

THE AFTER GATEWAY ADVOCATE

A Quarterly Newsletter Published by After Gateway Inc.

Summer 2010

From the Director's Desk

In our last issue, I wrote about the growth we had with new participants joining our program. Well, that trend hasn't stopped!

Since February, we've added another nine participants. This brings our permanent participant count up to 27. We created a new group, the Gladiators, to accommodate this growth. They join our Phoenix, Champions, and Vikings groups.

Our summer program has grown as well. Last year, we had three individuals spend the summer with us. This summer, two of those returned, plus three more, for a total of five summer participants. (For those of you, like me, who are math-challenged, this means we'll be serving 32 participants this summer!)

All the new participants mean we continue to hire new staff. After Gateway is doing its part to ease the recession and the unemployment rate!

Additionally, this growth brings challenges. As mentioned in our last newsletter, our biggest need is an additional van. After Gateway is a community-based program and one of our goals is to make sure our participants feel that they are important parts of our community. We want our folks to get out and about! But, with only one van, we have difficulty doing so. Our current van is completely inadequate for our needs. It is no longer possible for us to take even one of our classrooms on an outing together. And many of our participants have goals that involve community activities, including volunteer work. What we've had to do for the summer is assign each of our groups one week each month for their outings. Not an ideal solution, but workable.

The van we now own can hold four or five participants in wheelchairs (depending upon the size of the wheelchairs), and two ambulatory participants, in addition to the two staff members required to be on the van. We hope to raise enough money for another van like the one we have, plus a van that could transport some ambulatory individuals and those staff members who now must drive their own vehicles to outings. Several

fundraisers are scheduled over the next eight months to raise the \$80,000 needed for these two vans.

We are pleased to announce that our national accreditation has been renewed for the second of three years. We undergo a rigorous on-site survey and audit every three years, but have to meet certain criteria in the "off years" and we were able to successfully meet those criteria.

We've had a lot of wonderful things happen over the last several months. The reality is that those things that make After Gateway the special place it is for our participants happen because of the generosity of our friends and extended family – you! Again, I thank you – and we invite you to come visit us – we love to see friends and family!!!

Carolyn McManus, Program Director

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Atkinson Family Helps AGI

Ben and Judy Atkinson are loyal friends of After Gateway. Every year they are involved with The Human Race to help AGI. This year the Atkinsons raised more than \$1,000 for After Gateway! We deeply appreciate everything that this family does for us. Their daughter, Amy, attended After Gateway in 2002. It is Amy's sweet face pictured on the memorial plaque hanging in our hallway. Thank you, Ben and Judy, for continuing your generous support of AGI!

AGI and The Human Race

This year's Human Race was held on Saturday, March 20. The AGI team included participants, families, staff, and board members. Besides walking and running, there was also free food, music, performers, t-shirts, and even free massages. The blue, cloudless sky and moderate temperature made weather that was perfect for this event. Thanks to everyone that came out to walk with us!

This year, we set an ambitious goal of \$50,000 to go to a new van which is desperately needed with our explosive growth. Unfortunately, we didn't reach our goal. The final total was just slightly above \$6,000. The recession has hit this area hard. We deeply appreciate everyone who contributed!

Dolly Madison Tea for AGI

On April 22, the Dolly Madison Women's Club of Greater Greensboro sponsored a tea for our participants and staff. The "Dollies" did an incredible job of decorating the Fellowship Hall with flowers and china teapots. A delicious buffet



of sandwiches and pastry was set out, while our hostesses went around and poured tea for everyone.

The participants in the Phoenix Room had practiced their etiquette before the tea. They learned what a "tea" is. The Champions and Vikings participants dressed up to get ready for this event. This was a good learning opportunity for everyone to dress up and display impeccable manners. We all had a wonderful time and were so grateful to the "Dollies". Our hostesses had a lovely time being with us and may make this an annual event.

Our gratitude goes to all of these special women who worked very hard to make this tea a lovely event! We hope that we will be seeing our

new friends from the Dolly Madison Women's Club at After Gateway again.

AGI Receives a Grant from The Cemala Foundation

Things just keep on getting better for us here at AGI! The Cemala Foundation has rewarded After Gateway with a \$10,000 grant! The purpose of this grant is for us to create and distribute new informational materials for families about planning for the transition from school to "the rest of their lives," information about funding sources and resources available; to redesign and reprint our brochure; to provide us with funding for website maintenance and redesign, and to help us become a part of the "social network" of Facebook and YouTube; plus allow us to offer special fundraising training for our Board and staff.

This grant is important because of our new growth. In order to keep and sustain our new growth we must make everyone in the Triad area know who we are and what we do. Then we must raise funds to sustain this growth. Our board will be training to learn how to keep AGI growing and self-sustaining. We know that our program is important to our community and we want to remain a strong organization for a very long time. The Cemala Foundation has our overwhelming gratitude for making this possible!

AGI Website Makeover

Earlier this year, Tech Triad announced in the *News and Record* their annual free extreme website makeover. Each year, Tech Triad donates their services to one non-profit organization. Tech Triad gives back to the community by helping non-profits develop community resources through their websites. Past winners have included The National Conference for Community and Justice of the Triad, Triad Health Project, and Community Theater of Greensboro. Tech Triad is the oldest woman-owned technology business in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina.

Tech Triad received almost 40 nominations for this makeover. They chose After Gateway! Dr. Sue Polinsky has met with some AGI staff and board members to begin planning our new website. With Tech Triad's help, we hope to create a website that families can use to get information about AGI, as well as about disability issues in general. We are in

the early planning stages, but we can't wait to debut our new website when everything is completed. Thank you, Tech Triad for making this possible! In addition, Tech Triad arranged for After Gateway to receive a \$5,000 grant from The Weaver Foundation for hardware and software upgrades.

Planning for Prom



Once again, we are lucky to have Girl Scouts help us plan our prom. This year, we decided to hold it later in the summer because our recent graduates had just attended their prom – and we can include all our summer participants. While just in the planning stages, we're getting very excited. After last year, our participants can't wait! Helping to fund this event is a generous donation from the Weisberger Family Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Foundation. Thank you!

New Staff Members Join Our Growing Family

Jennifer Duncan is a new intern with AGI. She is completing requirements for a degree from UNCG in Human Development and Family Studies. Jennifer has proven to be a real asset, working with participants to learn the "caring" part of After Gateway, and working with administrators to learn the "business" part of After Gateway. She is part of the Gladiator team.

Zachary Budd has more than seven years experience working with children with developmental disabilities. Plus, he's a self-taught cook, so we're counting on him to provide us with lots of culinary delights at special events! He has spent time learning about several participants at AGI, and is part of the Champions team.

Ayoluwa Massey (affectionately known as Lulu) has more than 10 years experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities. She grew up in New York, but was smart enough to move to North Carolina (smile) four years ago. She is part of the Phoenix team.

Brian Hendrix has a degree in Geology from Appalachian State University. He practically has a lifetime of experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities, given that his mother runs a company serving those individuals. Having that background, he says it was only natural

that he developed a passion for serving our population. Brian is part of the Phoenix team.

Vickie Aiken, Sonja Bullock, Tara Childers, Rochelle Dawkins, Patricia Gainer, and Kandace Wright are all teachers with the Guilford County School system working with children with developmental disabilities. Vickie and Kandace work at Grimsley High School; Sonja, Tara, and Patricia work at Gateway Education Center; and Rochelle (who was with us last summer and over spring break) works at McIver Education Center. We are so lucky to have them with us this summer!

Ethan Lodics (son of our Healthcare Coordinator, Julie Rafter-Lodics), joins us part-time for the summer. He has been invaluable for his computer expertise, errands, moving things, and more!

Spaghetti Dinner—Save the date!

Friday, October 22, 2010 is the date for our Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser. We start serving at 11 am for all you working folks to come during your lunch hour. We'll even deliver your lunch if you call in advance. Or bring your family and friends for supper – we'll serve until 7 pm. The **Menu** includes spaghetti (meat or vegan), salad, Italian bread, dessert and beverage. Cost is \$8 per person. Along with the meal we'll be conducting an all-day Silent Auction that includes all kinds of good stuff. We will also be raffling a hand-made quilt that is partially made by AGI participants and finished by some experienced quilters. Additionally, we will be selling pies and Georgia pecans by the pound. We expect to have a great time at this event! We hope to see YOU!

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