

MUSIC PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH THE BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC



Several years ago, Dr. Andrew Clark, Director of Choral Activities and Senior Lecturer of Music at Harvard University and one of the founding members of The Woodlands Notes from the Heart music program faculty, introduced The Woodlands staff to Rhoda Bernard, Managing Director of the Berklee College of Music's Berklee Institute for Arts Education & Special Needs.

Located in Boston, MA, the Berklee Institute for Arts Education & Special Needs is deeply committed to providing educational opportunities in the arts for all learners. Berklee's highly trained instructors tailor their teaching to meet each individual student's needs in a safe and welcoming environment. In addition to a diverse curriculum of arts education for individuals with special needs, Berklee offers undergraduate courses and professional development opportunities.

When Andy and Rhoda began talking about The Woodlands and the Notes from the Heart music program, it was clear that there were many commonalities in terms of mission, vision, and programmatic offerings. Discussion soon focused on the potential to create a formal partnership between the two organizations that can be both scalable and sustainable long-term.

Although initial plans to begin a partnership in 2020 were derailed by the pandemic, planning has now resumed with the intention of launching a collaboration in late 2021. Virtual engagement with The Woodlands will begin as early as November 2021 with guest visits from the Berklee Institute to the Fall Music Ensemble and Music Makers classes. In summer 2022, Rhoda Bernard and key members of her team will visit The Woodlands' campus to offer new educational opportunities and provide support to Woodlands' staff and participants as they work toward the live

performance that culminates the Notes from the Heart summer camp program.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with Berklee College of Music and their Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs. Rhoda Bernard and her team of teaching artists do exemplary work in the field of inclusive arts education. I look forward to learning from their experiences as we continue to engage and support our musicians and artists at The Woodlands," says The Woodlands' Director of Music & Arts, Kristen Link. For more information, Kristen can be reached at klink@woodlandsfoundation.org.



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





The Woodlands
134 Shenot Road
Wexford, PA 15090
(724) 935-6533
mywoodlands.org

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. XXX

OUR MISSION

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

United Way Contributor
Choice #933107



Able

AUTUMN 2021

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



THE WOODLANDS PARTNERS WITH THE RYAN SHAZIER FUND FOR SPINAL CORD REHABILITATION



In August, The Woodlands and The Ryan Shazier Fund for Spinal Rehabilitation (RSFSR) hosted the first-ever weekend retreat for individuals with spinal cord injuries and their families. The mission of The Ryan Shazier Fund for Spinal Cord Rehabilitation is to give those with spinal cord injuries and their caregivers the support, resources and funding they need to live independent and meaningful lives.

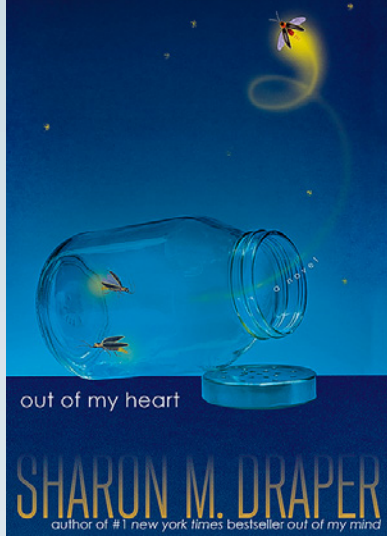
True to the mission of the organization that bears his name, Ryan was present the entire weekend, getting to know the participants and hosting an on-site Steelers tailgate party complete with an outdoor big screen and tailgate classics.

Alongside Ryan was his wife, Michelle, who led a session that enabled the caregivers to share their stories and offer one another support, allowing everyone to come together and reflect on their journey.

The weekend allowed the families to spend time together in a fully accessible environment, while having The Woodlands' trained staff support activities like swimming, zip-lining, a family carnival, and more. The Woodlands hosted the weekend utilizing funds from The Woodlands' WonderFund. Established in 2000 to provide scholarship assistance to those in need, today the WonderFund consists of two funds: the Lambert Family

Fund, established for the purpose of supporting new program development; and the Scholarship Fund, which provides financial assistance to eligible families.

"We are looking forward to a long relationship between the Ryan Shazier Fund and The Woodlands. Our retreat brought families together to have fun and to share their journeys with spinal cord injuries. Peer to peer interaction has emerged as one of our top priorities, and The Woodlands' campus is a perfect place for that. We are excited to do this again in 2022," said Caroline Boyce, Executive Director, Ryan Shazier Fund for Spinal Cord Rehabilitation.



The Woodlands to Co-present Author



The Woodlands is partnering with Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures to co-present New York Times best-selling author Sharon Draper and the debut of her novel *Out of My Heart*. Kristen Link, The Woodlands' Director of Music & Arts will be leading the virtual conversation with Ms. Draper, which will debut for general audiences on Sunday, November 21, 2021. *Out of My Heart* is a sequel to Ms. Draper's earlier book, *Out of My Mind*, a middle grade novel that focuses on the experiences of main character Melody who has cerebral palsy.

Woodlands' participant, Julia Fieldhammer, will present the formal introduction of the author and book while discussing the impact of Sharon's work during her adolescence, "I read *Out of My Mind* in 6th grade, and it is one of my favorite books of all time. It was the first book I read that had a character

that I could truly relate to. Reading *Out of My Mind* gave me hope. I finally felt represented. The way the book was written truly depicted what it's like to live with CP and not be able to express your feelings," says Julia.

Adds Executive Director of Pittsburgh Arts & Letters Stephanie Flom, "We could not have a more perfect partner to co-

“
I read Out of My Mind in 6th grade, and it is one of my favorite books of all time. It was the first book I read that had a character that I could truly relate to...

*Julia Fieldhammer,
Woodlands' participant*

”

present author Sharon Draper than The Woodlands! It was wonderful to work with Kristen Link, Director of Music & Arts, to make Sharon's virtual presentation and student visits as meaningful and wide-reaching as possible. We are thrilled to have Kristen moderate the Q&A for the program and to welcome artist, writer, blogger, and former Woodland's camper Julia Fieldhammer to our virtual podium to introduce Sharon Draper. We are so excited that Sharon will be visiting with The Woodland's BLOOM Club and that her school visit will involve several area schools with great inclusion programs. Finally, special thanks to the Woodlands Foundation Board Member Tina Calabro who, as always, goes above and beyond to make significant connections so that extraordinary things can happen!"

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

NEWS

NEW BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED



The Woodlands has welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors: Anthony Balouris and Amanda Winnor. Anthony, an attorney with PA Health and Wellness, brings to The Woodlands an in-depth understanding

of reimbursement programs, provider agreements and long-term services and supports. “The Woodlands is a fantastic organization and I’m honored and excited to play even the smallest part in ensuring it continues to make a difference in our community. I am thrilled to be able to give back to an organization that aligns with my values and The Woodlands is the perfect place to do that. It has meant so much to my family and I know many others as well and I’m looking forward to contributing to its continuing success.” shares Anthony.



Amanda is the Supervisor of Special Education for the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit, “For over 20 years, I have worked in special education, where I have witnessed firsthand the benefits of providing students with opportunities

to experience the world around them. So, when I learned about The Woodlands and became familiar with its mission, I knew that the organization was one I could support. I look forward to donating my time, energy, and experience to support the current operations and growth of the organization.”

ACA ACCREDITATION RENEWED

The Woodlands once again earned the American Camp Association (ACA) accreditation; the renewal is good for three years. The American Camp Association is the only nationwide accrediting organization for all types and designs of organized camps. ACA standards focus on health, safety, and risk management practices. The main purpose of the American Camp Association accreditation program is to educate camp owners and directors in the administration of key aspects of camp operation, particularly those related to program quality and the health and safety



of campers and staff. Accreditation is earned when camp sites maintain certain high standards for health and safety on site and in programming, as well as staff vetting, ongoing training, and risk management. While ACA accreditation is voluntary, The Woodlands’ views ACA accreditation as an important indicator of our dedication to upholding the highest standards for safety, programming, and staff. “We display the ACA logo proudly!” says Woodlands Program Manager Clarissa Amond.

WOODLANDS TO PARTICIPATE IN

GIVING TUESDAY

GIVINGTUESDAY is a global day of giving that inspires people around the world to support the organizations and initiatives that are close to their heart. On November 30th, The Woodlands Foundation will participate in GivingTuesday by inviting the community to celebrate generosity and make a gift. “GivingTuesday has evolved into this beautiful, international holiday that brings people together from different backgrounds, communities, and even countries to support worthy causes and build awareness about the invaluable services provided by nonprofit organizations like The Woodlands. The power of social media continues to demonstrate to The Woodlands how connected people are when new supporters not only from our local community but from across the country choose to support our mission to enrich the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. We are excited to be a part of this movement,” says Laura Thomas, Special Events & Corporate Relations Manager. To learn more on how you can participate, visit mywoodlands.org/givingtuesday/ or contact lthomas@woodlandsfoundation.org.