but it can also amplify the strength and vibrancy of the autism culture all together."

GHA organizers worked with City of Albemarle officials to create an official Autism Acceptance Month Proclamation that was approved at the March 21st meeting of the Albemarle City Council. In addition, children's books highlighting the life of autism self-advocate Temple Grandin were donated to all of the Stanly County public library locations. The GHA Autism Supports Marketing Department designed and sold autism acceptance t-shirts and pushed out a plethora of information on all of the organization's social media outlets throughout the month. Additional highlights from Autism Acceptance Month are featured on page 2.

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We had lots of opportunities to engage with others during Autism Acceptance Month!

PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF ALBEMARLE

Adopted on the 21st day of March 2022

WHEREAS, we recognize the culture of autism as a unique way of being and strive to be an inclusive community equal for all citizens.

WHEREAS, autism may impact an individual's social, behavior and communication in a variety of ways and knows no racial, ethnic or social boundaries.

WHEREAS, we are dedicated to expanding possibilities in providing access to services and supports to enable individuals with autism to reach their fullest potential.

WHEREAS, we pledge to promote residential, health, employment and social opportunities for individuals of all abilities.

WHEREAS, we recognize the importance of empowering individuals with autism to live lives of dignity, self-determination and respect.

WHEREAS, we value and celebrate the gifts and contributions of our neurodiverse community members.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the City of Albemarle joins the United Nations and the US Government in proclaiming the month of April to be designated as

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

as a symbol of our commitment to create a culture of diversity, inclusion and equity for all members.



City of Albemarle Mayor Ronnie Michael presented a copy of the signed proclamation to GHA Autism Supports CEO Dawn Allen, Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri and Development Coordinator Lori Ivey at their March 21st City Council Meeting.



OUR T-SHIRTS WERE A HIT!



GHA Autism Supports donated 5 hardcover copies of "The Girl Who Thought in Pictures", the story of Temple Grandin to Stanly County Public Libraries to educate young children about autism acceptance. Pictured left to right are Sara Hahn, Children and Youth Services Librarian, Melanie Holles, Stanly County Public Library Director, Lori Ivey, GHA Autism Supports Development Coordinator and Beth Olivieri, GHA Autism Supports Chief Development Officer.



Don't Duck the Opportunity to Support Our Annual Fundraisers!

We will once again return to the Stanly County Family YMCA on Saturday, May 21, 2022 for our 14th Annual “Rubber Duck Derby” and Inaugural 5K Duck Waddle, both presented by Uwharrie Bank. Be a part of the fun as nearly 7,000 rubber ducks race to the finish line for prizes, including a \$3,000 cash grand prize! To kick off this year’s event, we’ve added a 5K Duck Waddle at 8:00 a.m., followed by the Rubber Duck Derby at 10:30 a.m. The purchase of rubber ducks and participating in the 5K Duck Waddle helps support 100+ individuals with autism and nearly 30 programs offered through GHA Autism Supports each year!

Purchase your ducks or register for our 5K at:
<https://www.ghaautismsupports.org/rubber-duck-derby-info-purchase/>.

We appreciate the support of the following sponsors for making this year’s event possible:
Presenting Sponsor – Uwharrie Bank

Platinum Sponsors – In Memory of Ellen Brooks and GHA Autism Supports Boards of Directors

Gold Sponsors – Dr. & Mrs. Robert Craft, Friendly Chevrolet-Buick, Nick & Bobbilynne Garner, Mike & Lesley Graves, Chet & Elaine Gurski, Linda Lawrence, MD of Albemarle Pediatrics, Stan & Annette Leggett, Sue Martin, Family of Kirby Moore, Dale & Sherry Poplin, Ann & Al Sadowsky, Dr. Russ & Susan Sharples, Southern Pharmacy Services, Bill & Diane Stevenson, and Gary Whichello of Southern Lighting Services

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Bronze Sponsors – Beane Swaringen & Company, PLLC, Bob & Gloria Bianchi, Larry & Martha Hupp, Craig & Ulla Skeffington, Stanly Appliance Parts & Service, LLC, Stokes Construction Company, Inc., and Storm Technologies, Inc.

Patron Sponsors – Anthony & Teresa Andrews, Thomas & Marie Southerland, and Stanly Dairy Distributors, Inc.

“We could not be more pleased with the way in which our community, corporate partners, families and many friends of GHA have supported our fundraising initiatives. In times of uncertainty with the pandemic and the changing landscape of Medicaid funding, we depend on the generosity and support of all of our stakeholders.”
--Beth Oliveri, GHA Autism Supports Chief Development Officer



GHA Autism Supports Receives High Marks from Accrediting Body



Over a three-day period in April, GHA Autism Supports was surveyed by CARF, an international accrediting agency in existence since 1966. CARF accredits more than 60,000 health and human services programs serving more than 15 million persons annually. Accreditation is a stringent peer review process that demonstrates conformance to a rigorous set of best practices and standards.

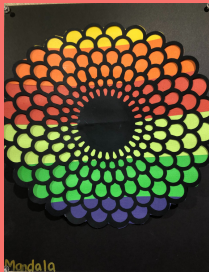
Many months of preparation went into the survey. GHA’s policies, employee records, individuals’ records, finances, performance improvement, individual rights, and many other governance areas were closely scrutinized. As part of the process, a number of individuals, families, staff, community members, members of the Board of Directors and administrative staff were interviewed. Surveyors toured the Central Office, and several of our sites and observed individuals at work and at home. Surveyors make many of the selections randomly, so we really appreciate everyone who made themselves available on short notice for interviews and tours.

Our survey was exceptional! The CARF team said GHA “had a lot to be proud of,” our staff were “fantastic,” recognized our parents as “very supportive,” and concluded that our programs and services are of the highest quality. Thanks to everyone for all the hard work in preparation for this accreditation, but more importantly, all the hard work that goes on day in and day out to make GHA Autism Supports an outstanding agency!

Pop Art Exhibit Highlights the Talents of Many



We were excited to have another successful GHA Autism Supports art exhibit at First Presbyterian Church in Albemarle this year. The theme for the exhibit, Pop Art, featured artwork with bold objects and bright colors. Pop art was first popular back in the 1950’s and was originated with Lawrence Alloway, a British museum supervisor that used the term to describe a new form of art with a modern feel. A big THANK YOU to our Creative Arts Director, Kyoko Rorie-Bruton and First Presbyterian Church for hosting the exhibit and supporting community arts.



Wilmington Residents Enjoy Newly Enhanced Outdoor Areas

Thanks to the support from the Landfall Foundation and R Kids Foundation, residents at both the Hollinger Home and McGee-Hudson Home are enjoying newly renovated outdoor spaces. With the recent pandemic, many community activities were limited, furthering the need for creative activities to occur in the homes. Volunteers from both organizations supported the plans to purchase weather resistant outdoor patio furniture, raised garden beds, permanent bird structures, new outdoor recreational equipment, grills, umbrellas and more. Residents are enjoying outdoor meal prep and dining, gardening and games from basketball, soccer to badminton! Community partners continue to play a key role in enhancing the programs that serve the 100+ individuals we support on an on-going basis.



**Many,
many
thanks!**

The Landfall Foundation and R Kids Foundation made these projects possible that have enhanced the quality of life for the people we support!

Enjoy the outdoors!



GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between November 15, 2021 and April 30, 2022. 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 Lynn Allard &
Julian Allard**

Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Dawn Allen

Merlin Amirtharaj

Paul & Brooke Childress

Larry & Thea Gardner

Chet & Elaine Gurski

Philip & Susan Hinely

Dr. Michael Taylor

In Honor of Mildred Andrew

Tom & Holly Norwood

In Honor of Aaron Andrews

Teresa Andrews

In Honor of Marlinda Bergdale

Laura C. Brown

In Honor of Mike & Sue Bohnsack

Heather & John Kilde

In Honor of Kayleigh Boyd

Priscilla Dollar

In Honor of Lee Boyd

& Kayleigh Boyd

Steve & Susan Boyd

In Memory of Ellen Brooks

Joan Bryan

Marshall & Nicky Dunlap

Shawnee Sundquist Dunlap

Wicki, Fletcher & Willi Dunlap

Frances Griffin

Ann G. Robinson

G. Smedes York

In Honor of Burrell Home Staff

Dale & Sherry Poplin

In Memory of Jackie Bynum

Marjorie Bynum

Larry & Thea Gardner

In Honor of Doug & Jane Clayton

Jody & Brenda Huneycutt

In Honor of Jason Cory

Steve Cory

Linda Varblow

In Honor of Cowan Home Staff

Jeff & Linda Stewart

In Honor of Dr. & Mrs. Robert Craft

Suzanne Surratt & the late Steve Surratt

In Memory of Michael Forrest

Rick & Penny Brown

Ryan & Jessica McIntyre

In Honor of

GHA Autism Supports Staff

Mike & Carla Shinn

In Honor of Greg Gurski

Joyce Palmer-Fortune

In Memory of Bud Hatley

Angela C. Mills

In Honor of JT & Janice Hinton

Philip & Brenda Julian

In Honor of "Iggy" & "Bowie"

Greg & Denise Taber

In Honor of Lori Ivey

Hawthorn Garden Club

In Honor of

Dr. Eric & Judy Johnsen

Doug & Susan Stokes

In Honor of James Jones

Linda Varblow

In Honor of Andrew Julian

Gordon & Ruby Johnson

In Honor of J. Henry Julian

Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Honor of

Dr. Jennifer N. Julian

Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Linda Lawrence

Angie Lowder

In Honor of Macy Allard

Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Ty LaRocco

Bud & Tammy Wrenn

In Honor of Charlie Lawrence

Winifred Helton

In Honor of Lindsay Leggett

John & Taryn Williams

In Honor of Travis Luxenberg

Jim Gibbons

In Memory of Jan Bailey Martin

John & Suzanne Mann

In Honor of Ryan McIntyre

Lyda Teer Mihalyi

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

In Honor of Justin Morrell

Eamonn FitzGerald
Jane FitzGerald
Marjorie FitzGerald
Tom & Patty FitzGerald
Kathleen Kern Baumann
Jack & Kathleen McMackin
Michael & Liz Morrell
Mary Ragsdale

In Honor of Maureen Morrell

Beverly Clark
Martha Webb

In Memory of Rob Morrell

Beverly Clark
Tom & Jodi Kelly
Laura Perrino
Mike & Linda Riley

In Honor of Fred & Holly Norwood

Doug & Susan Stokes

In Honor of Beth Olivieri

Hawthorn Garden Club

In Honor of Matthew Peele

Melanie Barfield

In Honor of Alberta & Roy Phibbs

Susan Doby Skolsky

**In Honor of Alexandra, Claire &
Will Phillips**

Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Honor of Matt & Ashley Phillips
Alexandra, Claire & Will
Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Memory of Mary Ann Ponder
Phil & Paula Ponder

In Honor of Jay Poole
Jane R. Williams

In Honor of Kyoko Rorie-Bruton
Larry & Martha Hupp

In Memory of David Sadowsky
Bea Pardo

In Honor of Lori Shue
Lyda Teer Mihalyi

**In Honor of Thomas & Marie
Southerland**
Paul Gerald, Jr.

**In Honor of
Heather Stafford**
Phillip & Brenda Julian

**In Honor of
Phillip & Miriam Stafford**
Phillip & Brenda Julian

In Memory of Ronnie Steed
Susan Steed

**In Honor of
Beth & Ron Swanner**
Kay Cochran
Doug & Susan Stokes
Suzanne Surratt

**In Honor of
Taylor Home Staff**
Larry & Martha Hupp

In Honor of Taylor Teague
Dr. Michael Teague

In Memory of Dillard Teer
Jim & Linda Shuler

In Honor of Emily Whichello
Owen & Mickey Calloway
Matt Ingram
Amy Whichello



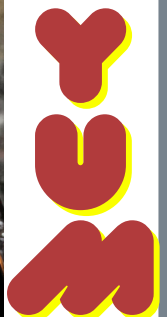
"Do-Nut" Miss Out On Our Famous Donuts and Cinnamon Rolls!



For decades, the Donut Dinette, a local breakfast hot spot in Albemarle, served up donuts and cinnamon rolls made fresh daily. Although the establishment is still serving breakfast, a decision was made last summer to discontinue making the famous donuts and cinnamon rolls. Second Street Sundries worked alongside Donut Dinette Owner, Doug Laxton, in purchasing the equipment and the rights to the secret recipe. Starting in December, and after several months of Stanly County residents awaiting the arrival of what has always been a community staple, Second Street Sundries proudly began serving up a tradition that so many have grown to love! Donuts and cinnamon rolls can be purchased individually or by the dozen, but you better get there early, as both sell out each day! We encourage customers to call ahead and place orders in advance to ensure you get your favorite sweet treat. Second Street Sundries is currently open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Our devoted bakers get very creative and love making specialty donuts that we highlight each week. Most recently, The Charlotte Observer featured the Second Street Sundries donuts as part of the CharlotteFive Reader's Choice Best Donuts in the Charlotte Region!



MADE FROM SCRATCH DAILY!



NC State Students Collaborate with GHA

During the Spring semester, GHA Autism Supports had an exciting opportunity to work with graduate students in the Master of Landscape Architecture Program at North Carolina State University. The graduate students were charged with developing site plans to enhance the outdoor spaces for individuals served at GHA Autism Supports. The students and professors visited Carolina Farms in February to educate themselves about GHA Autism Supports and its programs, as well as to have an opportunity to tour the property to better understand the landscape and facilities so they could address the needs and desires of individuals GHA serves. GHA Development Coordinator Lori Ivey was excited to participate in the final review of the graduate student's work on the campus of NC State University in April. "Their site plans were creative, thoughtful and utilized the natural landscape, while meeting a variety of needs for individuals with autism," shared Ivey. "We can't wait to get the plans in a digital format to discuss further and seek funding opportunities." Many thanks to course instructors Anna Grace FitzGerald and Ben Monette for selecting Carolina Farms as the focus of the course project. In addition, special thanks to GHA family members Maureen Morrell and Thea Gardener for participating in the final review poster session along with Lori Ivey on the NCSU campus.



Grants Received to Further Morrow Valley Farmstead Animal Therapy

As programming expands at GHA's newest endeavor Morrow Valley Farmstead, grants totaling \$8,000 were received to support animal therapy efforts with the residents.

Autism Speaks awarded a grant of \$5,000, while First Lutheran Church of Albemarle supported the program with a \$3,000 grant! Pastures are designed to encompass the facility to make it easy for the residents to interact with the animals.



2022 Board of Directors

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Granseur Dick
Brian Freeman
Dr. Phil Julian
Beverly Moore
Dr. Russ Sharples

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www.ghaautismsupports.org



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An easy way to support



Spring Fest=Fun For Everyone!



On April 22nd, individuals from the Stanly County programs gathered for lots of fun in the sun at Spring Fest at Carolina Farms. From a scavenger hunt, to chalk art, to enjoying hotdogs with all of the fixings, there were lots of smiles during the first group organized event post pandemic. Special thanks to Creative Arts Coordinator Kyoko Rorie-Bruton for organizing Spring Fest and to the many staff members that worked throughout the day running events, grilling and serving the food and supporting our individuals. What fun we had!



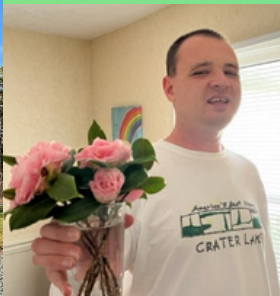
Fun Day



Over 25 youth and adult members of Vortex Church in Albemarle set their sights on sprucing up Carolina Farms in early April! The volunteers cleaned out the barn, prepared the greenhouses for more plantings, spread mulch and planted flowers around the property. We appreciate the commitment shown by this wonderful crew to give back to their home community!



HELLO SPRING



The promise of spring's arrival is enough to get anyone through the bitter winter!

--Jen Selinsky, American Author