



DECEMBER 2022

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of
GHA Autism Supports

Duke Endowment Funds New Initiative

GHA Autism Supports is pleased to announce a grant in the amount of \$125,000 from the Duke Endowment to fund a whole-person integrative care approach over a two-year period. The focus of the initiative will be to integrate physical, behavioral and social health in an effort to maintain health and prevent and treat chronic diseases for the individuals that GHA serves. The pilot project will initially focus on the ten residents at Morrow Valley Farmstead during 2023, with plans to expand the whole-person care approach throughout the organization to at least 80 additional individuals with autism served by GHA Autism Supports during 2024. The program will include medical massage therapy, aromatherapy, chiropractic manipulations, yoga, and relaxation techniques. A large premise of the initiative will be to provide a number of alternatives to traditional medicine to enhance the quality of life and assist each individual in managing what can at times be limited coping skills in an effort to reduce their overall level of anxiety. In addition, through the implementation of a whole-person approach, the goal is to create a relaxing, sensory-rich environment where individuals will be exposed to sensory stimulation with hopes of reducing the common behavioral challenges often exhibited. The Duke Endowment has supported a number of programs at GHA over the years including the development of Carolina Farms. "The Duke Endowment has had a long-standing commitment to funding cutting edge health and human service programs throughout the Carolinas, and we are thrilled that their Board of Trustees has invested in a program impacting the people we support," shared GHA Autism Supports Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri.

This issue:

Grants to Fund New Programs
& Autism Friendly Holiday Tips

PAGES 01 & 02

Sharing Time & Talents

PAGE 03

New Sensory Experience in Albemarle &
GHA Partners with SCC

PAGE 04

Memorials & Honorary Gifts

PAGE 05

Local News Recognizes
Second Street Sundries

PAGES 06

Fall Fun Across the Organization

PAGE 07

Staff Recognition
& Tidal Wave Fundraiser

PAGE 08

'Tis the Season!

PAGE 09



Grant Received From Gaither Family Foundation

GHA Autism Supports is pleased to announce a grant from the Gaither Family Foundation through First Presbyterian Church in Albemarle.

Grant funds were used to purchase an iPad for listening to music and noise-canceling headphones that could be used with the iPad and other equipment. A variety of instruments were purchased including rain sticks, singing bowls, rumba shakers, and steel drums which will allow for soothing sounds and repetition. An updated music therapy program will enhance the experience individuals have while attending the day program at GHA Autism Supports in Albemarle. GHA Autism Supports has a longstanding relationship with First Presbyterian Church with the creative arts program and the annual art exhibit, however this is the first grant received from the Gaither Family Foundation.

We look forward to hearing the sound of music from the day program!



Autism and the Holidays

Helpful Tips from GHA Autism Supports
Psychologist Janet Banks



The holidays are a time for family and fun, but can also bring stress for individuals with autism. There often are changes in routines, extra people, transitions, noises, smells, etc. Some planning and preparation tips can help ease the tension:

- **Maintain typical routines when possible such as morning and bedtime schedules;**
- **Ensure favored items and sensory supports are readily available and have backups;**
- **Make plans to accommodate food preferences amongst the special holiday meal;**
- **If unlimited access to all the special food is an issue, plan for ways to limit access such as setting up in the opposite end of the house, being outside versus inside if weather permits, or placing the food in a contained area;**
- **Have chargers, backup batteries, wifi access, downloads, etc. for electronics;**
- **Find a quiet space away from people and festivities to reduce overstimulation;**
- **Keep holiday expectations realistic for the individual with autism even if that includes shorter visits or fewer activities;**
- **Have a quick escape plan in case things become chaotic or overwhelming;**
- **Look at your holiday plans through the eyes of your loved one with autism and incorporate what's meaningful to them to make it a happy holiday for everyone!**



S H A R I N G



Sharing Our Time and Talents In Our Communities

GHA Autism Supports has always benefited from the long-standing support of the communities we serve. During the month of November to coincide with the overall theme of gratitude, individuals at the Albemarle Day Program were very busy as they had an opportunity to give back! They have made: cards for service men and women who will not be at home for the holidays; puzzle piece crayons for a local kindergarten class; bookmarks for the Roy M. Hinson Cancer Center, Trinity Place & Spring Arbor long-term care facilities and the children's program at the Stanly County Library and they have delivered Meals on Wheels through the Stanly County Senior Center. A number of hand-painted "kindness rocks" were placed throughout the community.

The Wilmington day program, Port City Academy, has also been busy making an impact in the Cape Fear community. They have assisted the New Hanover County Fire Department by putting together packets. Individuals have walked dogs and helped tidy the kennels at Paws for People. In addition, many have helped sort, clean, and hang up clothes at the Foster Pantry, as well as assisted in stocking shelves at Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. They have enjoyed volunteering, working, and networking in the community.

"We have gained so much from spreading kindness."

—Jessica McIntyre,
GHA Autism Supports
Day Services Coordinator



Sharing is caring!



New Sensory Experience in Albemarle

Since its opening on August 19th, the new sensory lab at the Stanly County Public Library has been a huge hit! The library secured a \$15,000 Bright Ideas Grant through the State Library of North Carolina and purchased two Vecta Delight Mobile Sensory Stations equipped with multiple sensory devices such as lights and colored bubble tubes, along with fiber optic tails. In addition to the two stations, they also purchased a fiber optic carpet, liquid floor tiles, weighted puppies, weighted medicine balls and other fun sensory-rich items. Sensory lab outings have been a favorite on the monthly activity calendars. We appreciate the partnerships that we have in all of the communities in which we operate!



Partnering to Train Paramedics

Dee Thompson, Chief Quality Officer, and Janet Banks, Chief Innovations Officer recently presented at the Stanly Community College Locust campus' paramedic class taught by professor Jeff Drake. In addition to specific information about services offered by GHA Autism Supports, training was provided to the future paramedics on autism, the types of healthcare needs of our individuals, and how best to support our individuals in an emergency in their future job roles. GHA is very appreciative of this community partnership outreach opportunity and the interest and enthusiasm of the college students.



GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between September 1, 2022 and November 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 the Carolina Farms
Home #1 Staff
Teresa Andrews

In Honor of
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Craft
Dr. & Mrs. Eric Johnsen

In Honor of Jason Cory
Steve Cory

In Honor of Justin Morrell
Kathy Baumann
Tom FitzGerald
Nora Meldrum

In Memory of Karin Nazaruk
Ron & Roberta Simons

In Memory of Ina Rich
Ron & Roberta Simons



Queen City News Features Second Street Sundries on Hometown Visit

The team at Second Street Sundries works tirelessly to make the establishment a favorite for many in our community. Recently, Second Street Sundries was featured on Queen City News (FOX 46 WJZY) station's series of "Hometown Visits". They recorded several stories in Albemarle, and the café and coffee shop was featured as a part of this series. The segment highlighted the mission of providing jobs for individuals with autism at Second Street Sundries. A highlight of the feature was Alan Cremisi telling his story of coming to work at Sundries. "Being able to wake up every day and come to work and being able to provide for myself, it's something I never thought I'd be able to do this soon," shared Alan. If you missed the feature, you can visit:

<https://www.qcnews.com/queen-city-hometown/qc-hometown-a-job-for-those-with-autism-at-albemarle-coffee-shop/>



Congratulations to Second Street Sundries for receiving two awards as part of the Stanly News & Press Reader's Choice contest!



Make your holiday gift giving a cinch by purchasing gourmet foods from The Market at Second Street Sundries! Intersted in purchasing a gift basket, contact Lori Ivey at loriivey@ghainc.org.

Fall Fun Across the Organization

The people we support across the organization have all enjoyed sunny days and crisp fall temperatures the last few months. From the fall festival at Carolina Farms, a pumpkin decorating contest, visits to the pumpkin patch and costumes galore, fall fun was had by all!



Staff Celebrated at Fall Events

Lots of fun, food and festivities were organized this fall to recognize all staff for their service to the organization across North Carolina and especially to the people we support! Our GHA teammates were celebrated with gift card giveaways and Igloo insulated coolers made possible by the Graves Enrichment Fund. Our staff members continue to go above and beyond making a difference in the lives of so many!



WE
LOVE
OUR
TEAM!



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You shop. Amazon gives.

Simply visit smile.amazon.com to link!

An easy way
to support



Albemarle Tidal Wave Hosts Fundraiser

For the second year in a row, the Tidal Wave Auto Spa in Albemarle chose GHA Autism Supports as the Charity Day beneficiary on September 16th. Charity Day is a nationwide initiative that is hosted at the 120 locations across the country focusing on the special needs populations in the communities where they operate. This year's event raised \$2,900! We appreciate the support of our many families and community members that stopped by for a car wash and left generous tips!



Editorial Team

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



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'TIS THE SEASON

to be jolly



*From our family at
GHA Autism Supports to yours,
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!*