

NEWSLETTER

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AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH



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FIELD DAY AT J. GILLETTE PARK



James Robinson



James Robinson Continued

There were vases, mushroom shaped paper weights, ceramic eggs and Star Trek communicators at the first James Robinson Art Show. James gave an easy gentle smile as people came to the Blue Willow Cafe, 2547 S. 17th Street in Wilmington, NC, to look at all of the pieces he and his guardian, Deborah Robinson, brought with them. James is one of the consumers at A Caring Heart Case Management, Inc.

The colorful work filled one table at the window so people who drove up could see the artwork right away. There were smaller pieces placed on each table. The dates the art pieces were created are on the bottoms of each piece. Soon all of the artwork was purchased and Deborah had to get more to put on the table for customers.

Deborah said James has many artistic talents. "He draws and makes jewelry too," she said smiling. "He is so very talented. I told him not to allow anyone to define him by his disabilities."

James' mother and cousin were also at the art show helping to show customers what was still available after so many items sold quickly and to tell people about the wonderful artist James is.

James is a person with autism and is deaf. He signs and reads lips very well, Deborah said. She said James has always loved to draw. When he was enrolled in the Cape Fear Community College GED program, he also enrolled in the plus program. "They said the plus program would help to find things he is interested in and might be good at," Deborah explained. "They saw his artistic abilities. He has been a part of all of the arts programs over there and completed them. He has done jewelry making, 3D design, ceramics and portraits."

Because James is on the autism spectrum, Deborah said the school did modify the program some. When his classmates may have an assignment that says to create three items for the school year, James may have one to complete. But James has been happily creating art now for a few years.

In addition to the art pieces James had there for purchase, he also had some of his drawings for people to look at that were not for sale.

One of his favorite shows is Star Trek. James will tell you his favorite captain from the franchise is Captain Jean-Luc Picard. "Jean-Luc is the best one," James laughed as he signed. "Captain Kirk is alright. Jean-Luc is better."

He loves Star Trek so much he makes some of the items from the show. "All I can say is I am so proud of him," Deborah smiled. "I knew he could do all these things. He just needed the room to do them."

ACH HEALTH INITIATIVE



Linda Jamison

There are New Year's resolutions and then there are offers you just can't refuse. As part of the "Healthy Employees Initiative" at A Caring Heart Case Management employees are paid \$100 for every five pounds they lose.

Linda Jamison, company nurse, heads the effort to help employees live a little healthier. Linda has lost about 90 pounds herself over a two year period, and wants to help others reach their weightloss goals.

"When you eat better and exercise, you feel better," Linda says. "And that makes a person a better employee because when you are happier with yourself, it reflects in every part of your life." Linda said. Carol Choate, ACHCM founder and CEO, asked her to start the weight loss program about two years ago.

"We have given away a lot of money," Linda laughs. Now, if you lose weight and then gain it back, you do not get another \$100 for the same five pounds. "No, no, no," Carol laughs. "We only pay for the additional weight. We only pay for those pounds one time"

They do not tell employees what method to use to lose weight. "We are not in control of their plan. They do whatever they want to in order to lose weight," Linda explained, "Recently we started Wrap Wednesday in Wilmington over at the day program. I was showing them that you can get a two carb wrap, the big one or the little one. You can put all the meat and all the cheese you want with a little bit of condiment, wrap it up and you still only have about three or four carbs for that meal." She says all of the consumers love it and so do ACH employees.

They had a few hiccups in the beginning. Some people were gluten intolerant and they had to find the wraps that accommodated special diets. "Then we had someone who was allergic to ham, so we had to look around and see what was best," she said. "We ended up with smoked turkey, honey ham and then I got shredded chicken. I bought different kinds of wraps. You can buy spinach herb, plain or tomato basil. You can have a tasty lunch and only have two or three carbs."

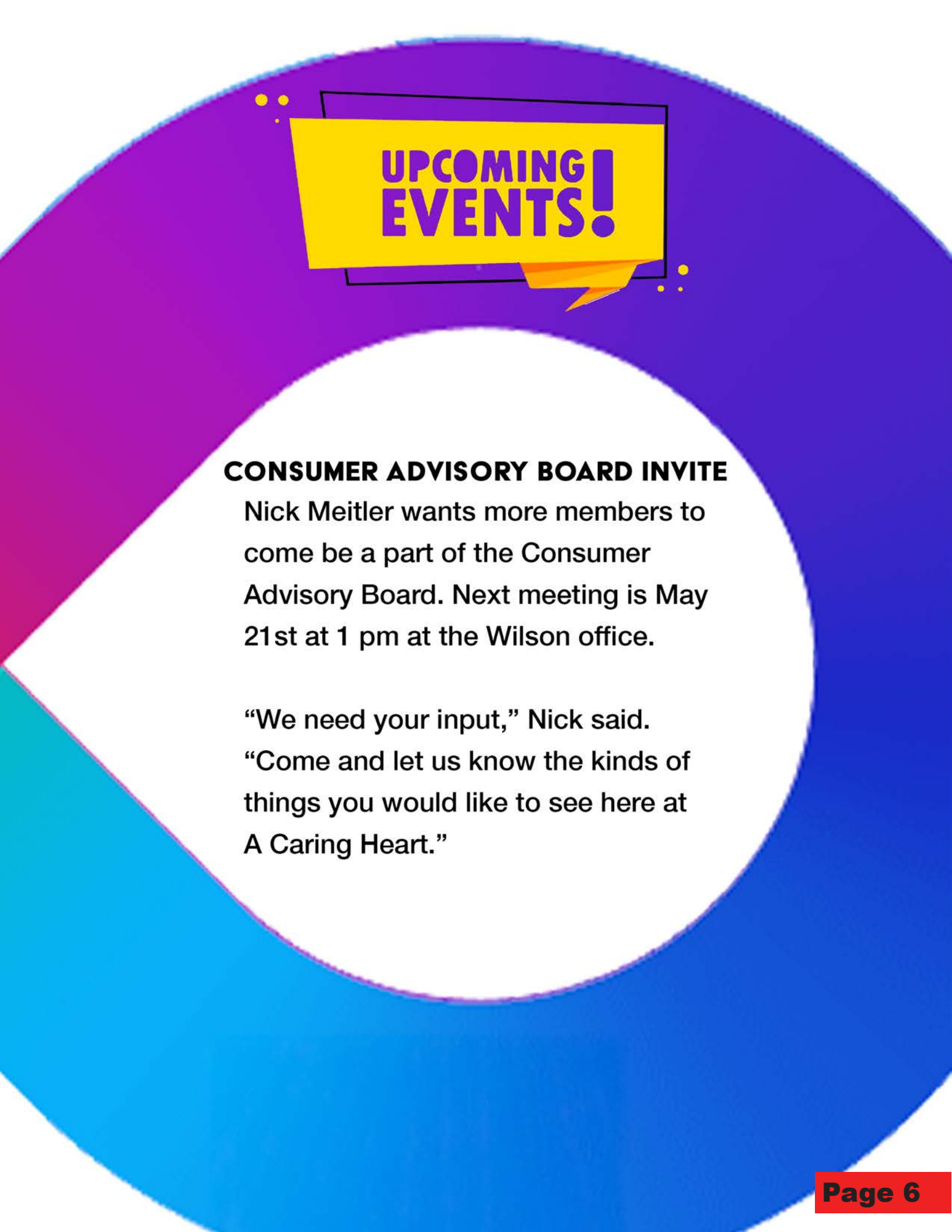
But when you go to a fast food restaurant and get anything, it is 45 to 50 carbohydrates, not including the fries and drink, Linda said. “And when you go to the fast food restaurants website, they make it so it is difficult to find.”

Linda recommends when shopping to not just pick up something off the shelf without reading the nutrition value. She said many times a product’s packaging will look as if it is good for people who are watching what they eat, and then find out differently when they read it. She says that little time reading the package helps with knowing what you are eating so the efforts to lose weight can be successful.

There are also many health benefits when you lose weight, Linda said. “You lessen your chance of having high blood pressure and diabetes,” she explains. “Then you decrease your chances of having a stroke or heart attack. You will be able to walk around easier with less weight. You become healthier when you lose weight.”

If any Employee would like to participate in the weight loss program, all you have to do is tell your program manager who will connect you with the program. Sarah comes around once a month to weigh people. “We want anybody who wants to be a part to come on,” Linda said.





UPCOMING EVENTS!

CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARD INVITE

Nick Meitler wants more members to come be a part of the Consumer Advisory Board. Next meeting is May 21st at 1 pm at the Wilson office.

“We need your input,” Nick said.

“Come and let us know the kinds of things you would like to see here at A Caring Heart.”



CALL to

ACTION

The ACH Newsletter is for everybody. If you have a poem you wrote or you have a favorite recipe, let us know. If you have had an experience in the community, positive or negative, and you want to share with others what happened, let us know. How about some pictures you want to share? We want to put them in the newsletter.

We will soon have a way for you to send your submissions. Stay tuned.



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