

GHAzette

Official Newsletter of GHA Autism Supports



Fun in the Sun at Wake the World

Over 40 individuals from our GHA Autism Supports family experienced the best of boating and water sports through Wake the World (WTW) Lake Tillery on July 15, 2021 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, as well as abused and neglected children and wounded warriors. The first Wake the World event in the United States started in 2008 with 8 families providing a day on the lake for residents of a local children's home. Today WTW is the largest volunteer organized event of its kind, with more than 500 volunteered boats worldwide. Lake Tillery WTW started in 2014. 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 lunch and dinner provided by local restaurants and businesses, as well as individual donations. The day would not have been possible without the dedicated community organizers and volunteers. We also send an abundance of appreciation to our GHA staff that provided support throughout the day. Check out scenes from this year's event on page two. We look forward to WTW Lake Tillery 2022!



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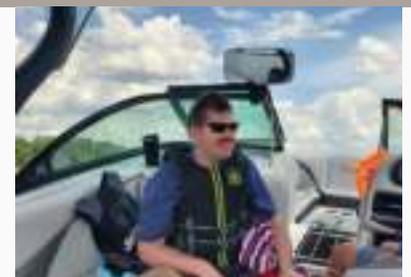
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WAKE the WORLD

SCENES FROM *Lake Tillery*



"We truly appreciate the partnerships that provide countless opportunities for the people we support. Wake the World Lake Tillery is an outstanding example of outreach to our special needs community,"



DAWN ALLEN,
GHA AUTISM SUPPORTS
CEO

GHA Autism Supports gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made memorials and honorary gifts between April 1, 2021 and July 31, 2021. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you feel an error has been made, please contact Beth Olivieri at 704-982-9600, x 125.



In Honor of Charles Brown

Bryan Collins

In Honor of Maureen Morrell

Celeste Cash Lamb

In Memory of Jackie Bynum

Brenda P. Alston-Mills

In Memory of Rob Morrell

Celeste Cash Lamb

Dana, David & Jay-Me Brown

Ta'Shonie Bryant

John Rossi

Altonia Crenshaw

Matthew D'Uva

John Hockman

Lawrence Horner

Kim McMiller

Maureen Morrell

Beth Olivieri

Albert Randall

Beverly Roberts

Rufus Rosser, Jr.

Craig & Ulla Skeffington

Marvin P. Thompson

In Memory of Ronnie Steed

Samuel & Michelle Whitlock

In Honor of Jonathan Martin

Janie Jaquier

In Honor of Justin Morrell

Carol Majors

Tony Outlaw

GHA Welcomes Development Coordinator



Lori Ivey,
Development Coordinator

GHA Autism Supports is pleased to welcome Lori Ivey as the new Development Coordinator to assist in identifying, researching and developing revenue and marketing opportunities for the organization. She began her role on July 1st after retiring from NC Cooperative Extension. She comes to GHA with more than 25 years of grant writing experience. In addition to grant writing in her former position as the County Extension Director, she also brings a wealth of fundraising, marketing and program promotion skills to the job. Lori has a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics Education from UNC-Greensboro and a Masters' degree from NC State University in Ag & Extension Education. She and her husband, Jim, reside in Albemarle and have two sons, William (24) and Robert (19). "I'm excited about working with GHA Autism Supports and look forward to developing many relationships within our organization with the people we support, along with their families," shared Ivey. "In addition, I am excited to expand connections in the community to support our mission."

Get Vaccinated for a Chance to Win!

GHA Autism Supports recognizes the importance of encouraging all employees to consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Our Nursing Department has been instrumental in working with officials at both the Stanly and New Hanover County Health Departments to secure appointments, as well as vaccines to ensure that every employee has the opportunity to be vaccinated.

In addition, the GHA Human Resources Department has organized an on-going incentive program to encourage our employee base to get vaccinated. All employees that were employed as of a specific date received a \$100 incentive check. In addition, all front-line employees of GHA Autism Supports have been entered in drawings for \$1,000 cash!

Congratulations to Tia McKenzie for being our first \$1,000 winner!

*Congrats
Tia!*



Manager Spotlights--Keeping Our Programs Running Strong!



Tina Sturdivant

Celebrating 25 years of service to GHA Autism Supports, Residential Manager Trainer Tina Sturdivant began her career in 1996 as a direct care staff at the A. Jack Wall Home in Albemarle. Shortly thereafter, Tina served as a Team Leader at the Cowan Home. During her career, she has also supported individuals and their families at the Thompson Home, Lowder Home, Doby Home and Carolina Farms Home #3. Tina was the first Residential Manager at Carolina Farms Home #1, the first residential program at Carolina Farms in Albemarle. Currently, she serves as a Residential Manager Trainer at the A. Jack Wall Home, a position she has held since 2003, as well as the Residential Manager Trainer for both Carolina Farms Homes #1 and #2. When asked to reflect upon her time at GHA, Tina shared, "I have enjoyed the relationships that I have formed with the individuals and their families more than anything, and I have loved watching them grow over the years." Tina resides in Ansonville and adores spending time with her daughter Jaleccia, her son Jaylan and her one grandson Jakarri.



Emily Worthington

Currently serving as the Residential Manager for both McGee Hudson and Hollinger Homes, as well as the Manager of Port City Academy, Emily Worthington earned her Bachelor of Social Work from Mt. Vernon Nazarene University. Her journey at GHA started in 2018 as a substitute staff at the McGee-Hudson Home and Port City Academy, the licensed day program in Wilmington. Shortly thereafter, Emily became a Support Advocate Trainer prior to being named the Residential Manager of both the Hollinger Home and the McGee Hudson Homes. "I have gained a wealth of knowledge that I would have never gained through school or other employment" shared Emily. "I love seeing the power of teamwork and working with a great staff." Emily loves living near the ocean in her coastal community and has a green thumb when it comes to her love of plants. She loves spending time with her two daughters Courtney, who is a member of the United States Air Force, and her 13-year-old daughter Lyla.

"Heroes are ordinary people who make themselves extraordinary."

--Gerard Way

Collection Drive Benefits GHA



SERVICE
TO
OTHERS



GHA Autism Supports appreciates the support of so many community partners! Most recently, our organization received an abundance of toiletries and linens that were collected during a drive organized by the congregation at Kendalls Baptist Church in New London. The Church was organized in 1830 and has a long-standing commitment to service in the community. Many, many thanks for this wonderful effort to supply multiple homes in our GHA family!



2021 Board of Directors

The Honorable Ron Burris
Brian Freeman
Dr. Phil Julian
Gina Martin
Terri Meyers
Ronnie Michael
Beverly Moore
Dr. Russ Sharples
Melissa Smith
John Townson

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Grant to Fund Multiple AEDs

GHA was recently awarded a \$4,000 grant from the Stanly County Community Foundation (SCCF) towards the purchase of three Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to be placed at Morrow Valley Farmstead, Burress Home and Morrell Home. The SCCF is a permanent endowment established in 1999 by local leaders to benefit a broad range of charitable purposes in Stanly County. The Foundation assists donors in making charitable gifts to the community, provides services for nonprofit organizations to create new or manage existing endowments and makes grants for new projects. An AED at each of these sites will allow staff to be better equipped should a cardiac arrest emergency occur. In addition, an AED training device was purchased to ensure that all employees have the hands-on training needed should an emergency arise. Approximately \$35,000 in grants from the SCCF has been awarded to GHA since 2006, which also includes funding for the construction of the barn, greenhouse, therapeutic horseback riding ring, as well as funding for the kiln for the creative arts program.



13th Annual Rubber Duck Derby Huge Success

On May 15th, a few lucky ducks crossed the finish line for some fabulous cash prizes during the 13th Annual GHA Autism Supports Rubber Duck Derby! It was another record-breaking year, selling nearly 7,000 rubber ducks to support the many activities and programs at GHA Autism Supports. We appreciate the support of corporate and patron sponsors that assisted us in raising more than \$30,000 from this year's fundraising effort. A big thank you is extended to the Stanly County YMCA for hosting our annual event and to the numerous volunteers that served as "duck dumpers". We look forward to another sea of yellow ducks next year!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Presenting Sponsor

Tim Marburger Honda

Platinum Sponsors

Ellen Brooks

Uwharrie Bank

Gold Sponsors

Albemarle Pediatrics

Southern Pharmacy

Ramon, Eman & Alley Sundquist

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Bob & Gloria Bianchi

The Bynum Family

The Family of Jason Cory

Shawnee Sundquist & Billy Dunlap

Bobbilynne & Nicholas Garner

Mike & Lesley Graves

Chet & Elaine Gurski

Larry & Martha Hupp

Brenda & Philip Julian

Stan & Annette Leggett

Jan & Sue Martin

Maureen Morrell

Dale & Sherry Poplin

Ann & Al Sadowsky

Craig & Ulla Skeffington

Thomas & Marie Southerland

Diane & Bill Stevenson

Linda & Jeff Stewart

Patricia Tripp



**AND THE
WINNERS ARE...**



\$75 WINNER - AL & ANN SADOWSKY

\$100 WINNER - SYLVIA GLENN

\$250 WINNER - ROGER DICK

\$1,000 WINNER - GARY WHICHELLO

**AND THE GRAND PRIZE
WINNER IS...**

\$3,000 - MELANIE BARFIELD



OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

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



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Staff Satisfaction: A Meaningful Component of Agency Effectiveness

GHA's services and supports are only as good as our staff. That's why the Quality Management Team conducts an annual Staff Satisfaction Survey. Working through the computer program SurveyMonkey, we guarantee all staff anonymity and encourage them to tell us how satisfied they are with their jobs. In May, 213 emails were sent to all staff; 107 surveys were completed, a return rate of 50%. Part of the GHA survey asks staff to Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree with ten statements. Results for questions two, three and nine are shown below. Overall, comments were positive including "Love my job!" and "GHA is a great place to work". Several useful suggestions were also shared. Every year, the Executive Leadership Team reviews the survey results, staying in touch with staff morale and changes that may be needed.



Taking Virtual Programming to a New Level

The pandemic hasn't stopped activities through GHA Autism Supports, rather it taught us to create new and creative approaches to deliver quality programming! Creative Arts Director Kyoko Rorie-Bruton has taken the lead in working with homes and the day programs to continue offering a variety of activities. Check out some of the crowd favorites:

- Kyoko has led virtual art classes on a regular basis by providing art projects and a list of supplies which are delivered to the homes, where individuals can create their own masterpieces through an instructor-led activity via Zoom.
- "Pen Pals", which began with the day programs as a way for individuals to keep in touch with each other, has now expanded to include homes near and far. A letter template is provided for participants to use. Next month's Pen Pal Art-Swap will include pen pal art that is delivered or mailed with each letter, allowing everyone to get a little creative and share their artwork with their pen pal.
- Virtual Bingo has also been a big hit! Two to three Fridays per month, individuals that love bingo play for prizes – snacks and crossword puzzle books are favorites!
- Cooking classes also continue to be a favorite amongst our GHA virtual community. Led by the individuals that GHA supports, they select a favorite recipe and Kyoko provides recipes and ingredients needed to make the recipe at each site. Some of the virtual recipe programs that have been shared include "Chinese Beef and Broccoli with Temika", "Banana Pudding with Alex", "Blueberry Muffins with Lyndy" and "Grilled Cheese sandwiches with Lyndy". Kyoko goes to each site to set up the camera for the cook of the day and assists with the filming for cooking classes.
- Virtual music classes and virtual concerts are also popular. Michael has entertained the virtual community by singing his 80's music and playing the piano, while Adam provided a virtual classical music piano concert from his parent's home wowing us with his Mozart and Beethoven selections.
- Other virtual activities included show and tell where individuals selected something they wanted to talk about and show everyone. Staff are not left out in the virtual activities, as participants enjoyed a staff led virtual pet appreciation where participants met dogs, cats and reptiles such as snakes, lizards and turtles.

COVID-19 has had an absolutely devastating impact on the world as a whole. Our organization has had to adjust to what has become the "new normal" the last few months, an extraordinary task for our essential direct care staff and for the individuals that we support. Many have worked tirelessly to create unique activities to make navigating through the pandemic a bit more bearable. Special thanks to all members of our GHA Team for going the extra mile and for making "lemonade out of lemons" during these challenging times. We salute our heroes!



*In loving memory
Sarah Jacqueline Bynum
11/16/42 - 4/15/21*



We extend our deepest sympathies to the Bynum Family for the loss of Sara Jacqueline Bynum, known by our GHA Family as "Jackie" or "Andy's Mom". Jackie was an active parent volunteer for many years. She, along with her husband Curtis, helped to organize many Family Network yard sales in Albemarle, and she also served as a past GHA Autism Supports Board member. Please continue to keep Curtis, their daughter Marjorie, Andy and the entire Bynum Family in your thoughts and prayers.



Holiday Shopping Is Around the Corner--Have You Linked Your Amazon Account?

With the ease of online ordering, there is no better time than now to link your Amazon account to AmazonSmile, a program that makes it easy for customers to support their favorite charitable organizations every time you shop. Customers who visit AmazonSmile at smile.amazon.com will find the exact same Amazon they know and love with consistent pricing, selection and convenience, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to their favorite charitable organization. There is no cap on the total donation amount and you can select GHA Autism Supports from nearly one million organizations around the country.

When customers first go to AmazonSmile, you will be asked to select your favorite charitable organization from almost a million eligible organizations – and that's it! Once you have selected GHA Autism Supports on your first visit, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from any eligible purchases through AmazonSmile from that point forward, whether you shop just once or once a day. Please note that you must remember to type smile.amazon.com into the browser on your PC, tablet or phone when shopping!

