

CHANGES FOR DAY CENTER

More Community Integration

The Vita Living Day Center opened in 2016 to give our residential clients a central day program to attend. The Day Center has improved the quality of life for our clients and their staff thanks to the support of our generous donors. Being together five days a week has helped strengthen clients' sense of community and deepen friendships. The program also enables us to provide on-site nursing care, offer a healthy lunch and snacks, bring in specialists like podiatrists and dentists to see multiple clients, give client care teams time for face-to-face meetings, and invite community members and volunteers to spend time with our clients.

This fall we will begin to change the structure of our Day Center program to adhere to new state guidelines/requirements for Individualized Skills and Socialization. Changes include additional community integration and lowering client-to-staff ratios for more personalized activities.

What this means for Vita Living is that we will continue to provide Day Center programs during the weekday, but our clients will spend additional time and participate in more community activities. It also means that we will increase our staffing to meet ratio requirements and ensure clients are cared for and safe.

These requirements will affect each individual differently as some clients have a great deal of autonomy and others need close supervision because of behavioral challenges. In the coming months we will look to raise additional funds to support this vital program expansion.



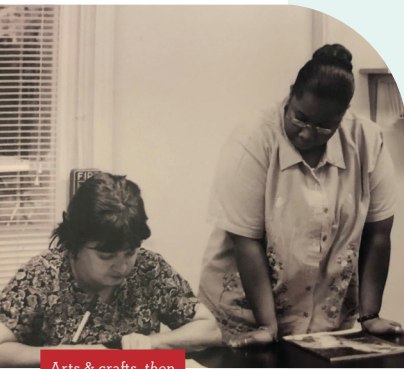
Lajuana and Chelsea pose for a photo at the Art Car Museum



Day Center visit to the Art Car Museum



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF CREATIVE CARING



Arts & crafts, then



Arts & crafts, now



40TH FIESTA CELEBRATION

The 40th Fiesta was a night to remember! About 280 guests helped to raise a record \$170,000 for our mission. Event Chairs Kristen and Drew Perrin and Courtney and John Anderson did a tremendous job leading our team. We are also especially grateful to all our donors, Emcee Kip Altstaetter, Rev. Louise Samuelson, the Amegy Bank volunteers, and the NCL Houston Hearts Chapter volunteers!

The featured speaker Gabe Cazares, is Director in the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. One of the most touching moments of the evening was when Gabe presented Vita Living with a proclamation from the City of Houston declaring June 2, 2022 as "Vita Living Day," recognizing the organization's 40th anniversary and our "thoughtful care and service to the IDD community in Houston." There were some tears and lots of warm hearts.



Gabe Cazares, Director in the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities presents Vita Living with a proclamation from the City of Houston

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE WONDERFUL JACQUELINE BETTS

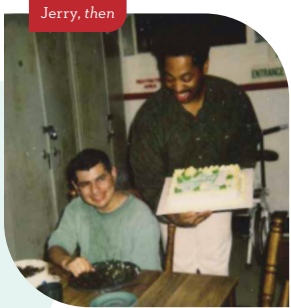


Jacqueline “Jackie” Betts celebrated 25 years of service with Vita Living this summer. She started her career in 1997 as a Direct Support Professional at the Campbell house. Today she is a House Lead, managing the new Campbell homes as well as providing significant support to House Supervisors in other group homes.

“...The more I learned about my clients and worked with them, it made me want to continue to care for them even more, especially after seeing the difference I was making in their lives.”

—Jacqueline Betts

Jackie has been working with many of the same residents since she started. She loves their unique personalities and feels joy in her work. “It’s not about the money. The more I learned about my clients and worked with them, it made me want to continue to care for them even more, especially after seeing the difference I was making in their lives. They just brighten your day,” she says.





FOR THE LOVE OF JAMES

“James is loving, helpful, and always keeps a beautiful smile on his face,” says his mother, Madeline. Despite his intellectual and other developmental disabilities, James was able to attend public school and graduated at 18. James has always lived with his parents, and after graduating high school, he spent most of his time with his mother, who cared for him every day. During that time, Madeline taught James the alphabet, his address, and their home phone number.

The life skill activities that James does at the Vita Living Center have helped him become more independent and take on more responsibilities around the house.

“James loves elevators in stores and shopping malls. Every Friday he looks forward to our weekly grocery store trips so he can ride the elevator. He also loves when I take him to the park and always asks if we can ride the trains that stop right next to the park,” says Madeline James’ mother.

James loves working with his hands and would often go with his father, who was a truck driver, on weekends to help him unload his truck during his trips. “James learned how to work on cars and trucks and loves to travel, so being able to go to work with his dad was a dream for him,” says Madeline.

It wasn’t until 2015 that Madeline decided to enroll James in a day program for people with disabilities. Dissatisfied with the level of attention and activities James was getting, one year later, Madeline decided to bring him to Vita Living’s Day Program where he could receive the specialized care, attention, and activities he needed to thrive. Because he loves working with his hands, creating art is one of James’ favorite activities to do at the Day Program, and staff often ask him to help create decorations. He also loves to help move tables and chairs around for events.

Before coming to Vita Living, James would collect paper anywhere he could find it, chew on his fingers, and have outbursts. Now, Madeline says these behaviors have improved significantly with the help and hard work from our staff, who took time to learn James’ triggers and needs. The life skill activities that James does at the Vita Living Center has helped him become more independent and take on more responsibilities around the house. He’s been helping change his laundry, he cleans his room every morning, and he helps his mother move furniture around. Madeline says she is very satisfied with the staff at Vita Living and believes they go above and beyond to care for and work with her son.



BUILDING A PILLAR OF GIVING

PHOTO CREDIT: KAREN SACHAR



The Jerry C. Dearing Family Foundation is a new supporter to Vita Living. They made their first gift in 2020, and their support has been critical as we navigate new state regulations and post-covid challenges. Founded in 2009, The Jerry C. Dearing Family Foundation has distributed over \$17 million to support Houston-based nonprofits that provide health, education, and sustainability services for the at-risk men, women and children of Houston and Harris county.

“Supporting programs for people with disabilities has become one of the pillars of giving at the

“I would tell a potential Vita Living donor that they are investing in opportunity, dignity, and a love of life—things that everyone deserves. Vita Living gives families in Houston the opportunity to stay connected and in the same community. The presence of people with disabilities can soften hearts and open minds about who can be, and who deserves to be your neighbor.”

Jerry C. Dearing Family Foundation. One of our aunts has IDD and lives in a residential program in Houston and The Foundation supports The Arbor School, a private program for children with disabilities. It’s been eye opening to consider what happens to people with IDD after they age out of school at 18 or 21. What are families supposed to do?” asks Kate Dearing Fowler, the Executive Director of the Foundation. “De-institutionalization was necessary but the accessibility and need for services remains challenging. Federal and state funding is never sufficient.”

The creativity of nonprofits serving people with IDD gives Kate hope: “Seeing the new Vita Living group homes in Spring Branch is so gratifying. The sector continues to place people with IDD into neighborhoods and fosters true community living. It’s so important to have an advocate for your loved one and the whole team at Vita Living are advocates for the clients. They do everything to ensure clients have a fulfilled, engaged life.”

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Day Program has been bustling with volunteers since we opened our doors back up last year following the COVID-19 lockdown. Our clients have been happier than ever to see their old friends who have been volunteering with us for years, and to meet new friends in the community. Almost every day, the clients ask us if we're bringing volunteers to the activity center because they want to meet new friends.

Recently, a group from The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) donated tons of fun prizes to the Day Program and spent the afternoon playing

bingo with the clients. The volunteers did a great job picking out prizes that our clients love, socializing with them, and making them feel comfortable. The group enjoyed spending time with our clients and getting to learn more about their stories and our mission. It was a day full of fun and laughter from both the clients and the wonderful IIDA volunteers!

From art projects, to life skills activities, to games; the activities at the Day Program are designed to encourage socialization and creativity for our clients. Shifts for volunteers are available Monday-Friday 10:30am-11:30am or 1:30pm-2:30pm. We also offer a couple of evening events and parties per month from 6:30pm-8:30pm. You can participate in the volunteer experience individually or you can bring your group to sponsor snacks and/or prizes or just to join in on the fun!

FOR INFORMATION VISIT

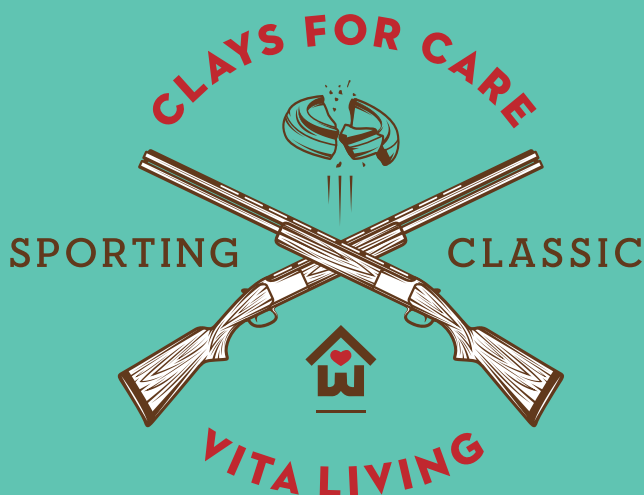
♥ | vitaliving.org/volunteer

OR CONTACT

♥ | [Danielle Malloy, Development Associate,](mailto:dmalloy@vitaliving.org)
at dmalloy@vitaliving.org or 713-292-1748



IIDA Volunteers visit for Bingo



SAVE THE DATE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022

AT AMERICAN SHOOTING CENTERS

👉 *Make Your Team
Reservation Today!*

TEAM OF 4 STARTING AT \$1,000

**REGISTER AT
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PEARLS *of* WISDOM

40th Fiesta

ANNIVERSARY

THANKS TO OUR 2022 PEARLS OF WISDOM SPONSORS

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SAVE THE DATE

THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2023

RIVER OAKS COUNTRY CLUB



VITAVISTAS



CREATIVE CARING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

SUMMER 2022

no.63

Vita Living's mission is to provide lifelong services and supports for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to promote personal growth toward a safe, satisfying, and meaningful life in their community.

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