

THE WRANGLER GAZETTE

STORIES AND LEGENDS OF NEW DANVILLE

December 2022

The Holidays Come
to New Danville

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Photo courtesy David Wallace.

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New Danville is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) rural community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those who need similar services that is located in Willis, TX.

FROM THE CEO



"A new year brings not only happiness, it makes us happy with a hope to fulfill our dreams or a new beginning of our life" Santonu Kumar Dhar

So here we are....2023 is around the corner! It has been a wonderful year for New Danville. We have been truly blessed by continued support from our families, our donors, and our community. This past year we were honored to receive numerous grants, both big and small, that will help us continue to enhance our programs. Two in particular include a grant from Texas Mutual which will help us create

more on-site employment opportunities, and a grant from the Montgomery County Community Foundation which will help us bring secured entry doors to our main building. And, thanks to our dedicated volunteers, we had two outstanding special events, Spring Thing and Play A Round for the Wranglers golf tournament. Add to that the continued growth of our day program and the continued success of our retail store, Jazzy Junque. What a great year!

How are we accomplishing this? The secret to our good fortune is simple; Our Mission: *"New Danville provides adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities an opportunity to live enriched and purposeful lives."* Very simple, yet very powerful. We believe in our mission! It is at the forefront of everything we do. Those we support, our Wranglers, are our motivation, our joy and our purpose.

As we close out the year I would be remiss if I did not thank all of our donors, sponsors, and community partners. Without this support, New Danville could not accomplish so much! Because of them, we not only operate, but we flourish. I would take up this entire newsletter in recognizing everyone that we are grateful for. Just know that without you, our community of friends, families and donors, we could not dream of a brighter future.

As we close out 2022, we look to our future and *"hope to fulfill our dreams"* through our Vision 2025, *Growing...for Living* campaign. Our "new life" will include expanded residential options, an expanded class/learning center, and a social/recreational center. These additions will truly place New Danville as a premier agency in Montgomery County offering specialized services for our community.

Once again, THANK YOU. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

GOOD NEWS THAT IS GOOD TO KNOW

Montgomery County Community Development recently advised New Danville that we can anticipate funding of approximately \$933,000 for infrastructure development on the south end of our campus in preparation for the construction of 11 new homes. For more information about our plans and fundraising needs associated with our *Growing...for Living campaign* check the storybook and virtual flyover available [here](#).

The **Montgomery County Community Foundation** recently awarded a grant of over \$11,000 to help address key elements of our initiative to improve security measures across the campus.

DEVELOPMENT CORNER: END OF YEAR TIPS

According to recent national statistics, about 20% of charitable giving occurs in December. Here are a few reminders to consider for year-end contributions:



- Remember, your donation must occur in 2022 to be counted for your 2022 income tax return. [Giving online](#) makes it easy to be sure your gift is credited this year. When mailing a check or a gift form, the envelope must be postmarked in 2022.

- If you opt to donate securities, you will find our form [here](#).
- I will be checking my email and voicemail frequently throughout the holiday period. If you have any questions related to your year-end contribution, please feel free to contact me at 936-253-5757 or Dion.McInnis@NewDanville.org.



NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanks to the [Texas Special Children's Projects](#)' ongoing support, the Wranglers had a very special Christmas party, including a visit from Santa!



Bowling is one of the Wranglers' favorite activities; they love bowling. And bowlers love the Wranglers, too. Thanks to the generosity of the league and recreational bowlers who participated in an Angel Tree project at [A Time to Spare](#) bowling lanes, each



resident at New Danville's residential community, Meadowbrook, received gifts from their personalized lists. Boxes of gifts were recently delivered for distribution. Hanna Thacker, the lane's event coordinator, said they are already looking forward to doing it again in 2023. Thank you!

FUNDRAISING FACTOID

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, you can be sure there's another party for the Wranglers on the horizon. Please click [here](#) to help make this yet another party of fun, celebration and good time.

Please remember our [Amazon Wishlist](#) next time you are shopping online. Below are members of the culinary class trying out the recently donated air fryer. New Danville has benefitted from a variety of contributions through the Wishlist. Thank you!



UPCOMING EVENTS



**Spring Thing
April 28, 2023**

The Woodlands Conference Center

For more information:
www.Spring-Thing.org

By the end of the year, we would LOVE to reach 500 Instagram followers. Please invite your friends, family, co-workers....everyone...to follow on Instagram @NewDanville.

LIVE: INDEPENDENCE EQUALS OPPORTUNITY

Colt has lived in New Danville’s residential community, Meadowbrook, for four years; this is his first time to live away from home. While there are many benefits of living independently, most that Colt cites involve opportunities that involve friends, work and chances to help others.

Speaking about living on his own, he said the transition was easy. “It felt good,” he said, “doing my own thing, hanging out with my friends and making new ones. My roommates and I laugh with each, picking on each other in fun ways. They are good friends.”

Responsibilities are part of opportunity, too. “I work, take care of my pet cat and take care of my room, keeping it clean.” He appreciates the ease of his work



commute, which is less than 100 yards. Colt is a member of the “pallet team” that assembles pallets for Charbonneau Industries, and of the “landscape crew” that helps with

some of the needs of New Danville’s 42-acre campus. He also volunteers to help with a variety of New Danville projects.

“I like helping others, too, whether my neighbors or people in the community. I get asked to do things that involve muscle and I am happy to help,” he said with more than a little pride.

Colt offers encouraging words to anyone who is thinking about living at New Danville. “Be patient. There are many people waiting for a chance. It is worth the wait.”

Most importantly to Colt and his parents are the changes that independence have brought about. “I am more independent than ever,” he said. “I’ve grown. My mom and dad, and me, didn’t want me to just sit around as a life. I have a good life.”



Some members of the Giving Back class include (L-R): Brooke, Amy, Shay (Direct Support Professional), Pam and Ivan.

LEARN: GIVING BACK CLASS: LEARNING TO SERVE

Learning to serve the needs of others is a lifelong process. Members of New Danville’s “Giving Back” class are service-minded by nature, but they have learned new ways to help others, as well as what it means to those they help with their projects that includes assisting at a food bank, animal shelter and other nonprofits in the community.

With Direct Support Professional Shay Caesar guiding the way, members of the group help select the organizations and specific projects that they tackle. Judging from feedback from the participants, the greatest reward is doing for others who need help. Wranglers have fun with everything they do and service projects are no exception.

Pam said she loves projects that help kids and animals. While she has fun helping, she feels best when her efforts enabled kids to have Christmas this year.

Amy loves working with the animals at a local shelter, too, and enjoys projects where she can make things for others, like was done for a nearby senior community.

“It feels good to help,” Brooke said. “It’s a good thing to do.” Everyone in the group nodded in agreement.

Ivan summed up why the group exists in a way that everyone agreed. He said, “We give to others to show them our love for them.”

WORK: WORDS OF WISDOM ABOUT WORK

It is always best to get advice about jobs from someone who loves theirs. Katy loves her job at Woodhaven Village senior community and she is happy to share her insights to both employers and employees.

She began her job in 2018; it was not her first job. She learned a lot about job hunting and interviewing while in high school. Proud of her work serving seniors, she smiles broadly while saying “Everyone loves me...I think it is because I am sweet to everyone.” Katy said, “I am not a morning person. I get to work in the evening which means I can come here (New Danville) during the day.”

To special needs adults considering a job, Katy suggests:

- Make sure you understand the job and what is required
- Make sure it is a job that you like
- Ask others for help to learn new skills on the job

To employers considering hiring a special needs adult, Katy encourages:

- Be flexible with work schedules
- Make sure to listen and try to understand your special needs employee
- Understand the restrictions of [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI)

...sounds like the voice of experience!



GROW: A SIGN OF GROWTH

Live, learn, work and grow. It is more than a tag line. Everything – and everyone – seems to be growing on the 42 acres of New Danville.

With enrollment up 20% over this time last year, programs and roles are changing to be sure the Direct Support Professionals (DSP) have the support they require to meet the needs of the Wranglers (clients). According to Program Specialist, Melissa Varney, “Most simply, my new role is support, support, support.”

Melissa has been at New Danville for five years. When she first started, she worked part-time as a DSP. There were just over 40 clients at the time. Recently promoted to the new role of Program Specialist, she now is an integral part of maintaining the empowering programs that serve 106 Wranglers.



“I look at my life and career experiences, and it seems like all of it has prepared me for this new role,” Melissa said. “I feel like I am using everything I’ve learned over the years to now help our DSPs provide the best support possible to our Wranglers as they live, learn, work and grow. I never want to leave New Danville. I got hooked my first day here because of the way the staff interacted with each

other, and how they engaged the clients in decisions about classes, field trips and activities. It is not a ‘my way’ mentality, but an ‘our way’ mindset.”

The new role has more paperwork and recordkeeping requirements than her previous position, but the most important function is supporting her team. “I know what they (DSPs) go through so I think I can better assist them. Our team makes the position easy. They always come together, no matter the situation, to make sure the Wranglers’ needs are met.”



WRANGLER'S TALE: LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTERS

Danielle's current status as a Wrangler is actually "phase two." She has been here a year, but she also attended prior to 2020, but then COVID hit. "That was a mess," she and her mother, Marie, said in unison. They are alike in more ways than their common opinion about the pandemic situation.

Gregarious, chatty and engaging, both like to be involved with all things involving New Danville.

Danielle's favorite part about New Danville is her friends, followed by a long list of other "favorites," including the variety of classes, the animals (Pumpkin is her favorite), field trips, helping with the Wrangler 2s (clients who need additional assistance due to the challenges they face)...and more. She loves being able to pick her own slate of classes and is already looking forward to the new "semester" in early 2023, including music and movie-making options.

Marie first learned about New Danville from the informal community network of families with special needs children. "That's the most important way to learn," she said.

Currently employed at Shake Shack, Danielle seems to found a perfect place for her love of people. She helps keep

the restaurant cleaned up and enjoys helping customers. She happily admits to being a people person. She has served others there for 18 months.

Danielle and Marie volunteered at the recent [Wine Walk](#) event in The Woodlands, engaging passersby to sell tickets and tell New Danville stories. "I like to tell stories about New Danville," Danielle said. "I tell them about the things we do, like the field trips we take to the mall, the fair and stuff. I love field trips."

Danielle's enthusiasm for New Danville and Marie's sense of commitment are contagious. Marie's other daughter, Alicia, recently started a new job. At her first opportunity to promote New Danville as a beneficiary, her new employer, [The GLD Store](#), selected us for a generous contribution in support of field trips.

Challenged to cite one thing that she wished other people knew about New Danville and Wranglers, Danielle replied quickly, "I wished people knew to listen to us, to be kind to each other." Words to live by.

(Editor's note: The Conroe Lion's Club recently contacted New Danville to make a donation and to offer the opportunity for New Danville to make a presentation to their members in March, thanks to the storytelling of Danielle and Marie at Wine Walk.)



WRANGLERS AND THEIR PARENTS: POWERFUL TEAMS



AND SO MANY MORE...!

GUEST VOICES : IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Cyndy and Mel Oller have a long history with New Danville, starting when it was only a concept. Both have served on our board and volunteered in myriad ways. Their daughter, Leah, started in the day program after she graduated from high school.

We volunteered a lot for New Danville. Both of us have served on the board, volunteered for projects and have done whatever we could. We wouldn't have done it if we didn't believe in everything about New Danville.

We brought our daughter, Leah, to see New Danville shortly before she graduated from high school. She loved it as soon as she saw it. The last few years, with the COVID situation and other things, have been hard for her because she misses her friends and the staff. She was so excited to be able to start coming again. She has buddies here. They are more than that... they are friends for life. As parents, it means the world to us to see our daughter have that. We didn't want her to have a life of sitting at home and watching movies all the time. New Danville provides her with so much.

Leah has a place now. New Danville is it. It has provided her with a sense of independence, too. She told us that she needed her friends and that we need our own friends, too. That was a stark reminder of how much she has grown because of New Danville. It means a lot to us. We love the staff that helps make her growth possible. Everyone here, from Eva (President and CEO) on, through everyone that works there, has a visible love for all the Wranglers (clients).

Joy surrounds you at New Danville. It must be the magic that the Wranglers provide. We recommend that everyone spend a day with these wonderful adults; you cannot go home without feeling their pure joy. You cannot not be affected by them and their spiritedness, and how they support each other. We love New Danville. It gives us hope and peace, which are priceless for parents of a child with special needs.



DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO SHARE YOUR TIME AND TALENT TO SUPPORT WRANGLERS?

Nonprofits depend on volunteers who share their time and talents. New Danville is no different. Here are some of the areas in which we utilize volunteers. Can you help?

- Jazzy Junque: Upscale home décor resale store located in the Outlets of Conroe shopping center
- Projects: Typically, one-day commitments to help with various projects typical of a rural campus
- Programs: Helping with instruction or other needs associated with the various programs/classes that we offer
- Special events: Our major fundraising events are Spring Thing and Play a Round for the Wranglers golf tournament

To make it easier to indicate your interest, simply complete this [form](#).

LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND GROW: LIFE AND TIMES AT NEW DANVILLE



Volunteers with the Legally Authorized Representative Association (LARA) helped our residents “deck the halls.” LARA is a nonprofit organization focuses on service and social activities for our residents. They also provide programs for our day program clients, Wranglers. One of their most popular offerings at this time of year is the Christmas Market where Wranglers can shop for free for gifts for their friends and family members.



Christmas at Meadowbrook photographs courtesy of Meadowbrook resident and Wrangler, David Wallace. Thank you, David!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ALL OF US AT NEW DANVILLE TO YOU AND YOURS. SEE YOU IN '23!

We are pleased to introduce *Live, Learn, Work and Grow: Wisdom from Under the Windmill*, an inspiring, motivational, immediately usable presentation by Dion McInnis, development director. Bring this to your organization, association, business or group; everyone’s life can be better with the 15 nuggets of wisdom for living discovered at New Danville. Contact Dion at Dion.McInnis@NewDanville.org to book the presentation for your event. For more info: www.NewDanville.org/Wisdom.

New Danville is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit rural community in Willis, TX for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. New Danville provides our clients an opportunity to live enriched and purposeful lives; we proudly call them Wranglers.