



GHAzette



GHA Autism Supports

ISSUE 01 2012

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From the CEO
Dawn Allen

*It is my hope that you have seen our colorful logo depicting our new name **GHA Autism Supports**. Amongst lots of other day to day operations, we have been hard at work with our rebranding campaign. As our expansion efforts have continued in Wilmington and as we look to educate families and stakeholders across the State, it is imperative that our name reflect the type of services that we provide. This has become so critical in the technology age in which we live. We must ensure that those needing to access our services can locate us on the internet. With the rebranding campaign, we will be giving our website a facelift, updating our organizational video, as well as sprucing up all of our print materials. Stay tuned as you see our exciting “new look” first hand!*

Speedway Children’s Charities Funds Expansion of Sensory Room

GHA Autism Supports recently received a grant in the amount of \$4,600 from the Lowe’s Motor Speedway Chapter of Speedway Children’s Charities in Concord. The funds will be used to purchase additional equipment, including a fiber optic light spray set and a bubble tube, for the sensory room located at the Day Services program. Both items will provide opportunities for gentle stimulation of the primary senses, while reducing tension in a quiet environment. Many individuals our organization supports are already enjoying the Hug Machine located in the sensory room thanks to a grant from the Speedway Children’s Charities received last year. The Hug Machine is a unique sensory device that applies gentle pressure, like a hug, when an individual climbs into the machine and activates the controls. The machine was invented by Temple Grandin, a well-known author and advocate, who has autism. She is a doctor of animal science, a professor at Colorado State University and a consultant to the livestock industry. When she observed the calming effects of a deep pressure machine for cattle, she tried it and found it relaxing, so she built one for herself. Her fascinating life story, including her invention of the Hug Machine, is documented in the Golden-Globe award winning HBO Movie “Temple Grandin.” Should you have additional questions about the sensory room, please contact Chief Professional Services Officer Janet Banks at (704) 982-9600, ext. 122 or janetbanks@ghainc.org.

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Anyone Up for Carolina vs. Duke on March 3rd?

Thanks to a very generous donation, GHA Autism Supports is auctioning off 2 tickets to the UNC Tar Heels/Duke Blue Devils basketball match up at Cameron Indoor Stadium at 7:00 pm on Saturday, March 3rd. These center court seats are fabulous to say the least! Enjoy yourselves in seats 17 and 19 in row C of Section 14. To join in on the bidding fun, visit www.stubhub.com and you can locate our tickets by providing the game information included above. What a great way to invest in the programs of GHA Autism Supports while watching this unforgettable rivalry unfold first hand at Cameron Indoor!



GHA Autism Supports P.O. Box 2487 Albemarle, NC 28002

GHA Autism Supports provides quality, community services to meet the unique needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Carolina Farms Corner

With the winter season upon us, there is still plenty of work to be done at Carolina Farms. A few highlights include the following:

- Eight hundred feet of garlic was planted in early December and will be ready for harvest in June.
- Soil samples were taken in early December from the gardens, strawberry plantings, the lower greenhouse and the back 12 acre field. The samples were sent to the State soil lab in Raleigh for general analysis. Another soil sample for the back 12 acres was sent to a private lab that will give a more detailed analysis and will provide organic nutrient recommendations.
- A soil conservationist from the National Conservation Resources Service made an initial visit in early January to create a plan to reduce erosion on the farm, establish field borders for wildlife and develop pollination areas to encourage bees and other beneficial insects.
- The lower greenhouse is being re-configured with raised beds to make it more accessible for the residents to plant, cultivate and harvest vegetables.
- The back 12 acres has been divided up into twenty 50' X 100' sections. Each section is approximately a tenth of an acre. The twenty sections have been configured with wide, 20 feet paths around and between the sections to allow easy access for the residents to enjoy hikes and golf cart rides.
- Work has begun for the 2012 Community Supported Agriculture program with seed orders and the development of an irrigation plan to get water to the back field. This year we plan to increase the size of our gardens, in order to more effectively provide quality and variety of produce to our shareholders and to local restaurants.

- Carolina Farms will receive 50-day-old chicks in early February to be incubated in the barn. A brooder has been built for the chicks, complete with a plexiglass window, which will allow the residents to view the chicks as they grow from tiny fluff balls to mature laying hens that are ready for the pasture.



- The finishing touches on the therapeutic walking track were completed thanks to a landscaping grant received from the Home Depot Foundation and will be utilized for special programming in an effort to increase exercise and activity opportunities for everyone.
- Therapeutic horse activities will resume, with more individuals involved in walking and grooming activities. The development of a therapeutic horseback riding program is also currently being explored and plans are to offer this activity as soon as possible.
- The development of a trail system at the farm is underway. The "Potting Shed Loop" is nearly complete, and plans for further trail development are already in progress.
- The addition of a third greenhouse to be located on the back of the property has been requested through a federal farming program. If awarded, construction will be completed by late spring.

Collaborations With TEACCH Continue



Janet Banks, Chief Professional Services Officer, served as a Trainer in July for classroom TEACCH training with the Charlotte TEACCH Center. Mary Barbara Staunton and Johanna Kroth attended one of the week-long autism trainings in Charlotte this year, as many GHA staff have previously done. Mary Barbara stated, "The training was extremely important for the work we do at GHA Autism Supports and gave me a new outlook in my understanding of autism." In August, Janet trained in Aberdeen, Scotland at the Linn Moor Residential School in collaboration with the Raleigh TEACCH Center. She also served as a TEACCH Trainer for residential training in Malmo, Sweden for the Solhagagruppen agency in September as part of a training team from the Greenville TEACCH Center. This service continued the organization's long-standing collaboration with TEACCH. "I feel fortunate to represent GHA Autism Supports and TEACCH in these trainings to further the knowledge of autism locally as well as internationally," Janet remarked.

Watch for our new website
coming soon!!!!

www.ghautismsupports.org

Upcoming Events

- April 21st – 2nd Annual Coastal Run/Walk for Autism in Wilmington**
- May 19th – 4th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby at City Lake Park in Albemarle**
- June 14th – "Golf Fore Autism" tournament at Cape Fear National at Brunswick Forest in Leland**
- August 27th – GHA Autism Supports Blood Drive to benefit Community Blood Center**
- September 9th – GHA Autism Supports Family Network Meeting**
- October 12th – Casino Night Fundraiser in Wilmington**
- November 3rd – GHA Autism Supports Gala Auction in Albemarle**
- January 13th - GHA Autism Supports Family Network Meeting**

Community Supported Agriculture

Program Continues This Summer

GHA is pleased to announce the continuation of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program at Carolina Farms for the 2012 growing season.



Essentially, a CSA is an opportunity for you to purchase a "subscription" to a farm's harvest. A limited number of shares are available and past shareholders will receive first right of refusal.

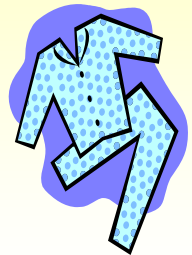
This growing season will be divided into two segments for shareholders including a summer session and a fall session. Weekly during each session, your investment could provide to you a dozen eggs and a variety of veggies free of pesticides. For the summer session, plans are underway to plant the following: basil, bok choy, cabbage, napa cabbage, chard, eggplant, garlic, green onions, kale, lettuce, peppers, hot peppers, yellow squash, tomatoes, zucchini, green beans, beets, carrots, sweet corn, cilantro, dill, onions, potatoes, radishes, spinach, white turnips, cucumbers, arugula, cantaloupe and watermelons. Our fall session will include the following: bok choy, cabbage, napa cabbage, chard, kale, lettuce, winter squash, beets, carrots, spinach, white turnips, arugula, sweet potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and collards. Pick-up times will be your choice of every Monday, Wednesday or Friday during each scheduled session. Through your investment in this project, you share in the risks of farming which may include, but are not limited to, poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. We are pleased to welcome Dean Mullis who has joined GHA Autism Supports this past fall as the Agricultural Specialist at Carolina Farms. Dean brings a wealth of experience in organic farming and is a featured columnist in *The Charlotte Observer*. To inquire about availability of CSA shares, please contact Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri at: 704-982-9600, ext.125 or betholivieri@ghainc.org.

GHA Autism Supports Receives Grant from Landfall Foundation

GHA Autism Supports received a grant in the amount of \$5,834 from the Landfall Foundation at a presentation ceremony on November 3rd at the Landfall Country Club in Wilmington. With the expansion of unique residential supports in the Wilmington area, our organization saw the need for wireless monitoring systems in two of the residential settings. The grant allowed for the utilization of these technological solutions to provide a secure environment, while allowing the individuals we serve to remain as independent as possible. The Landfall Foundation was formed in 1996 with a mission of providing funds to local non-profits for programs and projects that provide for the arts, education, and health and welfare in the greater Wilmington area. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised and contributed almost \$2,270,000 to non-profit organizations. In 2011, \$232,561 was distributed among 59 projects.

Pajama Gala 2011

Thanks to the generosity of so many, we are pleased to report that we have raised \$43,375 from the "Pajama Gala" mailing. We appreciate the philanthropic spirit of our donors as they made contributions to close out 2011!



 **Autism Society of NORTH CAROLINA** Annual Conference

The Autism Society of North Carolina (ASNC) will host its annual conference at the Hilton University Place in Charlotte on March 30th and 31st. Featured speakers for the 2012 event include: **Michelle Garcia Winner**, MA, CCC-SLP--presenting her nationally acclaimed Social Thinking workshop, *Thinking About YOU Thinking About ME*; **Dwayne Ballen**, father, sportscaster, and author of the blog, Journey with Julian-- discussing a father's perspective on autism; **Kathleen Dolbee** - mother, teacher, and advocate--presenting *Creative Ways to Teach Social Thinking and Social Skills for Home and School*; and **David Hamrick** and **Lindsey Nebeker**, adults with autism who were featured on *Good Morning America*--sharing their story, Living and Loving with Autism. GHA will have a booth on display throughout the conference. To register, visit www.autismsociety-nc.org or call David Laxton, ASNC Director of Communications at 1-800-442-2762, ext. 1111.

Coming Soon

WWW.GHAAUTISMSUPPORTS.ORG

Citizen of the Year

Congratulations to GHA Autism Supports Board Chair John Lowder! John was named "Citizen of the Year" at the Annual Meeting of the Stanly County Chamber of Commerce on January 30th.

CARF is Coming

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) is an internationally recognized accreditor of health and human services programs. GHA Autism Supports received a three-year accreditation for community integration and community housing from CARF in June, 2009. This is the highest rating a provider can achieve! To maintain this level of achievement, another survey will be conducted prior to June, 2012.



GHA Autism Supports submitted its *Intent to Survey* document to CARF for their review on December 28, 2011. We have requested that our "preferred two week window" for their site visit be from May 25 through June 7, 2012. In addition, we have started the *CARF QUIZ* with all direct support professionals in an effort to prepare our staff for what CARF will be looking for during the survey. We have also pulled together a team of nine professionals to gather examples of our good work for the *Program Standards*; our Management Team continues to do the same for the *Leadership Standards*.

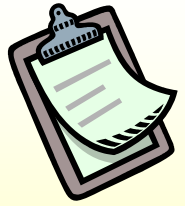
In 2012, we will continue our existing accreditations, and our CARF team will review a total of eighteen individual programs. The survey includes extensive documentation review as well as interviews with staff, individuals served, community stakeholders and family members. While the review team is on-site, direct observations will also be made at various GHA Autism Supports programs. Accreditation visits require a great deal of preparation, but these visits help us continue to develop the best possible services and supports.

Fun and Festivities!
Individuals and staff celebrated with food and fellowship at the annual Thanksgiving gathering on November 21st hosted at First Baptist Church in Albemarle.



College of Direct Support

The College of Direct Support is coming to GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS! This web-based series of training is designed for direct support professionals and others who assist individuals with disabilities. This volunteer participation program allows participants to connect with a nationally recognized set of skills and a clear career path, while emphasizing the important role guiding individuals we support toward developing richer, more fulfilling lives.



Family Support Network Maps Out Annual Activities

Families and staff of GHA Autism Supports gathered at Market Station in Albemarle on Sunday, January 8th for the first Family Support Network gathering of the year. Chairperson Terri Meyers presided as she mapped out areas of importance for the coming year. Five target areas were outlined in hopes of securing involvement by families on the following committees:

- **Education Committee** – plan educational programs that would be of interest to families
- **Beautification Committee**—plan work days to do small scale projects at the homes and at Carolina Farms
- **Staff Appreciation Committee**—plan appreciation events and ways to acknowledge staff members
- **Fundraising Committee**—organize events to raise money for Family Support Network sponsored activities (funds have provided dollars for staff gift cards during the holiday season and Christmas gifts for residents who need to be "adopted" during the holiday season) and support annual GHA Autism Supports fundraising activities through coordination of volunteers at such events
- **Legislative Committee**—organize ways to engage families in efforts to stay involved at the State legislative level

To indicate your interest in serving on one of the committees, please contact Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri at (704) 982-9600, ext. 125 or by email at betholivieri@ghainc.org. In addition, please mark your calendars for this year's Family Support Network meetings scheduled for 1:00 to 3:00 pm on both Sunday, September 9, 2012 and Sunday, January 13, 2013. Both meetings will be held in Albemarle and more details will be provided as plans are finalized.

On behalf of all of the employees of GHA Autism Supports, we would like to extend a special thanks to the Family Support Network for the gift cards we received during the holiday season!

Welcome



Ginger Scales Longino serves as the Development Director for New Hanover County and the surrounding area. In her position, Longino will be responsible for fundraising and marketing initiatives for the development and operation of services provided by GHA Autism Supports in Southeastern North Carolina. Longino has been long involved in non-profit marketing and event planning in the Wilmington area.



Sandra Morton joined our Finance Department as Financial Specialist in January, 2011. Sandra is a Certified Public Accountant with over 16 years of experience in the non-profit and healthcare industries. She is excited to be a part of a team who continually strives to expand its services to meet the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



Michael Vorherr joined our team in August as the Director of Quality Management. Michael brings over 25 years experience working with the developmentally disabled in a variety of roles in both the public and private sectors including direct service, case management, administration and consulting. He coordinated many of the State of North Carolina programs in the early 90's to seek out alternative supports and treatments for over 1,200 individuals residing at Broughton Hospital. For 15 years, Michael served as the Executive Director of a private non-profit group home and vocational service organization. Mike enjoys being a part of an organization that is truly dedicated to its mission of providing quality services and meeting the needs of the individuals we support and their families.



Mary Barbara Staunton, Staff Psychologist, joined GHA Autism Supports in February 2011. Prior to that time, she contracted psychological services with our organization through providing specialized case consultation. Mary Barbara brings a wealth of experience having served as a psychologist for over eighteen years. She provides supports to individuals residing at Durrett, Ridgecrest, Hanks, Lowder, Taylor, Cowan, and Holbrook Homes and Martin and Starr Apartments. In addition, she also works closely with both the Day Program and the Potting Shed program at Carolina Farms. Mary Barbara likes knowing that she is part of a team trying to make a positive difference in the lives of the individuals we serve.



Johanna Kroth, Director of Clinical Services, joined GHA Autism Supports in October, 2010. Johanna brings over 23 years of experience and is responsible for the development and implementation of all clinical services and programs for the individuals we serve, as well as the supervision of all clinical support staff. She finds that seeing individuals learn and grow is the most rewarding part of her position at GHA Autism Supports.



Ryan McIntyre joined GHA Autism Supports in October, 2011 as Clinical Coordinator for the residents at Carolina Farms. He is a graduate of Wingate University with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services. Ryan enjoys having the opportunity to connect with the individuals he supports on a daily basis. It is his personal goal to remain in close contact with the families in an effort to provide the most meaningful experience each and every day and to see them progress to achieve their personal goals.



Anita Terry joined GHA Autism Supports in November, 2011. Anita brings 12 years experience and is Clinical Coordinator for Thompson Home, Starr Apartments and Taylor Home. Anita stated she has received a heart felt welcome from the clinical team, managers and all the individuals.



J.D. Holbrook joined GHA Autism Supports in January 2011 as a Human Resource Assistant. He is a 2010 graduate of Appalachian State University with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Management. J.D. assists in the regional expansion of our organization's services and day-to-day human resource functions.

He enjoys meeting the individuals and looks forward to the future of GHA Autism Supports.



Dean Mullis, Agricultural Specialist, joined GHA Autism Supports in November, 2011. Dean brings over 23 years of experience in organic farming and is responsible for the planting, cultivating and harvesting of all of the gardens at Carolina Farms. In addition, he maintains the greenhouses, barn area and cares for all of the animals. Dean is currently drafting a long range plan for the development of Carolina Farms including the acreage in the back part of the property.

2nd Annual Coastal NC Run/Walk for Autism

GHA Autism Supports and the Autism Society of North Carolina (ASNC) are partnering again to host the 2nd Annual Coastal NC Run/Walk for Autism on Saturday, April 21st at the TrySports Event Field at the Mayfaire Town Commons in Wilmington. The fundraising effort also serves as an awareness event and includes a 5K race with competitive and non-competitive divisions, as well as a 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk and Kids Dash. Last year, well over 325 runners and walkers participated in the event and donations exceeded \$34,000! Most importantly, this event is an opportunity to educate the Cape Fear area about both organizations and the supports we provide to individuals with autism and their families. Registration will begin at 7 am with the 5K beginning at 8:30 am, followed by the 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk and Kids Dash. The event fee is \$25 and packet pick-up is scheduled for Friday, April 20th from 4:00-7:00 pm at TrySports. Please visit our interactive website at www.coastalncrunwalkforautism.com for registration information. For additional information, please contact Wilmington Development Director Ginger Longino at vlongino@ec.rr.com.



United Way
of Stanly County



GHA, Autism Supports
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