



Ben's Place Bugle

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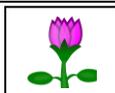
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Summer 2020

Our Mission

Our Mission is to provide social experiences and support the independence of individuals with disabilities. We provide unique opportunities for individuals with developmental, physical, or acquired disabilities to interact and learn life and vocational skills with their peers in a social environment. Our vision is based on the premise that individuals with disabilities will be respected and appreciated for their own individual capabilities as they strive toward their own personal dreams.

***Created different. Treated equal.
A community of friends.***



Gashia's Story

Ben's Place wouldn't exist if it weren't for our members. This edition of the Bugle is featuring our member Gashia and how she has been going about her daily activities since COVID-19...

Hi! My name is Gaisha Wright, and I just celebrated my 33rd birthday in April. Family and friends are very important to me. I live with my mother, Darlene, and I have a big sister, Connie, who is the best sister ever!

On weekends, I often spend a lot of time with my cousin Demetrius. We love to shop, eat out, and play games. My favorite game is 'Just Dance' on Xbox.

(cont. page 3)

Daily Activities Update

There are so many things that continue to change in everyone's life. **We still do not have a planned time to re-open.** It is especially important for us to have the proper equipment and distancing plans to be able to keep everyone safe.

Since we cannot meet, we have created a way for our members to meet, talk, and possibly sing a little karaoke. **Ben's Place is online, Monday through Friday at 11 am and again at 4 pm. Join Stephanie and London, for about 1 hour, to talk with your friends and hangout.** You can come once a day, both times, or just a few times a week. Our hope is to try and get back to feeling a little bit more normal. **Everyone who has been there is feeling better just seeing their friends and talking with them.**

So please join using Zoom, it is free. You can use your phone, tablet, or computer if it has video camera and a microphone. Again, the meetings are at 11 am and 4 pm (Florida time). Remember to click on the movie camera icon so we can see you, the microphone icon so we can hear you, and the speaker so you can hear us.

Send us a message and we will send you the password information.

~Annie

Reopening WISH LIST: we currently need for the center, masks, thermometer, cleaning supplies, paper towels, toilet paper, gloves, hand soap, hand sanitizer, bingo prizes, and gift cards.

Thank YOU...for the generous donations to our center. We have received a **brand-new karaoke machine** by an anonymous donor who saw our WISH LIST!

Notice: We have a notification system. This allows our team to remind us of important things and notify everyone in case of an emergency. Please join in.

www.remind.com/join/benspl



**BE SAFE
FOLLOW THE RULES
AND
WE WILL GET
BETTER SOON**

- 1) Wash your hands often especially after coughing or sneezing
- 2) Wear your mask in public that covers your mouth and nose
- 3) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth until you wash your hands
- 4) Do not hug or share food with others
- 5) Stay home if you feel sick

Hi,

Some much has changed in everyone's life. If your family is like ours you are ready and anxious for things to get back to normal.

We wish that too but, for now we still cannot open. When we do, we will have some changes too. We will have to **up our sanitizing procedures**. That means we must have more sanitizer, bleach, antibacterial cleaners, tissues and more. We will **not be able to provide lunches** and must learn to **be socially distant and most likely wear masks**.

Depending on how many members are coming back we might even have **two (2) sessions or alternate days of attendance** for full days. When we know the details of when we can open, we will notify everyone. **Please make sure that we have your email address or join us on Remind.com.**

For now, please stay safe and healthy. And join in with the members for Ben's Place meetings.

~ Annie



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A Message from the President

Some of you may remember the opening to Charles Dickens's book A Tale of Two Cities. "**It was the best of times, it was the worst of times**, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." Amazing how this one sentence outlines the range of emotions we've experienced this year!

Many of us are struggling with the swing from celebrating our essential workers and local heroes to now facing the social failures and racism that lead to tragic and unnecessary deaths. As positive changes occur, I hope they make us all realize how important we are to one another. Inclusiveness, dignity, and respect for everyone has been integral to our success at Ben's Place. Showing that love and caring for others means more now than ever before.

Due to the stay at home orders we've made some **adjustment at Ben's Place because we can't all gather together**. As an example, I joined a **Zoom** call recently where there were about 15 of us from Ben's Place and we had a **scavenger hunt**. A household item would get called out called out then we'd scurry around trying to find that roll of toilet paper, hat, or stuffed animal so we could show it to others on Zoom. It was great fun and wonderful to see so many friends who were usually at Ben's Place every day. I really missed seeing everyone and our scavenger hunt together provided lots of laughter and fun.

On the business side, we were able to **secure an SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan** to help us bridge the gap but like most non-profits it's been a really tough financially.

We have plans for many **fundraisers and opportunities for you to support us going forward** so we hope to rebound quickly.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you soon.

- Jay Abraham

Fundraising Committee

Have a little extra time right now? We Could Use Your Help!
We are looking for some help planning our continuing fundraising events. We need to have money in our treasury to prepare for our reopening. Please give us a call or email so we can get you started on our fundraising committee.

Gashia's Story

(cont. from page 1)

We turn the living room into a dance floor to dance, compete, and have lots of fun. I love going to my favorite restaurant, GG's, where we can eat all the crab legs, seafood, salad, and dessert we want.

I spend a lot of time at home now that Ben's Place is closed, I play with my dog named Angel. She likes to chase me when I take her favorite toy and run! It is my job to make sure she has fresh water and food each day, and I give her treats. I like to color, I color in my coloring books also, I like word search puzzles.

I sometimes go to Sam's with my Mother and my cousin to grocery shop, but my cousin and I mainly went for the food samples, now that they are no longer serving samples it's not as much fun, but I still like to go. We wear a mask when we go into a store now to stay safe. Since we are not able to meet at Ben's Place Ms. Annie decided to keep us in touch by video chatting on Zoom! We meet daily at 11:00 a.m. and again at 4:00 p.m. to talk about our favorite foods, movies, and crafts.

I talk to my friends on the phone every day, I also got up in the mornings and make breakfast for myself, I make omelets, French toast, fried eggs with grits, and oatmeal; I enjoy cooking, sometimes I make breakfast for my Mother and Aunt Tee.

When I am at home I also play a game called Sims, I build my family, I go to work so I can pay for all the things I want in my house, I have to keep the people in the game alive, sometimes It's hard, but I like to play. I listen to my radio and play my Karaoke machine singing songs I like to sing like Whitney Huston, and Kenny G, I sang a lot of different songs. When the weather is good my sister and I go walking about a mile and a half to exercise, most of the time we walk through the neighborhood and see who can get home first, some time I walk really fast to be the first one home and win.

I enjoy watching television, most of the time I watch Zack and Cody, Burney Mack, Sam & Cat, and Nickelodeon. I love to watch scary movies with my family.

I miss Ben's Place very much and hope we get to go back where to all my friends and staff; I miss them a lot.



I want to take swimming lessons this summer and I would like to learn how to drive. One day I want to get my own apartment.

I hope we are able to go back to Ben's Place soon. I miss my friends, the nice staff, and all the great things we get to do.

Thank YOU ~ Gashia

YOU'VE BEEN FLOCKED



Let's have some fun and help out Ben's Place! Surprise that friend with a "**Flamboyance of Flamingos**" in their front yard. What a great surprise for a birthday or anniversary or just because!

Starting at the following suggested donations for:

Small Flock (12 Flamingos) - \$10;
Medium Flock (24 Flamingos) - \$15;
Large Flock (36 Flamingos) - \$20;
Super-Size (60 Flamingos) - \$30,
you can have Pink-a-Licious Flamingos waiting to surprise someone when they get up in the morning. They get to enjoy these cute birds for 24 hours. Or they can choose to send them to someone else for \$10.

We are also **selling Premium Anti-Flocking Insurance for \$15** that guarantees you will not be flocked during this fun event!

Here is the link to the fun form, <http://bensplacecof.org/flockingafriend/>
What a nice way to cheer-up your friends during this unique time!



Save the Date

Golf tournament on **Friday, October 2nd at Bent Creek Golf Club.** Call (904) 303-5996 for more information on sponsorships, creating a foursome, or making donations to our silent auction.

We certainly are living in interesting times!

Without a doubt, **the active opening of Ben's Place has been missed.** As a community, we like others have been forced to isolate in order to ensure our individual and collective safety. The closing down of the center was purely a move to protect our members, but it has come at a cost. **The center sustains itself in three ways: 1) membership fees; 2) fundraising; 3) donations.** The circumstances of the pandemic, such as social isolation, have greatly disrupted our revenue streams. The suspension of onsite activities has meant no membership income. The closing of the economy has meant no direct fundraising as we have traditionally done. Though we have received some very generous donations, many of our supporters are in the same situation as the center. And in truth, although we were extremely fortunate to not have to pay rent during this period, we still have operating expenses that are necessary in order to be in a position to reopen for our members.

Out of a desire to reopen on the strongest footing possible, **we ask your full participation and support of the creative fundraising activities that you see listed in this issue.** When safety permits, through our pending fundraising efforts and the hopeful return of our membership, we will be able to return to our stellar members' services without any lag due to limited financial resources. **Please support Ben's Place when and as you can.**

Jason M. Gibson

Board Member (Secretary/Treasurer)

And thankfully, with government support, our staff

Eat, Drink and Be Giving

Our online auction will run August 27 - August 29th! Get ready to grab your favorite food and drink. Log into our auction & raffle event. Buy raffle tickets & bid on your favorite items! A great way to end summer and get ready for fall!

Share this <http://www.biddingowl.com/BensPlaceServicesInc> with all of your family and friends. See previews leading up to the event. All from the comfort of your home.

Coming Soon!

Cooking Along with Ben's Place

Very soon we will be launching our very own virtual cooking show. All the ingredients to make a delicious home cooked meal or dessert. Stay tuned!!!

Free Workshops for Parents and Guardians

As the caregiver of a loved one with special needs, you face many of the same challenges that any parent faces. But you must cope with some unique financial, medical, educational, and legal issues as well.

I'm sure many of you have become veritable medical experts when it comes to your loved one and their individual medical needs; the meds, the specialists, the insurance. But what have you done to ensure your loved one's future?

As a parent or guardian of a loved one with special needs, you sometimes have to face difficult tasks that make you uncomfortable, but their importance compels you to take action. Accidents happen. People are involved in fatal accidents every day on the road, at work, even at home. You need begin planning for the care of your loved one with special needs when you are no longer around.

Part of Special Needs Planning is the process of planning for those situations to make it easier on your loved ones physical and emotional well-being and to ensure that your loved one is cared for in accordance with your wishes. This is what I do.

I have an adult son with Asperger's Syndrome and lost a child with Downs Syndrome that passed before his first birthday. I am also a Financial Advisor that specializes in Special Needs Planning. I understand the need for planning more than most. This is why I have been asked to begin contributing to the newsletter.

Aside from just the column in the newsletter, I will also be conducting free monthly workshops on Zoom centered around the special needs community. The current workshop topics are;

- **Special Needs Trust**
- **ABLE United Accounts**
- **Providing For Your Loved One After Your Death**
- **Support Networks and Community Resources**
- **Letter of Intent**

I look forward to being a more vocal part of Ben's Place Services and I hope that the education and information that I will be providing will help you and your family lead a fuller, more enjoyable life. Thank you for a moment of your time.



thrivent

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