



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION @ THE WOODLANDS

To ensure that The Woodlands' programs and operations reflect the highest level of diversity, equity and inclusion, a new committee is developing a process of self-examination and education. The goal is to build Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) values into all aspects of operation as we advance our mission of enriching the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. The committee will meet bi-monthly, first to lay the groundwork for successful integration of DEI into The Woodlands' culture and to provide educational opportunities for the Board, its committees, and Woodlands staff. The committee will regularly measure achievement of DEI goals and continually look for ways to improve DEI within the organization.



The concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion relate to distinct aspects of an organization's activities:

**DIVERSITY** refers to differences among people — differences in age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, educational attainment, socio-economic status, ability, religious beliefs, and other attributes. An organization

that values diversity consciously fosters a culture of acceptance, understanding, and respect for individual differences.

**EQUITY** means ensuring equal rights and opportunities and acting fairly according to the needs of individuals.

**INCLUSION** is an organization's commitment to creating an environment of meaningful belonging.



The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is led by Administrative Manager Rachel Clark and includes Woodlands staff, board members and participants. For more information, contact Rachel at [rclark@woodlandsfoundation.org](mailto:rclark@woodlandsfoundation.org).



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## OUR MISSION

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

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# Able

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



AUTUMN 2020





# Woodlands Enhances, EXPANDS CAMPUS



Front cover: AmeriCorps members serving in the NCCC program served at The Woodlands in the fall of 2019. To learn more visit [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov)

Last year provided The Woodlands with several key opportunities related to the infrastructure of our 52-acre campus. In the spring of 2019, The Woodlands was chosen as the site for a PPG Colorful Communities Project. Colorful Communities is PPG's initiative to revitalize and beautify communities around the world using their products and the power of employee volunteers. The project focused on painting the exterior of all of buildings on the upper part of campus as well as the interior of the residential lodge. PPG lent professional consultation support, product, and manpower with approximately 141 employees on the day of the project, September 20, 2019.



In preparation for the Colorful Communities project, thanks to the generosity of a Board member's donation and involvement, The Woodlands was able to purchase cement board siding to replace the aging cedar siding on the buildings on the upper part of campus enabling the rehabilitation of the exterior of the residential lodge, activity center, wellness center and arts and crafts buildings. To assist The Woodlands' facilities staff with this undertaking, The Woodlands hosted a team from the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps from August 17-September 27, 2019. During this time, the team of 10 AmeriCorps volunteers resided on The Woodlands' campus in the counselor dormitory and assisted with multiple projects related to infrastructure improvement, including the replacement of siding in preparation for the PPG Colorful Communities project. The result was a



funding from the Gaming Economic Development Fund and the Department of Community and Economic Development Multimodal Transportation Fund, the construction of a roadway to connect the flagship campus to the adjacent property commenced in October of 2019. This undertaking also included the construction of a 58-vehicle parking lot in anticipation of the development of additional programming and the resulting need for additional parking. The project concluded on June 30, 2020.

visible and long-term improvement to campus, an expansion of our community, and a refreshed environment for those we serve.

In addition, last year The Woodlands was able to progress towards the goal of gaining access to the 21.6-acre property adjacent to our flagship campus. With



## VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING ENGAGES INTERNS

With the cancellation of in-person programming for the rest of the year was announced, Woodlands' staff was already hard at work developing a menu of virtual programming in an effort to continue to connect with, and engage, both old friends of The Woodlands and new ones. Soliciting the help of student interns to develop new programming offerings as well as fresh perspectives, has been one of the strategies The Woodlands has employed for the fall semester.

*"This experience has been just as amazing as being in person, although different. The participants and I can connect with one another and they can connect with each other while sharing their art."*

*Nicole Hicks, Creative Collaboratives instructor and Art Therapy major, Seton Hill University.*

The Woodlands has five interns this semester, who have developed virtual programs that pertain to their majors. Virtual programs include The Creatives Collaborative, an art-based program; Living Well & Staying Healthy, focused on self-care and the importance

of wellness; and Mindfulness Matters, a program that focuses on healthy mindfulness and coping strategies. In a typical in-person setting, interns would have daily hands-on interaction and activity with Woodlands' participants. In the current environment, by drawing on their classroom and academic experience, the interns have created content that has enabled them to connect with participants.

"Although we miss having programming at The Woodlands, we are excited to be able to virtually create, collaborate, and communicate together. We are using our current virtual programs to help us think outside of the box for future programs and how we can continue to leverage virtual access to programs when we resume in-person activities," said Samantha Ellwood, Executive Director.



Kamthron Sukarochana as a means to raise money in support of The Woodlands' Wellness Center to today's production of over 600 cakes baked annually by numerous corporate volunteer groups, the Rum Cake Sale continues to grow in popularity and reach.

After retiring from a long and successful career as a pediatric surgeon, Dr. Sukarochana, known as Dr. Kam, enrolled in the International Culinary Academy in Pittsburgh. What began as a small

Due to the many restrictions related to COVID-19, the Rum Cake Sale is cancelled this year. However, planning will begin early in 2021 for a better than ever effort— if you have any input or suggestions, please contact Christa Papcunik, [cpapcunik@woodlandsfoundation.org](mailto:cpapcunik@woodlandsfoundation.org).



## RUM CAKES TO RETURN IN 2021

Of the many efforts The Woodlands undertakes to raise funds in support of our mission, the annual Rum Cake Sale is by far the most sentimental. With its grassroots beginning 16 years ago by Dr.

34-cake operation, has now expanded to thousands with shipping available nationwide, and all proceeds benefiting The Woodlands' mission to enrich the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. 2013 marked Dr. Kam's retirement from the renowned Rum Cake fundraiser, leaving his signature recipes in the hands of Woodlands' staff and the many corporate volunteers who help to bake and package the cakes.

## WOODLANDS TO PARTICIPATE IN GIVINGTUESDAY



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 December 1, The Woodlands Foundation will participate in GivingTuesday by inviting the community to celebrate generosity and make a gift. "Many organizations, like The Woodlands, use the momentum of GivingTuesday to not only gain and motivate financial support but also increase awareness of their cause. Fueled by social media, GivingTuesday is an opportunity for The Woodlands to gain exposure and better share our mission of enriching the lives of children and adults with chronic illness and disability," said Development Manager Christa Papcunik. To learn more on how you can participate, visit [mywoodlands.org/givingtuesday/](http://mywoodlands.org/givingtuesday/) or contact [cpapcunik@woodlandsfoundation.org](mailto:cpapcunik@woodlandsfoundation.org).