



# THE LARC VOICE

LOWNDES ADVOCACY RESOURCE CENTER  
FALL NEWSLETTER 2021



HARRY A. HAMM, PhD.



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## LARC LEADERSHIP

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The LARC leadership team has been telling our story every chance we got. Joel Giddens serves as a member and Treasurer of the Mayor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. This council has worked to improve services and recognize the rights of Valdosta citizens with special needs for several years under the guidance of various Mayors.

Nearing Adams was selected to participate in Leadership Lowndes, which was extended an extra year due to COVID-19, where he met new community leaders and learned much about our community. Normally, LL tours LARC each year, but due to COVID and for the safety of all, he described LARC services to his colleagues. Words speak volumes but a tour of LARC providing services demonstrates what words cannot tell.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

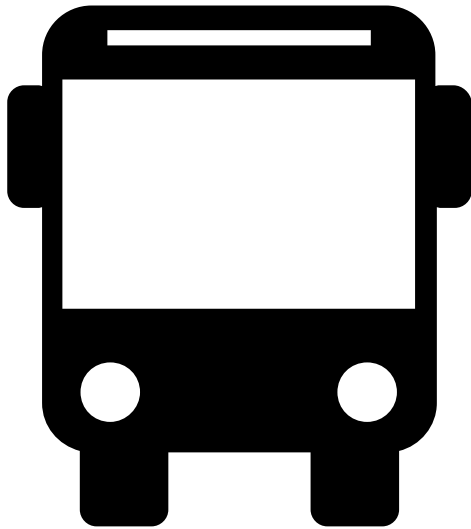
Steve Jaramillo spoke on the radio with our Mayor and Board Member Scott James Matheson, conversing with each other about LARC so that listeners could learn what we do. He recently spoke to the North Rotary Club about us. He has participated in several activities at United Way and spoke to the Business Networking International Club.



Dr. Harry Hamm recently spoke to the Rotary Club of Valdosta on another occasion. He is currently serving his fourth term as President of the Kiwanis Club of Valdosta and wrote a grant request for Kiwanis to fund a scholarship for un-, or under-funded, individuals who need services provided by LARC. The grant was approved and should exist perpetually.

# COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

With places opening back up slowly in the community, our staff has had opportunities to take our consumers on field trips. Here are just a few trips we have been on since summer started.



## FIFTH DAY FARMS

LARC of Valdosta was able to visit Fifth Day Farms on June 10th. The consumers were very excited to be out during these hard times with COVID. They were able to see and pet many farm animals. This was another awesome experience for many of our consumers. Everyone was excited and each consumer was eager to pet the many types of animals. The staff at Fifth Day Farms was very welcoming and allowed each consumer to be themselves. That alone spoke volumes. We all had a great time even in the midst of the pandemic. We are dedicated to the safety and happiness of our staff and consumers.

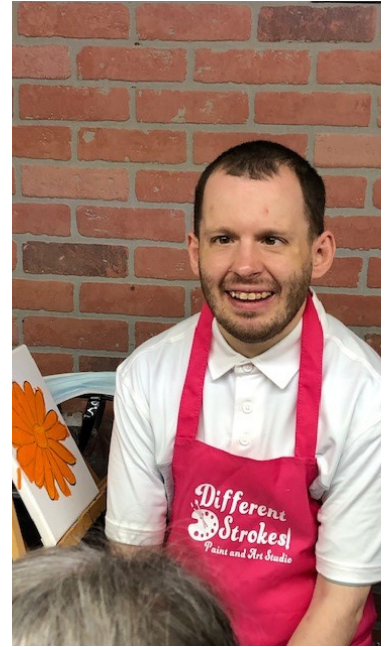


"The staff at Fifth Day Farms were very welcoming and allowed each individual to be themselves."



# Different Strokes Art and Paint Studio

Some of the staff took their consumers on an outing to a local Art Studio in Valdosta. While there, consumers had the opportunity to interact with each other and to enjoy a day of fun. They had an amazing time painting. While there they listened to music, enjoyed lunch, and painted their own canvas. Many consumers never had the opportunity to experience painting on a canvas, or visit an actual studio. The smiles on their faces were priceless to the staff at Different Strokes Art and Paint Studio. One staff member in particular took to social media on how her day had started rocky and she was feeling very low. With tears in her eyes as we walked through the door, she states, "it's the smiles for me". They instantly changed her outlook on the day. The fact that the consumers were so happy, made her realize how grateful she was to have this unique opportunity to share with such great warm hearts. Our consumers were beyond happy; they constantly thanked the owner and staff for allowing them to paint. We at LARC are dedicated to ensuring that we strive daily for the happiness of our consumers.



"It's the smiles for me!"



**We are not just staff and consumers.  
WE ARE FAMILY!**

# Kona Ice

As a way of sharing a CARF performance indicator with the consumers, LARC started an attendance program for the consumers in the WAC (Work Activity Center). LARC sets a monthly attendance goal and announces the daily attendance to the consumers and celebrates with music if the goal is met that day. The attendance is tracked on a calendar in the WAC so that everyone can follow along with the progress for the month. If the monthly attendance goal is met then the consumers get rewarded with different treats including an ice cream party and a pizza party.



Kona Ice partnered with LARC to reward the consumers for meeting their goal for the month of April 2021. The consumers enjoyed receiving the treat from the bright colored Kona Ice truck with its tropical music playing. A great time was had by the consumers and LARC staff alike. We appreciate Kona Ice for helping us with rewarding the consumers for their continued attendance at LARC.

# TRAFFIC SAFETY ON CARS AND MOTORCYCLES

On May 20th Selena, an instructor at LARC, introduced the topic of Traffic Safety on Cars and Motorcycles to her group. She discussed the laws of the road as well as the advantages and disadvantages of operating a car versus a motorcycle. She talked about the importance of following driving laws and being vigilant of their surroundings even while being a passenger. Selena also stressed the importance of wearing both seatbelts and other necessary safety gear when riding in any type of vehicle. She opened up a discussion on safety, which allowed everyone to share thoughts on car and motorcycle safety. After the discussion, Selena had her group complete a traffic safety handout.

Selena feels that it is very important for everyone to have new learning opportunities as well new experiences. She states; "I just want to make sure my consumers get to experience so much more in life. To see their excitement brings so much joy to my heart. Being around them allows me to forget so many of my own struggles."

Selena showed her group a video, "Inside a Riding Education Program". The video explained safety measures for a particular type of motorcycle: the Can Am 3 (Spyder). After introducing these safety measures and videos, Selena was very touched at how much we take for granted when a few of her consumers stated they had never seen nor ridden a motorcycle. Many had only seen motorcycles on television!

Selena made a call to her son, Kartavius, the owner of Kar'Lani's Beauty and Barber Salon. He is the proud owner of a Can Am 3 Wheel (Spyder). Without hesitation, Kartavius changed his schedule and provided the opportunity for Selena's consumers to see a motorcycle up close. Selena instructed her group to take a walk outside with her. Once outside, she presented Kartavius and his motorcycle. The consumers were ecstatic! The looks on the consumers' faces were priceless.





Kartavius shared with the consumers the 'dos and don'ts' of operating a motorcycle. Individuals were allowed to sit on the motorcycle and have their picture taken. Again, expressions were priceless. Dr. Hamm allowed Selena to drive the motorcycle so that her consumers could see a moving motorcycle up close. The consumers had a wonderful time and had the opportunity to experience something quite different. The experience is something they will remember for a long time to come.



We, at LARC, extend our gratitude to our staff and our visitor, Kartavius, for bringing his Can Am 3 Wheeler (Spyder) to help teach about traffic safety. He certainly made this a great experience for our consumers.



## CLOSING

Despite COVID still happening a year later, LARC consumers have been able to enjoy activities within the community. We are taking precautions by wearing masks, sanitizing during breaks, and practicing social distancing. The safety of our consumers are our top priority, and we see to it that they are taken care of while at LARC.

A big thanks goes to our Board; without their support, LARC may not have stayed afloat. To our staff, thank you for seeing us through a particularly hard two years. Without you, our programs would not be what they are today.





# LOWNDES ADVOCACY RESOURCE CENTER

**LARC WILL ENCOURAGE SELF-GROWTH AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION BY PROVIDING LIVING AND WORKING OPPORTUNITIES IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS WITHIN THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS/COOK/LANIER/BERRIEN/BROOKS /TIFT SERVICE AREA. LARC WILL WORK WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES TO HELP INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES MOVE FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE. OUR PHILOSOPHY IS TO ENSURE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY CHOICE IN PLANNING FOR AND PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING. LARC WILL BE A MEASURABLY VALUABLE RESOURCE THROUGH SUCCESSFULLY MEETING THE CHANGING NEEDS OF OUR CONSUMERS.**



CARF Accredited



LARC is a United Way Agency

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