

Woodlands Appoints Program Manager



THE Woodlands is pleased to announce the appointment of Clarissa Amond as the Program Manager. Clarissa has been working for The Woodlands since 2018 when she was hired as the Volunteer & Staffing

Coordinator. In this role, a large part of Clarissa's responsibility was to recruit the seasonal staff who work for The Woodlands as counselors, activity instructors, and healthcare associates. As the parent of a son with a disability, Clarissa's perspective when recruiting was clear, "I know what parents expect and hope for in a program like The Woodlands, and I used that perspective with every decision I made regarding staffing."

In her new role as Program Manager, Clarissa will oversee the coordination of The Woodlands year-round camps, retreats and clubs. She will work with Executive Director Samantha Ellwood to implement new ideas, approaches, and partnerships. "We are lucky to have Clarissa as our Program Manager. She works tirelessly to ensure the best experiences for both participants and our counselors. She has approached her new role and the implementation of COVID-19 policies

and procedures with determination and commitment."

In addition to Clarissa's commitment, her mindset and ability to relate is just as meaningful, "It hasn't been the easiest road as a parent who has a child with a disability, but I am always able to look at the positive aspects. You can't change the situation but you can control your attitude and your outlook on life." As far as her plans in her new position, Clarissa "really wants The Woodlands to evolve in every aspect! I dream of having a larger camp capacity,

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**Clarissa Amond,
Program Manager**

animals, growing our own food, job training and having people on campus 7 days a week!" Clarissa welcomes input and can be reached at camond@woodlandsfoundation.org.



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



The Woodlands RE-OPENS



After canceling all in-person programs in March of 2020, The Woodlands will be re-opening its doors for a full in-person summer camp season for all ages beginning on June 6, 2021. Following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the input of The Woodlands' Safety and Quality Assurance Committee, protocols and plans have been developed to keep The Woodlands' community safe. To allow for appropriate social distancing, registration will be limited to 75% of full capacity.

The summer camp season represents the busiest time of year: for 10 weeks in

a row, The Woodlands will host children and adults for 6-day, 5-night residential programs. Program staff works months in advance preparing for the summer camp season; maintenance staff anxiously await the first sign of spring to begin preparing the outdoor areas; and 35 college students will move in the campus dormitories in late May for the duration of summer to work as camp counselors, healthcare associates and activity instructors.

"We know that being a healthy individual is much more than just physical well being. Being emotionally and socially fit makes a better person. Our participants

need these interactions at camps with their peers as this may be their only opportunity to do so. While we are making sure the participants are doing well physically, we need to help with their other needs too," shared Dr. Michael Petrosky, member of The Woodlands Board of Directors and the Safety & Quality Assurance Committee.

For more information, contact Program Manager Clarissa Amond, camond@woodlandsfoundation.org.





ince its founding, The Woodlands has developed programs and services centered on the objectives

of socialization, recreation, culture, appreciation of the natural environment, and life skills. One of The Woodlands' first forays into the arts began in 1999, when a group of musical artists and music lovers in the Pittsburgh area came together with a desire to create a summer program that would bring the joy of music to individuals with disabilities and chronic illness. After a series of special musical presentations and a pilot music retreat, the need for a dedicated program was apparent and the Notes from the Heart (NFTH) music program was born.

Today, the NFTH music program offers year-round programming that includes two week-long summer camps and a full music ensemble. The music program offers a wide variety of activities and programs that range from music appreciation, theory, composition, singing, and instrument playing under the guidance of internationally and locally known musicians, artists, conductors, and educators.

To build on the progression and success of the Notes from the Heart music program, The Woodlands plans to expand the program to include creative and other performing arts. Kristen Link will begin as the inaugural Director of Music & Arts on June 1st, "I am thrilled to be joining the



MUSIC PROGRAM EXPANDS TO INCLUDE THE ARTS

wonderful team at The Woodlands as the Director of Music & Arts! In addition to building upon an already flourishing Notes from the Heart music program, I look forward to creating new avenues of artistic expression for our participants. I am excited to learn from The Woodlands community about what arts opportunities they are especially eager to explore, and allow their curiosity to be our guiding force. Additionally, after many years working within the professional performing arts community of Pittsburgh, I'm eager to branch out and initiate new partnerships

where our participants can collaborate and learn from many of the world-class artists that call our region home!"

Kristen is passionate about making the arts more equitable. For nearly two decades, her work has placed her at the intersections of art, education, and disability. Ms. Link's longest tenure was at Pittsburgh's City Theatre, where she served as the Director of Education & Accessibility for 11 years. Among the accomplishments she is most proud of is the creation of Arts Access Classrooms, an in-school program for youth with disabilities that placed students at the center of creation in the theater-making process. Ms. Link has presented on the topic of arts accessibility at regional and national conferences, and is a former member of the Arts Education Collaborative Advisory Council. In 2013, she was awarded the "Work of Art" award for her accessibility work within the theater community from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council.

For more information, contact Kristen Link at klink@woodlandsfoundation.org



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**Kristen Link,
Director of Music & Arts**



NEWS

The Woodlands Partners *with* North Hills Golf Academy

THE WOODLANDS Golf Course is a par-3, adapted golf course specifically designed to provide children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to learn, play and appreciate the game of golf. The only facility of its kind in the region the 9-hole course, designed by Dominic Palombo, offers a unique experience for individuals learning the game of golf or returning to the game after a setback from injury or illness.

To expand opportunities to learn the game of golf, The Woodlands is partnering with the North Hills Golf Academy (NHGA) on the development of a golf program for individuals with disabilities of all ages. "We are so excited to be partnering with The Woodlands!

Our priority at NHGA is to make golf more available to everyone, and we are thrilled that The Woodlands is able to work with us on furthering our mission with the adapted golf program. Golf is such a great sport to be involved in at any age and any ability level. We have been afforded amazing opportunities because of the sport, we only hope that everyone can enjoy it as much as we do," says NHGA owner, Sydney Smyers.

The golf program will be held at The Woodlands every Wednesday from July 7-28, 2021 at 6:00-7:00pm for ages 6-13 and 7:00-8:00pm for ages 14+.

For more information, contact Clarissa Amond, camond@woodlandsfoundation.org

NEW BOARD CHAIR APPOINTED

When The Woodlands' Board Chair Nicholas J. Barcellona departed the Pittsburgh area in late 2020 to accept a position at Temple University Health System, John P. Stampfel was more than willing to step in. John is the Vice President of Business Development and Strategy at Atkore International. "I'm honored to continue to serve The Woodlands in this new capacity and I look forward to working with our families, staff, sponsors and board as we



strive to fulfill our mission. We certainly find ourselves in challenging times, but our wonderful support network and the encouragement from our families are constant reminders that we only need to imagine the possibilities as we continue to enrich the lives of the many people we touch! It is the hard work of our extended teams and the generosity of our supporters that allows The Woodlands to provide such amazing opportunities to so many people." A Board member since 2014, John and his wife, Christian, reside in the Pittsburgh area with their two daughters.

