

SEPTEMBER 2022

GHazette

Official Newsletter of GHA Autism Supports



Fun in the Sun at Wake the World

Nearly 20 individuals from our GHA Autism Supports family experienced the best of boating and water sports through Wake the World (WTW) Lake Tillery on July 14, 2022 creating memories that will last a lifetime! WTW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides watersport opportunities to youth and adults with developmental disabilities, as well as abused and neglected children and wounded warriors. Event organizers, Robin and Melissa Lemons, along with other volunteers work to secure boaters, in-kind donations, as well as monetary support to help make the day successful. Participants enjoyed food provided by local restaurants and businesses, as well as individual donations. The day would not have been possible without the dedicated community organizers and volunteers that gave their time and used their watercraft to create some incredible summer memories. Check out scenes from this year's event on page two. We look forward to WTW Lake Tillery 2023!



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WAKE the WORLD

SCENES FROM *Lake Tillery*



"Community partnerships continue to play an important role in the quality of life for the people we support. Wake the World Lake Tillery is an outstanding example of providing a meaningful experience to so many."

**DAWN ALLEN,
GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS
CEO**



GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between May 1, 2022 and August 31, 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 Jessica McIntyre
and the Albemarle Day
Program Staff**
Larry & Martha Hupp

In Honor of Caleb Stern
Jimmy & Shirley Bayne

In Honor of Emily Whichello
Gary Whichello

**In Honor of
Samantha Diane Messer**
Allison Crotty

In Memory of Eric Roberts
Leah Ajewole
Jo Alice Blyther
Mona Huffman
Bradford Simpson

GHA Welcomes Social Worker



Welcome
Araceli!

Contact information for
Araceli Mondragon-Casas:
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704-626-2881

GHA Autism Supports is pleased to welcome Araceli Mondragon-Casas as the new Social Worker at GHA Autism Supports. A Stanly County native, she began her role in early June. She earned an Associate's Degree from Stanly Early College and obtained her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC). After receiving her BSW, Araceli began her career at the Stanly County Department of Social Services as a Social Worker III in their Child Protective Services Unit. In addition, she worked for the Stanly County Health Department as a Social Worker/ Program Coordinator for a grant funded program. Shortly thereafter, Araceli returned to UNCC to obtain her Master of Social Work degree (MSW) and joined GHA Autism Supports as a substitute direct support trainer during this same time. As part of her graduate studies, she completed an internship with MindPath Care Centers in Charlotte, North Carolina. Araceli has spent an abundance of her first few weeks on the job connecting with countless GHA families to ensure that she's an integral part of the team committed to providing quality services. "I'm excited about working with GHA Autism Supports and look forward to developing many relationships within our organization with the people we support, along with their families," shared Araceli.

Residents Enjoy Meeting Scaly Friends On Reptile Day

Reptile Day was one of many exciting experiences offered this summer as residents ventured to Carolina Farms for a fun-filled time to learn about this vertebrate class of animals. Imagine feeding an African Sulcata Tortoise, holding a Bearded Dragon, or touching a Leopard Gecko. Although for some of the individuals we support and staff it was a little out of their comfort zones, it was a great opportunity to learn about these unique creatures. A big THANK YOU to reptile enthusiasts Kyoko Rorie-Bruton, Creative Arts Coordinator, and Jennifer Rorie-Bruton, Director of Residential Services, for planning such a wonderful event for everyone!



Manager Spotlight--Celebrating 25 Years of Service



Dedicated to
Excellence

Wincey
Marshall

Celebrating 25 years of service to GHA Autism Supports, Residential Manager Wincey Marshall began her career in 1997 as a direct care staff at the Robert W. Thompson Home in Albemarle where she remained for thirteen years. She was promoted to a Residential Manager of the 4th Street Home in 2008. During her career, she has also supported individuals and their families at the Shopler Home, Lowder Home, Doby Home, Starr Apartments, Hanks Home, Durrett Home and Carolina Farms Home #2. Currently, she serves as a Residential Manager of Starr Apartments, Durrett Home and the Lowder Home. When asked to reflect upon her time at GHA Autism Supports, Wincey shared, "I have enjoyed my different experiences that have served as a learning tool and helped me polish my autism skills." Wincey resides in Ansonville and enjoys walking for exercise, spending time with her family and loves cooking, especially cakes!

Medicaid Transformation Continues

Medicaid is transitioning from a fee-for-service model to Managed Care. Under Managed Care, the State has begun contracting with MCO's (Managed Care Organizations) which are paid a predetermined rate to provide all the services an individual needs. NC currently has the following MCO's: Alliance, Eastpointe, Partners, Sandhills, Trillium, Vaya.

Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental disabilities, such as the individuals served by GHA Autism Supports, will transition to Tailored Plans December 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.

Medicaid is scheduled to begin sending enrollment notices to guardians August 15, 2022. Please be on the lookout for this important correspondence. If you receive any Medicaid correspondence, please contact GHA's Quality Management department at 704-982-9600, ext. 119 before you take any action to avoid potential loss of funding. For more detailed information, visit [medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/transformation](https://www.medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/transformation).

TRANSITIONING
TO
TAILORED
PLANS





Cape Fear Summer Fun



Our Wilmington program has had no shortage of fun-filled activities this summer. From exploring the Riverwalk, to taking in a Sharks baseball game, to attending the "Under the Sea" Celebration Dance sponsored by Special Olympics, the people we support have enjoyed a variety of the best experiences the Cape Fear region offers! Special thanks to our dedicated staff that invest lots of time and effort in seeking out tons of opportunities!



Grant to Fund AED

GHA was recently awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Stanly County Community Foundation (SCCF) towards the purchase of an automated external defibrillator (AED) to be placed at the A. Jack Wall Home. The SCCF is a permanent endowment established in 1999 by local leaders to benefit a broad range of charitable purposes in Stanly County. The Foundation assists donors in making charitable gifts to the community, provides services for nonprofit organizations to create new or manage existing endowments and makes grants for new projects. An AED at each of these sites will allow staff to be better equipped should a cardiac arrest emergency occur. A previous grant was used to purchase an AED training device to ensure that all employees have the hands-on training needed should an emergency arise. Approximately \$40,000 in grants from the SCCF has been awarded to GHA since 2006, which also includes funding for the construction of the barn, greenhouse, therapeutic horseback riding ring, as well as funding for the kiln for the creative arts program. Grant writing continues with hopes to install automated external defibrillators at every program operated by GHA Autism Supports. "Installing these devices and training our staff to operate an AED is important because it strengthens the chain of survival should anyone experience a cardiac event," said Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri.



Quacking Good Time at the Rubber Duck Derby & 5K Duck Waddle

On May 21st, a few lucky ducks crossed the finish line for some fabulous cash prizes during the 14th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby! It was another record-breaking year, selling over 7,250 rubber ducks to support the many activities and programs at GHA Autism Supports. The morning festivities kicked off with the inaugural 5K Duck Waddle which attracted 40 participants! A big thank you is extended to the Stanly County 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 and "waddlers" next year!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

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GHA Autism Supports Board of Directors

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Linda Lawrence, MD - Albemarle Pediatrics

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Family of Kirby Moore

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Larry & Thea Gardner

Brenda & Philip Julian

South Central Oil & Propane

Jeff & Linda Stewart



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

\$75 WINNER - KENNETH HASTILL

\$100 WINNER - NANCY STITTGEN

\$250 WINNER - AL & ANN SADOWSKY

\$1,000 WINNER - SANDY HINSON

AND THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER IS...

\$3,000 - RAMON SUNDQUIST

Inaugural 5K Duck Waddle Top 10 Finishers

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1st - Patrick Morrell | 6th - Macy Wiseman |
| 2nd - Rhys Brace | 7th - David Orr |
| 3rd - Jennifer Hesley | 8th - Gretchen Kalamatas |
| 4th - Ritchie Hearne | 9th - Joey Collins |
| 5th - Beth Irvin | 10th - Michael Morrell |



Bronze Sponsors:

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- Anthony & Teresa Andrews
- Thomas & Marie Southerland
- Stanly Dairy Distributors, Inc.



Patrick Morrell, 1st Place!

Staff Satisfaction: A Meaningful Component of Agency Effectiveness

In June 2022, Quality Management conducted the annual GHA Staff Safety Survey. There were two forms of the survey. The Regular Survey consisted of ten questions and a space for comments while a Modified Survey was provided for most of the individuals who work for GHA. The Regular Survey was accessed via SurveyMonkey. To encourage completely honest answers, staff who responded in this way were promised anonymity.

The first survey question asked participants to Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree with the statement:

GHA maintains a safe, healthy environment for both staff and individuals.

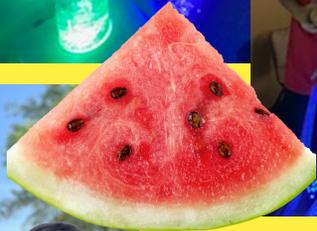
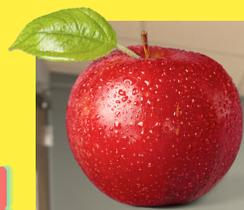
Strongly Agree or Agree was selected by 95% of respondents. The main conclusion from similar questions and open-ended comments: almost all staff believed their workplace was safe for themselves and for the individuals GHA serves. The Modified Survey was completed by eight supported individuals who work for GHA. This survey was comprised of eight Yes/No questions and a opportunity to make comments. Sample questions from this survey and the 2022 results are shown below:

2022 Modified Staff Safety Survey		
Questions and Results	Yes	No
Are seatbelts worn on the van?	8	0
Do you know where to go when weather is bad?	8	0

Quality Management concluded that survey results from both the Regular Survey and the Modified Survey provided a picture of GHA as a safe workplace with effective safety policies.



SUMMER ADVENTURES ARE THE BEST!



OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

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



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Improvements Made to Sensory Garden

We are so thankful for the generous donation made by Ramon Sundquist recently to help purchase new outdoor furniture, planters, and plants as well as funds to get the fish pond back in working order and stain the bridge. Ramon was the lucky winner of the \$3,000 grand prize at the Rubber Duck Derby. He graciously donated back his winnings allowing us to make the sensory garden at Carolina Farms more inviting and user-friendly for the individuals we support and their families. It is a beautiful space that provides numerous opportunities for sensory stimulation. We can't thank the Sundquist family enough for this generous donation that was used to make much-needed improvements! In addition, we appreciate the continued support of Vortex Church who provided volunteers to spread mulch and make the entire area more aesthetically pleasing!

Holiday Shopping Is Around the Corner--Have You Linked Your Amazon Account?

With the ease of online ordering, there is no better time than now to link your Amazon account to AmazonSmile, a program that makes it easy for customers to support their favorite charitable organizations every time you shop. Customers who visit AmazonSmile at smile.amazon.com will find the exact same Amazon they know and love with consistent pricing, selection and convenience, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to their favorite charitable organization. There is no cap on the total donation amount and you can select GHA Autism Supports from nearly one million organizations around the country.

When customers first go to AmazonSmile, you will be asked to select your favorite charitable organization from almost a million eligible organizations – and that's it! Once you have selected GHA Autism Supports on your first visit, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from any eligible purchases through AmazonSmile from that point forward, whether you shop just once or once a day. Please note that you must remember to type smile.amazon.com into the browser on your PC, tablet or phone when shopping!

