

Able

capable

A seasonal publication by The Woodlands, celebrating the marvelous abilities of everyone we serve.

strong

beautiful



SPRING 2019

Divas Weekend

Encourages Self-Empowerment



THE WOODLANDS developed the DIVAS Weekend program seven years ago as a means to provide specialized programming for girls and women, ages 8-29, with disabilities or chronic illness. The residential program, held once a year, focuses on self-confidence, self-worth and the diversity of beauty both inside and out.

Woodlands' staff and special guests work with participants to create an atmosphere of empowerment and support. During the sleepover weekend, each participant receives a hair and makeup makeover, the opportunity to craft a pageant sash, fashion headshots, and runway coaching. Unlike a beauty pageant, the program is non-competitive, focusing on displays of personality, humor, and inspiration. Dr. Josie Badger, Miss Wheelchair America 2012 and a member of The Woodlands' Board of Directors, holds a "girl talk" session focusing on achieving dreams and goals.



“It is important for all individuals with and without disabilities to see that their internal and external beauty empowers them to become the powerful, strong women they were meant to be.”

The DIVAS Weekend culminates with a runway show attended by family, friends, and program volunteers. This year, thanks to the donation of 130 evening dresses coordinated by community members Nico Engelbrecht, Beth Yankel and Missy Fahler, participants were treated to the opportunity to “shop” at a pop-up shop and hand select the dress they wanted to wear. Ta'lor Pinkston, MSW, founder of LADYHOOD journey LLC, served as the emcee, “Being the emcee for the 2019 DIVA Runway Show was powerful. The amazing participants and the staff at The Woodlands were all so inspiring and energetic I can't wait to come and visit soon. As a Self-love Coach, I believe in the body-positive movement and a runway show is an amazing idea to help girls with disabilities learn to appreciate their bodies as they are. It was an honor to be the emcee this year.”

Over 60 volunteers from Slippery Rock University Alpha Omicron Pi, The Kiski School, Vincentian Academy, North Catholic High School, Quaker Valley School District, First Love, Sewickley Academy, and the Pine Richland High School Spire & Co Club helped to make the DIVAS program a success by assisting with decorating, makeovers, crafts, coaching, and the runway show. The next DIVAS Weekend will be held in early 2020; for more information on how you or your group can get involved, contact Staffing & Volunteer Coordinator Clarissa Amond, camond@woodlandsfoundation.org or 724-935-6533.



THE WOODLANDS WELCOMES THE DART PROGRAM

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*This setting has
been a perfect fit
for our program.*
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THE WOODLANDS welcomes the DART Early Intervention Program to our campus, located in the former Clubhouse building. The DART program serves eligible children in Allegheny County, ages 3-5, who are experiencing developmental delays or disabilities.

The DART Early Intervention Program believes that early childhood programs are places of excitement and enrichment. The Program uses a model of learning that combines cognitive developmental and behavioral models. The cognitive developmental approach considers the developmental level of the child and readiness for learning. This model promotes initiative, independence, and self-confidence, and fosters social awareness. The behavioral model includes defined goals with set criteria and tasks planned to achieve these goals. The combination of these two models supports both spontaneous interactions with the environment and optimal skill development.

“We are so excited to be at The Woodlands! The staff love the space and people that they have met and worked with from The Woodlands. The parents and children are pleased with the classroom setup as it meets the needs of the young preschool children we serve who have developmental delays and disabilities. This setting has been a perfect fit for our program,” says Susan Sams, Ph.D., Program Director DART Preschool Early Intervention Program.

The goal of the DART Early Intervention Program is to provide early intervention services in the least restrictive environment. Recommendations for services are based on a child’s strengths, needs, and eligibility for services. The DART location on The Woodlands’ campus provides programming to children from the North Allegheny, Pine-Richland and Hampton school districts. Currently, 22 children are enrolled.

For more information, contact the DART Program, 412-394-5816.





JOIN OUR TEAM!



THE WOODLANDS signature programs, expert staff and adapted facilities are all designed around our mission to enrich the lives of children and adults living with disability and chronic illness. Every year, seasonal staff are hired to work as program counselors, unit coordinators, life skills and recreation activity instructors, and healthcare associates for 11 weeks in the summer (during which staff are in residence at The Woodlands), or for weekend retreats and special

programming held throughout the academic year. The Woodlands has proved to be the perfect environment to supplement academic and theoretical experience as program staff



positions offer hands-on exposure to a multitude of disabilities, provide students with opportunities for internships, practical job experience, and service learning. For more information, contact Staffing & Volunteer Coordinator Clarissa Amond, camond@woodlandsfoundation.org, or 724-935-6533.

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION OPEN!



THE WOODLANDS programs are getaways designed to be fun! There is nothing quite like joining in our group events, camps or clubs to open minds, challenge comfort zones, overcome barriers and forge new friendships. No one is left on the sidelines.

At The Woodlands, differences don't mean limitations, and everyone is encouraged to discover a whole new world of possibilities and independence. Our programs offer safe, inclusive experiences that provide enrichment for participants

with all disabilities—while caregivers have a chance for a welcome respite. Program offerings include residential weekend retreats held during the academic year, 10 weeks of residential summer camps, and specialized weekly and bi-weekly clubs.

Registration for the summer camp season is now open! Participants enjoy traditional summer camp activities such as swimming, music, arts and crafts, nature activities, golf, archery, cooking and more. But, unique to The Woodlands, our staff facilitates games and activities to practice communication and self-efficacy while reinforcing goal setting, team-building and enhanced socialization. Reinforcement of routine helps each participant engage in independent activities of daily living within our safe campus and lodging accommodations. There is nothing like camp to help make memories and foster new friendships that will last a lifetime. Our team will help jumpstart each participant's road to understanding their true abilities and potential. The Woodlands offers day and overnight camps to accommodate all ages and abilities. For more information, visit, www.mywoodlands.org/programs/summer-camps/.





CUB CLUB

A GREAT PLACE TO START



Welcome all little cubs! The Woodlands Clubs are perfect for participants who like to have fun during the day and head home at night, or for those not yet ready for an overnight stay. Clubs are offered to serve all ages, interests, and abilities, so everyone has a chance to have fun, meet friends, experience new things and challenge the limits of personal potential.



For children with disabilities, learning fundamental social skills can take a little more time and effort. Cub Club is an introductory day camp for The Woodlands' youngest participants, children ages 6-12. Cub Club is the first step into life enrichment activities and an individualized social com-

munity. Cubs enjoy music, recreation, and the creative arts along with socialization opportunities that help build lasting friendships.

Parallel running weekend retreat programming for older kids on campus offers another opportunity for supported peer socialization. While participating in Cub Club, children explore their own, independent social environment – allowing for healthy separation between child and parent/caregiver. Cub Club participants are provided with lunch and a snack while attending and do have the option to bring their own as well.

Cub Club is held two Saturdays a month from 10:00am-3:00pm on The Woodlands' campus. For more information, contact Jesse Solomon, 724-935-6533 or visit www.mywoodlands.org/programs/clubs.

“*The Woodlands is a hidden gem—it is such a great atmosphere and the grounds are beautiful. Cub Club has provided my daughter, Zoey, with the opportunity to meet peers and develop friendships, skills that she will be able to continue to use. When I asked Zoey what her favorite part about Cub Club is, she said everything—I think that says it all!*”

Cheryl Silinskas

*Visit us on social media
and see all the other
great things we're doing!*





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Our Mission

To enrich the lives of children and adults
with disability and chronic illness.

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