

SEPTEMBER 2023

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of GHA Autism Supports

Fun in the Sun at Wake the World

Nearly 45 individuals from our GHA Autism Supports family experienced the best of boating and water sports through Wake the World (WTW) Lake Tillery on July 13, 2023, 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. Local 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 a pizza lunch & and sweet treats at the sandbar provided by local restaurants and businesses, as well as individual donations. The day would not have been possible without the dedicated community organizers and



and volunteers who gave their time and used their watercraft to create some incredible summer memories. Check out page 2 to see lots of fun pictures!



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WAKE the WORLD

SCENES FROM Lake Tillery



"Collaborations and partnerships are essential components of our service delivery model. Wake the World Lake Tillery is an outstanding example of providing a meaningful experience to so many."



GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between June 1, 2023 and August 31, 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, x 125.

**In Memory of Mimi Denton,
Scott Denton's Grandmother**

Mike & Becky Alexander
Kathryn Allen
Ken Bryant, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Edwin L. Clark, Jr.
Kathy W. Hunnings
Ronnie & Katherine James
Mac E. Manning, Jr.
Lyda T. Mihalyi
Billy Pate
Judy W. Reynolds
Mr. & Mrs. James H. Ward III
Page T. Worthington

In Honor of Jonathan Martin

Janie Jaquier

In Honor of Emily Whichello

Amy Whichello
Gary Whichello



GHA Quality Management's Approach: Always Room for Improvement!

Every fiscal year, Quality Management implements projects to improve the quality of services. The most exciting project focused on launching and tracking a Quality Site Visits Program for all GHA service sites. GHA Autism Supports offers 19 residences and two day services programs. In the past, there were site visits that monitored quality service delivery. However, most visits to service sites were follow-ups to potential breaches in quality. The ambitious goal was to design a program that systematically monitored the quality of all service sites. Planning began in July 2022, the start of the fiscal year. Visits would not be scheduled; Direct Service Professionals would be notified when the evaluator arrived outside the site. Visits would be viewed as team efforts to have the best possible service site. The next step was developing a comprehensive evaluation form to be completed for all visits. The form noted such items as: (1) individuals are dressed appropriately, (2) individuals' hair and nails are neat, (3) individuals are engaged in activities, (4) privacy issues were handled appropriately, (5) staff voice tone and interaction were positive. Then, the program was launched by the Quality Management Program. The actual visits began October 2022 and were evaluated nine months later. After each visit, a summary of the visit was sent to the Site Manager, the Coordinator of Site Managers, Chief of Quality Management and others, as needed. If there were changes needed to increase site quality, plans were developed. All the data supported the Program's success. Over the course of nine months, 56 visits were made!



Quality is more than the absence of problems. Quality of services can always be improved.

GHA Quality Site Visits Program	
FY 2022-2023	Visits Made
2 nd Quarter	19
3 rd Quarter	20
4 th Quarter	17
2 nd 3 rd 4 th Quarter	56

GO TEAM GHA!



2023 Board of Directors

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Dr. Russ Sharples

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GHA Benefits From Uwharrie Bank Intern



We are thankful to have had Uwharrie Bank intern Michael Hickey to volunteer a few hours each week with GHA Autism Supports this summer. Michael, a rising Senior at Appalachian State University (ASU), completed a summer internship through Uwharrie Bank to learn more about the banking industry. Michael worked closely with John Fields, Director of Carolina Farms, on a variety of projects this summer at Morrow Valley Farmstead and Carolina Farms. We are so thankful to our community bank for sharing one of their summer interns weekly with GHA Autism Supports as part of their “Community Difference Maker” approach! We appreciate Michael selecting GHA as his community project focus, and we wish him the best of luck as he returns to ASU!

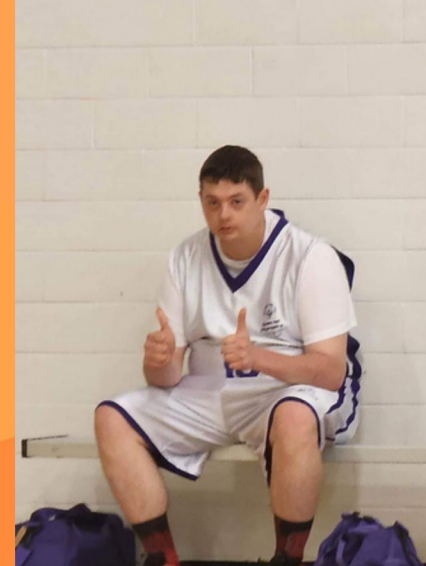
Be a difference maker!



Camp Puzzle Piece=Loads of Fun!

Summer 2023 was full of activities that kept us busy trying new things and cooled us off on pool days with sweet icy treats! That’s the mission of GHA’s very own “Camp Puzzle Piece”--having fun, all while learning new skills! Our field trips included bowling at Wood Leaf Lanes, Dan Nicholas Park complete with a picnic lunch, boating and water sports at Wake the World Tillery, skating at a local skate rink, Lazy 5 Ranch, Sno-Biz, and visiting a local sunflower patch. Fridays were all about activities at Carolina Farms. Our youngest residents savored every moment and celebrated summer coming to an end with a back-to-school cookout!





Athletes Compete at Special Olympics

Participants from GHA Autism Supports were part of a group of more than 1,300 Special Olympics athletes that participated in the 2023 Summer Games in early June in Raleigh, North Carolina. Athletes across the State participated in basketball, bowling, gymnastics, powerlifting, swimming and volleyball. Special congratulations to the following GHA participants who earned medals and ribbons:

- Michael Francis
 - Swimming
 - bronze medal in the 100y freestyle
 - 6th place in the 50y freestyle
 - silver medal in the 50y backstroke
- Maria Gurski
 - Bowling
 - 4th place ribbon in bowling singles
- Jonathan Martin
 - Swimming
 - bronze medal in the 100y freestyle
 - bronze medal in the 50y freestyle
 - gold medal in the 50y backstroke
- Temika Singletary
 - Bowling
 - silver medal in bowling singles
- Sam Poplin
 - Basketball
 - 4th place ribbon in 3-on-3 basketball team



Hands In the Dirt!

Gardening activities were a key focus this past summer to help us remain active and enjoy the outdoors! We had raised bed gardens and in-ground garden plots both small and large at a variety of locations - Second Street Sundries, Morrow Valley Farmstead, and Carolina Farms. We grew herbs, corn, cucumbers, peppers, squash, tomatoes, flowers, and more! Everyone did a great job watering, weeding, and harvesting. The most rewarding part was having fresh vegetables to use for tomato sandwiches and other dishes. A special thanks to the staff for assisting with setting up gardens, daily tasks, and using fresh vegetables for meals. We can't wait for cooler weather, and we are looking forward to starting our fall planting soon!



Music to Our Ears for 22 Years

Residents at Trinity Place in Albemarle, a long-term care facility owned and operated by Lutheran Services Carolinas, have enjoyed seeing a familiar face at the piano since 2001. With the exception of the time during the recent pandemic, Michael Francis has shared his love of music and his skilled piano playing for all to enjoy for 22 years. Michael was recently honored at the 2023 Trinity Place Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in Albemarle. "Everyone loves Michael," shared Trinity Place Life Enrichment Director Tracy Dean. "He knows each person's favorite song and ensures that he plays the favorites for all in attendance." Special thanks to Trinity Place for the ongoing community opportunity and to Direct Support Professional Anita Atkins for working alongside Michael for over two decades.



Celebrating Ten Year Work Anniversary

Since expansion to the Cape Fear region 13 years ago, many of the GHA Autism Supports residents have been fortunate to have secured meaningful employment opportunities. These partnerships have enabled employees to build valuable vocational skills, while building relationships with other employees along the way. Most recently, Chris Walsh is approaching his 10-year anniversary with O'Brien's Heating and Air in Wilmington! As part of being a valued member of the maintenance department, Chris ensures that their new location remains in tip top shape by cleaning throughout the facility. Locally owned, O'Brien's Heating and Air has been in operation for over 40 years and has invested a great deal in the Cape Fear non-profit community. Special thanks to O'Brien's for partnering with GHA Autism Supports, and hats off to Chris for a job well done!



Congrats Chris!

What's Up Wilmington?



SUMMER IS FULL OF ADVENTURES!



SUMMER FUN IS THE BEST!



OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

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

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