



Georgia Society of Nursing Home Activity Directors (GSNHAD) History

In 1972 the Georgia Health, Education, and Welfare Department and the American Nursing Home Association combined to sponsor a program to train Activity Directors for Nursing Homes. This was a nationwide effort to provide continuing education and leadership opportunities for Activity Directors and to increase emphasis on resident activities. On July 31st and August 1, 1972, a regional meeting was held in Atlanta with Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Florida participating. The purpose of the 2-day meeting was to develop a 36-hour training course for Activity Directors. The Georgia Steering committee selected Ron Addington, Associate Director of the Georgia Nursing Home Association and Martha 'Skip' Mulligan, Recreation Consultant for the Georgia Department of Human Resources as co-chairpersons. These two established a plan for teaching courses in Athens, Atlanta, Columbus, Cordele, and Statesboro.

During this time a plan was made to form a State Organization. Linda McSwain, R.N. with the Georgia Department of Human Resources came on board. The G.N.H.A agreed to be the sponsor, and the first 36-hour training course was held on June 1, 1973 in Cordele. It was at this meeting that the Georgia Society of Nursing Home Activity Directors, GSNHAD, was formed. Our Constitution and By-laws were written and dates were set for the first council meeting for each of the six geographical areas. The plans were presented to the Volunteers and Activities Committee of the G.N.H.A on September 19, 1973 and were unanimously approved. The plans were next presented to the Board of Directors in late September and were approved. The six councils were West Central, Metropolitan Atlanta, Southwest, Southeast, Northwest, and Northeast.

The Georgia Society of Activity Directors met for their first meeting in Macon at the Ramada Inn on January 9, 1975, and it lasted a total of six hours. State officers were elected and the first Board of Directors was formed. Continuing Education for the Activity Directors was set as the first and ultimate goal. The Education session was titled "The Challenge of a Professional" and given during lunch. The first annual convention was set for September 11th and 12th, 1975 at the Olde English Inn, Decatur, Georgia. {Room rates were \$13.00 for a single room and \$16.00 for a double occupancy room. Pre-registration fee for the convention was \$40.00 for G.N.H.A members, \$50.00 late registration at the door, and \$60.00 for non-members.} The theme was "Come Grow with Us". George Hunt and Sue Bridwell, G.N.H.A staff, and Nell Spurlin and Skip Mulligan designed the Logo. The six councils continued to meet on a local level and in 1983 the Society changed to an 8 Council structure that included East Central and Middle Georgia.



Since 1992, one deserving Activity Director has been named Activity Director of the Year. This prestigious award is presented to a nominated Activity Director who exhibits outstanding leadership, creativity, teamwork, and excellence in being an Activity Director. Colleen Finchum was elected as our first Activity Director of the Year. The Skip Mulligan Scholarship was developed to benefit the members of the GSNHAD by providing a \$500.00 scholarship to one worthy Activity Director per year who is working toward a degree. The first scholarship was presented to Chris Loga and Chris Wrenn in 2002. State dues of \$10 were established by recommendation of the GSNHAD Board of Directors with the approval of the GHCA Board of Directors. The dues allow a member in good standing of GHCA with each facility represented to have only one vote on the state level. The commencement of dues went into effect for the 2008 Annual meeting.

Many things have developed since 1973, but the goal of educating the Activities Directors remain the same. Georgia's Activity Directors are bound by a common bond to share, touch, lives, lift spirits, and give our residents activities that are beneficial and fun. We encourage each of you to keep moving forward by attending your quarterly council meetings and annual meetings. Please take this opportunity to receive continuous education and the pleasure of uniting and reuniting with Activity Directors who can share ideas and answer questions.

Please forward any GSNHAD pictures or information you have that can be placed in our archives. We are history in the making, so let's continue to keep OUR Society alive and well.

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