

Able

AUTUMN 2022

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





WOODLANDS OPENS CAMPUS TO COMMUNITY FOR

Fall Festival

*Local Corporations Decorate the Not So Haunted Trail
to the Delight of Attendees*

Like many organizations, The Woodlands has had many stops and starts over the past few years with the ability to hold in-person programming. When programming resumed in June of 2021, capacity was limited and masking and social distancing requirements were instituted to support the health and safety of those we serve as well as our staff and volunteers. As an additional precaution, any on campus community meetings or events were canceled during this time period. All the more sweeter was this year's Fall Festival, the first community event The Woodlands has held since 2019.

"We were so thrilled to be able to welcome the community back on campus for the first time in

3 years. Since joining the organization in April 2020, I have been looking forward to sharing our spaces with the region and potential participants. So much of the magic of The Woodlands can only be felt on campus. We are excited to share that magic again," said Executive Director Samantha Ellwood.

One of the more unique aspects of the Fall Festival is the transformation of the campus's nature trail into The Woodlands Not So Haunted Trail. Employee volunteers from MSA The Safety Company, FedEx Ground, Ally Financial, ProspHire, A. Martini General Contractors and The Woodlands Emerging Professionals Board used their imaginations and, in a few cases, the likenesses

of their co-workers to decorate sections of the trail in a fun, engaging way.

"We wanted to share the idea of 'prospering together,' which is an important part of our firm's culture, but we wanted to do it in a really fun and kind of off-the-wall way," said Tanya Torres from ProspHire. "The leaders of both organizations (ProspHire and The Woodlands) have a very strong relationship, so it seemed like a good fit to use it as the basis of our theme. Not to mention, how often do you get to put the faces of your team on fuzzy spiders and scarecrows? We had a great time and hope to do it again next year!"

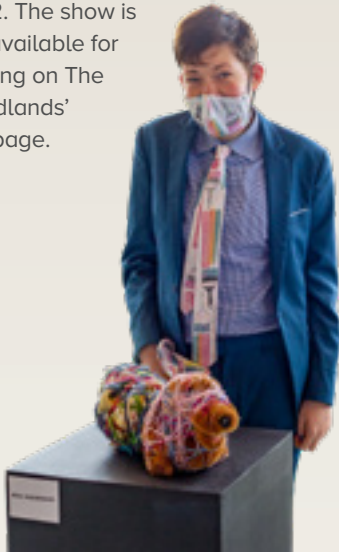
Mark your calendars! Plans are already underway for next year's Fall Festival, scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 2023.



Music & ART CONTINUES TO EXPAND

During the spring of this year, The Woodlands launched a brand-new studio arts class led by Fran Flaherty. Ms. Flaherty is a Deaf artist, curator, and educator who was recently appointed to the prestigious role of Director of Dyer Arts Center for the Advancement of Deaf Culture at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Throughout the spring term, ten Woodlands artists met weekly to examine and discuss the works of prominent Disabled artists, such as Helen Rae and Judith Scott. They also had the opportunity to learn and hear critiques from local artist and Woodlands community member, Matthew Carroll. Their original artworks debuted in our inaugural gallery show entitled, THE WOODLANDS ART HERE, in April 2022. The show is still available for viewing on The Woodlands' webpage.



In June of 2022, a selection of our artists' pieces traveled to downtown Pittsburgh where they were exhibited during the Three Rivers Arts Festival (TRAF). TRAF, attended by thousands of people annually, provided a broader platform for our artists' works to be seen. One piece by Woodlands artist, Laken Hoover, has already been invited to show at the Jodee Harris Gallery at Seton Hill University in early 2023.



"I am extremely proud to have worked with The Woodlands Foundation on creating their inaugural studio arts program. The support I received from the Director, Kristen Link, was vital to making the program successful. I wanted to make sure that we created a program that would foster, enhance, and encourage the innate creativity and talent within our students. Our students have not disappointed. Not only were they able to create a body of work, but they were able to create exhibition quality artwork. They challenged traditional aesthetics of art that allowed audiences to appreciate the beauty in their work," shared Fran Flaherty.

The studio arts class has resumed classes this fall and anticipates a new, on-campus gallery exhibit to begin in May 2023. For inquiries about Woodlands' arts programming, please email Director of Music & Arts, Kristen Link, at klink@woodlandsfoundation.org.



NEWS

WOODLANDS LAUNCHES EMERGING PROFESSIONALS BOARD



A new endeavor for The Woodlands, the Emerging Professionals Board (EPB) offers individuals between the ages of 22

and 35 with opportunities for personal and professional growth, leadership, networking, and service. Since the EPB's formation earlier this year, members have attended networking meetings and activities, learned more about The Woodlands, worked as a group to develop a concept for the Not So Haunted Trail on display during The Woodlands' Fall Festival, and volunteered at Woodlands' fundraising events. Next on the EPB agenda is the development of a professional mentorship program.

Chaired by Anthony Balouris, a member of The Woodlands Board of Directors, the EPB currently has 11 members with the goal of increasing membership to 15 by the end of next year. "There are exciting things happening at The Woodlands and the establishment of the Emerging Professionals Board is one of them! The group has been engaged in creating a strong unit and has invested time and attention in understanding the work that goes on with our organization, as well as how their roles fit with the organization. Moving into 2023, the EPB will have the opportunity to be paired up with a current Woodlands Board Member in a mentorship capacity and start to understand the roles and responsibilities of serving on a Board. This allows our organization to be forward-thinking with training future leaders both for The Woodlands and the local community in general."

For more information, contact Special Events & Corporate Relations Manager, Laura Thomas, lthomas@woodlandsfoundation.org.

NEW AUXILIARY PRESIDENT NAMED

The Woodlands welcomes Lori H. Roberts as the new President of the Auxiliary. Founded in 1998, the Auxiliary has been instrumental in supporting the success and growth of The Woodlands. Throughout the year, members of the Auxiliary dedicate countless hours to meeting, planning, and fundraising to support The Woodlands' mission. In addition, Auxilians work to identify and develop

other projects and community events that will enhance participant experience, broaden awareness, and beautify The Woodlands' 52-acre campus.

"I am thrilled to serve as the President of The Woodlands Auxiliary. As a parent of a Woodlands' participant, I had a vested interest when I joined the Auxiliary in 2013," said Lori Roberts. "My initial interest has grown into a deep desire to not only generate an understanding of the impact The Woodlands has on those it serves, but also support the growth and success of the organization. It's been an honor to serve alongside the members of the Auxiliary for the past nine years, and I am excited to work with this amazing group of women in a different role."

The opportunity to join The Woodlands Auxiliary is ongoing; for more information, contact Special Events & Corporate Relations Manager, Laura Thomas, lthomas@woodlandsfoundation.org.



WOODLANDS BREAKS GROUND FOR THE LAMBERT FAMILY AMPHITHEATER

October 8th was a milestone for The Woodlands when we celebrated the groundbreaking for the Lambert Family Amphitheater. With a lead gift from Sandy and Bill Lambert, contributions from individuals and the local grant making community, the project is set to be complete in the spring of 2023.

The amphitheater will provide a multi-purpose accessible open-air space to be used by The Woodlands, partners of The Woodlands and the community, and a permanent enhancement to The Woodlands' campus and infrastructure.

"The Amphitheater has always been a central part of the experience for The Woodlands participants," said Sandy Lambert. "It was heartbreaking to see the amphitheater no longer able to support the wide range of activities The Woodlands' children and adults deserve. With accessibility in our world too often taken for granted, we did not want this amphitheater to lose its importance to The Woodlands. Bill and I had fun imagining the possibilities for this incredible space. We know others have joined us in this project. We and The Woodlands thank them for their support. And we look forward to the many possibilities and exciting programming this space will provide."

Look for information about the ribbon cutting and open house, to take place in May 2023, on The Woodlands website, www.mywoodlands.org.



— GRANT RECEIVED FOR — PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



In addition to the program opportunities offered and its campus setting, The Woodlands boasts another unique asset in the Staff Development & Training Program. Every year, The Woodlands hires between 50-80 college students to work in seasonal staff positions such as program counselors, unit coordinators, life skills/recreation activity instructors, and healthcare associates for either 10 weeks of residential summer camp, or for residential weekend retreats held throughout the academic year.

Seasonal staff undergo training via The Woodlands Staff Development & Training Program, which offers a hands-on opportunity to work with individuals with a variety of disabilities, both physical and intellectual, and learn beyond the classroom setting what individuals with disabilities experience on a daily basis, from physical challenges to

communication barriers. The objective is for the experience to become a co-learning opportunity for both seasonal staff and program participants.

With grant funding, The Woodlands is partnering with Slippery Rock University (SRU) to enhance the current Staff Development & Training Program model through new approaches to professional training. Together, SRU and The Woodlands will develop a preferred future of learning for seasonal staff that will emphasize shared learning experiences; include instructors from the disability community; a formal curriculum of year-round learning opportunities; and, for program participants, the opportunity to take leadership roles as trainers and experts. The goal is to create a dynamic immersive experience that our partner colleges and universities will want to add to their curriculum.

“The Woodlands is looking forward to the opportunity to improve the depth and quality of our professional development. We know that strengthening our seasonal college staff impacts not just the care and programming offered at The Woodlands but also the future workforce of the greater disability community,” said Executive Director Samantha Ellwood.

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



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OUR MISSION

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with disability and chronic illness.

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**GIVING
TUESDAY**

NOVEMBER 29, 2022

