



GHAzette

FALL 2014

GHA OFFERS THERAPEUTIC RIDING

GHA is pleased to partner with Kelly Bovi, a PATH International Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, and Jericho's Gift Therapeutic Riding Center to bring equine and horseback riding activities to Carolina Farms. This unique program allows participants to get up close and hands-on with our therapy horses, and includes all aspects of horsemanship including things such as basic anatomy, grooming, tack education, saddle cleaning and horseback riding. Therapeutic riding uses equine assisted activities for the purpose of enhancing a person's cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being. The horse's gentle rhythmic movement helps increase the balance, muscle control and strength of riders. In addition, horseback riding motivates participants to increase their levels of concentration, patience and discipline. Lessons are currently being offered to just the individuals that GHA currently supports, but plans are underway to expand the offerings to members of the community.



2014-2015

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Governor Proclaims Direct Support Professionals Week

The week beginning September 7, 2014 was designated by the U.S. Senate as the seventh annual "National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week." North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory signed a proclamation in support of and in celebration of Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week in our State. Direct support professionals (DSP) provide essential daily support to enable people with disabilities and their families to live healthy, community-inclusive lives. Working tirelessly, these compassionate supporters of people with disabilities bring us all closer to seeing the promises of the Americans with Disabilities Act realized. As part of the Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week celebration, GHA Autism Supports honored all direct care staff by providing a meal for them at each site during the month of September.



On October 9, 2014 at the Embassy Suites in Cary, NC, hundreds of direct support professionals from across the State attended a daylong National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) training and conference. Each GHA site was asked to nominate one direct support staff member to be entered into a random drawing for a chance to represent GHA Autism Supports at the NADSP conference. Staff chosen in the random drawing to represent GHA were Dora Watkins, Derek Hill, Jason Polk and Noelle Page. Along with Staff Development Coordinator Beth Irvin, these direct support professionals traveled to Cary on Thursday, October 9 to take part in this exciting learning and networking opportunity. GHA appreciates the hard work and dedication of each of our direct support staff and is proud to be represented by these outstanding employees.



GHA Autism Supports Staff providing support each and every day!



Hooray for Walgreens!

In an effort to highlight the growing need for concern and awareness about autism, GHA Autism Supports recently partnered with 14 Walgreens locations in the Coastal NC area. Customers were given the opportunity to purchase a puzzle piece for a \$1 donation. We appreciate the support of the 14 coastal area Walgreens locations

for raising \$2,386 for GHA Autism Supports! Proceeds will benefit the programs operated by GHA Autism Supports in the Wilmington area.

GOING FOR THE GOLD—INDIVIDUALS WIN MEDALS AT STATE SPECIAL OLYMPICS EVENTS

More than 1,400 athletes were in Raleigh and Cary on May 29-31 to participate in the 2014 Special Olympics North Carolina Summer Games. In total, 45 of those participating went on to represent North Carolina in New Jersey at the USA Games in June. The



games this year comprised six events: aquatics, powerlifting, volleyball, softball, gymnastics and athletics. More than 38,000 adults and children with intellectual disabilities are trained by Special Olympics North Carolina all

year long.

GHA Autism Supports has had a rich history with Special Olympics for a number of years. Participants supported by GHA have excelled in bowling, basketball, soccer, track and swimming to name a few. Congratulations to the following participants:

Michael F. - Gold medal in the Aquatics 4X25 Freestyle Relay, Bronze medal in the Aquatics 50y freestyle, 8th place in the Aquatics 50Y backstroke and Silver medal in the Aquatics 25y freestyle.

Curt G. – Bronze medal in the Athletics 25 M walk, 4th place ribbon in the Athletics softball throw and 5th place ribbon in the Athletics standing long jump.

Jonathan M. – Gold medal in the Aquatics 4X25 Freestyle Relay, Gold medal in the Aquatics 25y freestyle and Silver medal in the Aquatics 50y freestyle.

John P. – Gold medal in the Aquatics 25y backstroke, Gold medal in the Aquatics 50y freestyle, Gold medal in the Aquatics 4X25 Freestyle Relay and 4th place ribbon in the Aquatics 25y freestyle.

Chris W. – Bronze medal in the Aquatics 25y backstroke, 4th place ribbon in Aquatics in the 25y freestyle and 4th place ribbon in Aquatics 4X25 Freestyle Relay.



Meet GHA Staff

Jennifer Sykes, Director of Nursing, has 11 years experience as a registered nurse, and her experience ranges from geriatrics and long term care to acute care settings with hospitals and the travel nursing industry. Jennifer is a 1998 graduate of UNC-Charlotte with a Bachelors of Arts in Anthropology. After volunteering at the Schiele Museum in Gastonia, NC for over a year, she soon realized she wanted to return to college and complete her passion; nursing. She received her nursing degree from Presbyterian School of Nursing in 2002, and began working for Presbyterian Hospital in their inpatient oncology/hematology/hospice units. She then transitioned into the travel industry completing a broad range of inpatient care from medical-surgical, orthopedics, and “step-down” units. Her most recent work has been as a nursing supervisor. She can be reached at 704-982-9600, ext. 132 or by email at jennifersykes@ghainc.org.



Melissa Rivera, Director of Clinical Services, graduated from Gardner Webb College with a BA in Sociology in 1992. She attended the University of North Carolina in Charlotte and received her Masters in Special Education in 2000. Melissa has had exposure and direct involvement with the Intellectual Developmental Disabilities population, federal and state waiver support services (ICF & IID), children, aging population, as well as a member of various state affiliated associations. She has worked in this field for over 22 years in various roles, which have developed her skills which include clinical, medical knowledge, management, team building and leadership roles. Melissa is committed and is passionate about working with individuals with developmental disabilities. In her leisure, she enjoys camping, scrapbooking, riding motorcycles and spending time with her family. She can be reached at 704-982-9600, ext. 135 or by email at melissarivera@ghainc.org.



Brenda McNatt, Nurse, received her LPN from Conway School of Practical Nursing in South Carolina. Her work experience began on an Alzheimers Unit at Conway Nursing Center and then transitioned to the Med/Surg floor at Conway Hospital. Brenda moved to Albemarle in 2002, and worked for Cabarrus Family Medicine for about 5 years and then took a weekend Baylor position in Long Term Care so that she could continue her nursing education and become a Registered Nurse. Brenda also completed an LPN to RN bridge program and received her ASN in 2009. Brenda's interests and hobbies include reading, gardening, DIY projects, Toll painting (folk art), camping and riding her Harley, to name a few. She can be reached at 704-982-9600, ext. 132 or by email at BrendaMcNatt@ghainc.org.



HUGE SUCCESS AT “GOLF FORE AUTISM”



Twenty-one teams gathered at Cape Fear National Golf Club at Brunswick Forest in Leland, NC for the 3rd annual *Golf Fore Autism* tournament on May 19th presented by Anlyan & Hively. The morning began with muffins, fruit and coffee as golfers prepared to have some competitive fun on what turned out to be a beautiful spring day. Awards were given for the top 8 teams while all in attendance enjoyed a southern style pig pickin’.

Over \$28,000 was raised to support expansion efforts in the Wilmington area. This event would not have been successful without the support of sponsors including the following: Anlyan and Hively, **PRESENTING SPONSOR**; Angel Oak Capital Partners, Barry and Janet Burkholder, CAIS Group, Jack and Martha Erdody, Fidelity Investments, First Trust Portfolios LP, Hartford Funds, Hatteras Funds, James Alpha Management, JAT Capital Management, JP Morgan Asset Management, McKinley Building Corp., Kathleen Meyerson, Natixis Global Asset Management, Ogden Car Wash, LLC, Oppenheimer Funds, Orchard Square Partners, LLC, Penton Development, Inc., Prudential Investments, LLC, Schaeffer BMW Inc., Security Benefit, SunAmerica Mutual Funds, The Little Bank, Touchstone Investments and VantageSouth Bank, **SPONSORS**; Active Entertainment, Apple Annie’s Bake Shop, Artisan Partners, Bald Head Island Club, Bald Head Island Limited, LLC, Baron Capital, Beau Rivage Golf & Resort, Cape Fear Camera Club, Cape Fear National Club, Carolina National, Charles Schwab & Co. Inc., City Club at de Rosset, Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Cool Sweats, Edible Arrangements and Fred Alger & Company, Goldman, Sachs & Co., Keri Hartmann, Jim and Lesley Hively, Lockwood Folly Country Club, Magnolia Greens, Ocean Ridge Plantation, Pine Valley Country Club, Port City Java, Protocol, Queensboro Shirt Company, RA Jeffreys, Realty Capital Securities, Reeds Jewelers, Jodie Rippy, River Landing, St. James Plantation, Elizabeth Singletary and Janet Wilson; **DONORS**. Special thanks to Bill Anlyan, Jim Hively, Ginger Longino, all of the business associates at Anlyan & Hively and the other numerous volunteers whose tireless efforts added to the huge success of this event!

*Make Plans to Get Groovy at
That 70’s Auction*

The GHA Auction Planning Committee has been hard at work securing items for the agency’s next auction fundraising event. The event scheduled for 6:00 pm on Saturday, November 15th at the Stanly Regional Family and Education Center will feature spectacular silent and live auction items, groovy music and fabulous food provided by Chef Tim and his special events staff. Are you willing to sponsor an item or would you solicit a business to donate an auction item? If so, please contact GHA Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri at (704) 982-9600, ext.125. Invitations will be mailed under separate cover in mid October. The cost of tickets will be \$75 for couples and \$40 for individuals. A complete list of items will be available on our website on October 15th. In addition, please “like” GHA Autism Supports on Facebook where we will feature pictures and descriptions of items up for bid as well in the coming weeks. Be there or be square!

Fun Day

*Stanly County Special Olympics
YMCA Park - September 26, 2014*

SIXTH ANNUAL GHA RUBBER DUCK DERBY RAISES OVER \$30,000

Hundreds gathered at the Stanly County Family YMCA Park in Albemarle on Saturday, May 17th for the 6th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby, which raised a record \$30,000. At 1:00 pm on event day, 5,335 rubber ducks were dumped from buckets by GHA volunteers and staff members as those in attendance watched excitedly inside the YMCA Olympic-size pool facility. A \$5,000 prize package was a stake which included \$4,000 in cash and a number of gift certificates. An individual that wished to remain anonymous was the proud owner of the “Lucky Duck”, the first duck to cross the finish line, winning \$3,000 cash. Rick Lowder won \$1,000 cash as the owner of the “Runner Up Duck”. Other winners included the following: “Hungry Duck” owner John Olivieri took home a \$100 Harris Teeter gift card courtesy of Harris Teeter of Albemarle; “Yummy Duck” owner Buck Hill enjoyed a \$50 Dairy Queen gift card courtesy of Albemarle Oil Company; “Dining Duck” owner Andrew Allen picked up a \$50 gift certificate courtesy of Off the Square restaurant at 114 South Second Street in Albemarle; “Sudsy Duck” owner Nancy Teer won a \$50 gift certificate to Sun Plaza Car Wash & Lube; “Keep Me Movin’ Duck” owner John Burress won a \$50 BP gas card courtesy of Albemarle Oil Company and “Thrill Seeker Duck” owner Martha Hupp won two tickets to Carowinds courtesy of Cedar Fair Parks. Prior to the rubber ducks taking the plunge into the pool, those in attendance took advantage of lots of free family-friendly fun including inflatables sponsored by All 4 Fun Inflatables of Albemarle, numerous children’s games, balloon art by Dr. Colin Moffett, face painting by Vicki Galloway and a visit from the #18 Skittles Showcar, courtesy of Joe Gibbs Racing. Representatives from the Albemarle Police Department, the Albemarle Fire Department, Stanly Regional Medical Center, NC Forestry Service and the Stanly County Family YMCA were also on hand with activities for children.



Exchange of Ideas With International Visitors Continues



Ms. Yuko Nakamura, who serves as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from Chiba, Japan, toured GHA programs in early summer. "I am very impressed with the environment at the homes and appreciate receiving information about vocational training," commented Ms. Nakamura.



GHA was excited to meet with professionals from Denmark in early summer to discuss the long-term care needs of aging individuals with autism. Future collaborations will continue to study the issue further.



A group of autism professionals from Kawasaki University in Japan toured several sites in early August. Affiliated with TEACCH at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, this tour group is one of many that have visited GHA programs over the last decade in hopes of taking knowledge and practices back to their native countries.

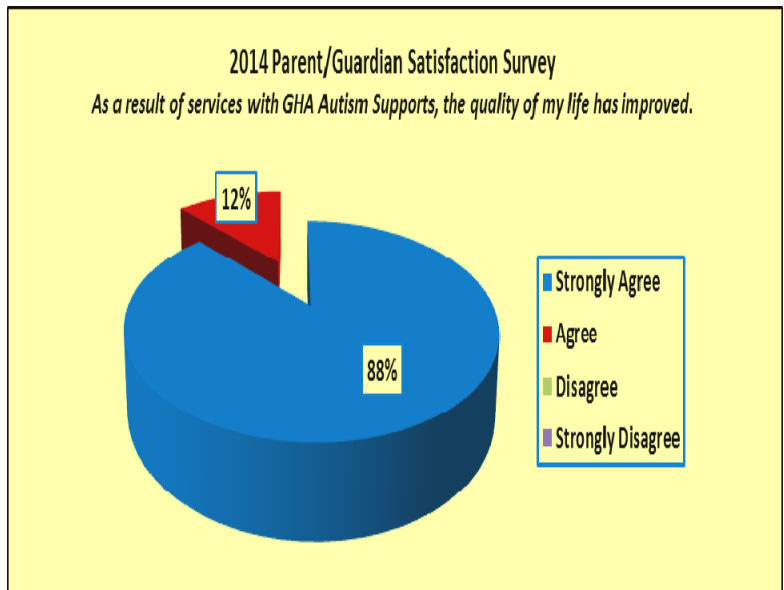


A new entrance sign welcomes families and visitors to Carolina Farms as the program celebrates its 11th anniversary. Special thanks to the anonymous donors that made this project possible!

STAFF APPRECIATION AND WELLNESS DAY COMING ON DECEMBER 10TH!

The 2014 Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Survey

Our annual Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Survey was mailed to every parent and guardian, with a return rate of 53%. Thanks to all who responded with many positive comments as well as useful suggestions. One essential question focused on overall parent/guardian satisfaction: *As a result of services with GHA Autism Supports, the quality of my life has improved.* All parents and guardians selected *strongly agree* or *agree*; none of the survey participants chose *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The chart below summarizes our results:



GHA Autism Supports will become a "Tobacco Free Workplace" starting January 1, 2015. Tobacco of all kinds/forms and tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, smokeless tobacco and electronic cigarettes will not permitted.