



# GHAzette

MARCH 2015

## Grand Opening of Second Street Sundries

Despite the frigid temperatures, a large crowd gathered on January 19<sup>th</sup> for the grand opening of Second Street Sundries. The festivities began at 5:00 pm with the official ribbon cutting, followed by "Business After Hours", a networking event sponsored by the Stanly County Chamber of Commerce. Located at 221 North Second Street in downtown Albemarle, Second Street Sundries, owned by GHA Autism Supports, officially opened on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Through a management agreement with Sodexo, a leading provider of sustainable, integrated facilities management and food service operations, the café and coffee shop serves a wide variety of moderately priced breakfast and lunch food items for dine-in or carry out. In addition, the contract with Sodexo allows Second Street Sundries to participate in the We Proudly Serve



Starbucks® coffee program. The agreement allows the establishment to serve a variety of Starbucks® coffee products including brewed coffee and espresso beverages. Sodexo currently contracts with Pfeiffer University to provide all campus food services and the partnership helps to facilitate Pfeiffer's continued involvement in the greater community.

The mission of Second Street Sundries is to provide employment opportunities for the individuals with autism that GHA currently supports. Currently, two individuals with autism have been hired, with another completing the training module. "The whole menu is like trying to tackle a horse, but I kind of got a hang of it within a week and I've just been pumping out drinks ever since," commented Alan, one of the baristas at Second Street Sundries.

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### RUN • WALK • DONATE • SPONSOR • CREATE A TEAM

GHA Autism Supports and the Autism Society of North Carolina (ASNC) are partnering again to host the 5th Annual Coastal NC Run/Walk for Autism on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Try Sports Event Field at the Mayfaire Town Center 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. 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 7:00 am with the 5K beginning at 8:00 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 24<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Try Sports event field. Please visit our interactive website at [www.coastalncrunwalkforautism.com](http://www.coastalncrunwalkforautism.com) for registration information. For additional information, please contact Chief Development Officer Beth Olivieri at [betholivieri@ghainc.org](mailto:betholivieri@ghainc.org).



[www.CoastalNCRunWalkforAutism.com](http://www.CoastalNCRunWalkforAutism.com)

Saturday, April 25, 2015

Wilmington • Mayfaire Town Center • 8 am

5K Race • 1-Mile Run/Walk • Kids' Dash

Proceeds will fund GHA Autism Supports in the Coastal NC area and local programs of the Autism Society of North Carolina.

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

## CSA Shares Now Available for Purchase at Carolina Farms

Would you be interested in enjoying the freshest of produce without all of the hassle of working in a hot garden all summer long? GHA is pleased to announce the fifth offering of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program at Carolina Farms for the 2015 summer and fall growing seasons. Essentially, a CSA is an opportunity for you to purchase a "subscription" to a farm's harvest. A limited number of shares are available from the Carolina Farms Community Supported Agriculture program for an investment of **\$400.00**. **All payments are due no later than Friday, May 2nd**. Feel free to drop your payment by our office between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm on Monday through Friday or mail your payment to P.O. Box 2487, Albemarle, NC 28002. Cash, checks and all major credit cards are accepted. Additional details:

**12-Week Summer Session (May 13th - July 31st)**  
**4-Week Fall Session (November 4th- November 25th)**

Plans are underway to provide the following during the CSA season:  
*cucumbers, sweet corn, popcorn, napa cabbage, green cabbage, lettuce, celery, arugula, squash, tomatoes, fresh herbs, toscano kale, turnips, cantaloupe, watermelon, rainbow kale, Swiss chard, beets, radishes, garlic, broccoli, brussel sprouts, lima beans, soybeans, peppers, eggplant, potatoes, sweet potatoes, free roaming eggs and fresh flowers.*

Each week your investment could provide to you a dozen eggs and a variety of veggies **free of pesticides**. Your subscription will give you access to **both sessions** allowing for a larger variety of produce from both the summer and fall growing seasons. Pick-up times will be at our office on North Second Street in downtown Albemarle from **Noon to 4:30 pm on your choice of Tuesday or Thursday of each week within each session**. Feel free to contact **Beth Olivieri at (704) 982-9600, ext. 125 or by email at [betholivieri@ghainc.org](mailto:betholivieri@ghainc.org) if you have additional questions or to make your reservation**. 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.



### Another Duck Derby Coming Soon!

Don't "duck" the opportunity to attend the GHA Annual Rubber Duck Derby scheduled for Saturday, May

16th at the Stanly County Family YMCA Park starting at 11:00 am! Materials will be mailed out in the coming weeks outlining the wonderful array of prizes. Special thanks to Albemarle High School student volunteers Caroline Brown, Riley Graeff, Mason McGowen and William Oke for sorting over 5,000 rubber ducks to get us ready for our big event day!

GHA Autism Supports: Number of Individuals Served by Fiscal Year  
 Fiscal Year 2007-2008 through Fiscal Year 2013-2014



### Board of Directors

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Dawn Allen, CEO

## GOING FOR THE GOLD STATE SPECIAL OLYMPICS BOWLING EVENTS



Bowling has become such a popular sport amongst Special Olympics athletes that the state-level competition was divided into three regional one-day events. Nearly 900 athletes total competed at the state-level in 2014! Several individuals supported by GHA competed in the central tournament held in Greensboro on December 7<sup>th</sup>. 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. and Maria G. – Bowling Doubles, **Gold Medal**

Jonathan M., John P., Clint P. and Josh W. – Members of the “Stanly Dudes” Bowling Team, **Silver Medal**

Adam H. – Bowling Singles Ramp, **Gold Medal**

Jayman H. – Member of the “Stanly Spare Parts” Bowling Team, **4<sup>th</sup> Place Ribbon**



## Staff Spotlight-Ameshia Smith



“When I think what GHA is to me, stability comes to mind,” shared Ameshia Smith. Ameshia has **22 years of service** with GHA Autism Supports and has served in numerous capacities including direct care, as a team leader and as a teacher assistant. She currently supports an employee at Second Street Sundries as a job coach. “It is very rewarding to work one on one with people and provide the stability needed so they can live in the community and watch them thrive. I have built many bonds over the years.” She has been happily married for 24 years to Charles Smith and they have two children Anisha and Kierre and one grandchild Syni. Ameshia’s hobbies include reading, crocheting, watching movies and spending time with friends and family.

## SUCCESS AT “THAT 70’S AUCTION”!

On Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, over 250 gathered at the Stanly Regional Family and Education Center for “That 70s Auction” where guests savored the groovy cuisine while pursuing over 150 fabulous items up for bid! Auction planning committee members, including Dawn Allen, Jamie Beinkampen, Sue Bohnsack, Janet Breeding, Tonia Camiña, Tonia Diggs, Denise Drye, Tonda Forrest, Carroll Holbrook, Martha Hupp, Gina Martin, Lyda Mihalyi, Clay Morrell, Maureen Morrell, Beth Olivieri, Melissa Rivera, Brinn Smith, Mary Stokes and Ashley Tyner, worked tirelessly for months securing items and sponsorships and providing those final touches in creating extraordinary displays the day of the event. Emcee Rob Morrell and Auctioneer Tom McInnis energized buyers and helped to set the tone for the evening as families and friends of GHA gathered at the organization’s fourth run of its signature fundraising event. The gala auction raised over \$50,000 to support GHA’s initiatives to provide quality services for individuals with autism. A very special thanks goes to the following sponsors whose support of “That 70s Auction” made the event a tremendous success: Presenting Sponsor: Tim Marburger Honda; Platinum Sponsors: Camiña Design & Construction, Cohen Construction, Forrest Fence, Hudson Fence Supply and Uwharrie Bank; Gold Sponsors: Albemarle Pediatrics, Professional Propane, South Central Oil Company, Southern Pharmacy Services, Wal-Mart of Albemarle and Wells Fargo; Silver Sponsors: Albemarle Tire & Retreading Co., Bear Insurance Service, Crook Motor Company, and Davidson, Holland & Whitesell & Co., PLLC; Bronze Sponsors: Deek Mechanical, East Albemarle Xpress Lube, SimplyHome, Stanly Appliance Parts & Service, LLC, Storm Technologies, Inc.; Media Sponsors: Stanly News and Press and WSPC/WZKY Radio. The next gala event is slated for the fall of 2016.





### Morrell Receives Distinguished Service Award

*(Thank you to the Autism Society of NC for the following article. The complete article can be found in the ASNC blog at <https://autismsocietyofnc.wordpress.com/>)*

Maureen Morrell, chapter director for the Autism Society of North Carolina, was awarded the Helen C. "Holly" Riddle Distinguished Service Award by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities on November 19th in Cary.

Morrell has advocated for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families for more than 30 years. Morrell, who began her working life as a nurse, was motivated to advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities after the birth of her first son. Justin, now 36, who is a resident at Carolina Farms.

"The very fabric of Maureen's life has been to mitigate the disabling aspects of autism yet all the while recognizing, and yes, even celebrating, the positive attributes," wrote Janet Breeding in her nomination who currently serves as a LME-MCO Liaison with the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. "Maureen is able to beautifully blend the two (research and personal experience) to help meet the needs of so many as she is constantly tapped by others for her guidance."

Morrell said she was honored to be nominated by her colleagues, who inspire her. She also expressed admiration for the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) and Holly Riddle, who served as NCCDD's Executive Director from 1990 until 2013. "The Council on Developmental Disabilities is a very important group of self-advocates, parents, and professionals that work very hard to not just advocate for the needs of people with disabilities but also to talk about their strengths and their unique gifts. I have always admired that about the council," Morrell said. "Holly Riddle is a very passionate, persistent, committed advocate for people with disabilities. She's done a great deal to advocate for people with disabilities."

In her current position, Morrell works with Autism Society Of NC's 50 support groups and chapters across the State. "There's nothing I like better than having the opportunity to go to different parts of the State, meet with parents who are trying to help their own children and yet also have the generous spirit to organize and help all the families in their community. It is so inspiring," she said.

Terri Meyers, one of ASNC's regional chapter directors, said Morrell's colleagues appreciate her can-do attitude. "Maureen's kind and sharing spirit is infectious," Meyers wrote in her nomination. "She is one who will not only organize and plan, she will roll up her sleeves and get right into the trenches for the cause."



that showed the world what true beauty and confidence really is and benefitted The Miracle League of Wilmington.

### The Fashionistas of Wilmington

A great time by all was had at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Semi-Annual "I Am Beautiful" Fashion Show on January 17<sup>th</sup> at Pine Valley United Methodist Church in Wilmington. The event featured lots of individuals



### Special Times At The Sweetheart Dance

Many had a wonderful evening at the Valentine's Day dance on Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup> hosted by Pine Grove Methodist Church in Albemarle. Organized by church volunteers, the event has been attended by those served by GHA for many years. Included in the day

of festivities are hair, nail and make-up appointments provided free of charge by students at the Stanly Community College Cosmetology Department.

### WILMINGTON'S GATHERING PLACE STILL GOING STRONG



The Gathering Place, sponsored by Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in Wilmington, will celebrate its 7th anniversary this April and is still going strong! The Gathering Place is a free social activity for individuals with and without special needs targeting individuals in high school and in their 20s. At least 200 members of the community, including several participants

from GHA Autism Supports, meet in the church activity center one Friday evening of each month at 1401 College Road in Wilmington. Guests enjoy a wide array of activities including a game room, a bingo room, and a gym with music, beachball volleyball, cornhole, parachute, craft activities, soda & snacks, and dancing until you drop! Dedicated volunteers from the church, the community, UNCW and Hoggard High School always assist to make the event run smoothly. The Gathering Place was started by local resident Nathan Hansen as his Eagle Scout Project for Boy Scout Troop 26 in April of 2008. The family and local volunteers have coordinated the event ever since with support from Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church. GHA always appreciates forging partnerships with the communities in which we serve to provide wonderful social opportunities.