A Note from the Executive Director

August has already been an exciting month for the Didlake Foundation as we continue to build partnerships, create opportunities, and strengthen our commitment to an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

One of our biggest milestones was the successful launch of artWORKS Collaborative, our newest partnership with ARTfactory. We were thrilled to welcome community members, partners, artists, advocates, and supporters to our Launch Party, where we celebrated a shared vision of using the arts to bring people of all abilities together. **Thank you to everyone who joined us**, and to Baskin-Robbins Gainesville for helping make the evening extra sweet!

The excitement surrounding artWORKS has continued beyond the launch. This month, we're proud to begin our Community Art Series in partnership with Birmingham Green and ARTfactory. This free, multigenerational program uses visual and performing arts to foster creativity, confidence, social connection, and belonging. It's inspiring to see organizations from across our community come together to create spaces where everyone is welcomed, valued, and encouraged to participate.

We've also been grateful to see growing community support for the Foundation. This month, Prince William Living featured the Didlake Foundation and our upcoming gala, helping shine a spotlight on our mission and the impact we are making together. We continue to build new relationships with businesses, nonprofit leaders, and community partners who believe in expanding opportunities for people with disabilities.

As we look ahead, planning is well underway for our 2026 Didlake Foundation Gala, where we'll highlight the stories, partnerships, and achievements that demonstrate what's possible when communities invest in inclusion.

Every new partnership, program, volunteer, donor, and advocate brings us one step closer to creating communities where individuals with disabilities have every opportunity to live, work, create, and belong.

Thank you for believing in this mission and for being part of our journey. We are excited for all that's ahead and look forward to sharing more with you in the months to come.



With gratitude,

Kelsey

Kelsey DeWispelaere, CFRE, ACNP
Executive Director
The Didlake Foundation, Inc.

Building inclusive communities,

ONE OPPORTUNITY AT A TIME.

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

- 🎨 artWORKS Launch Celebration
- 🤝 Community Art Series Begins
- ⭐ Laura Evans Announced as Gala Emcee
- 💙 EagleBank Supports 2026 Gala
- 📅 Save the Date: November 7 Gala

Community Art Series Brings Creativity, Connection, and Inclusion to Birmingham Green

The Didlake Foundation, in partnership with ARTfactory and Birmingham Green, is excited to launch a new Community Art Series designed to bring people ages 18+ of all abilities together through the power of the arts.

Beginning Wednesday, August 19, this free, three-week series will be held from 2:00–3:15 p.m. in the Willow Oaks Dining Room at Birmingham Green. Sessions will continue on August 26 and September 2.

Participants will enjoy a variety of engaging, hands-on experiences, including theatrical performance, painting, drawing, movement, and dance. More than just art classes, these interactive sessions are designed to foster belonging, confidence, creativity, and meaningful social connections among participants of all abilities and generations.

Research consistently demonstrates that participation in the arts can improve emotional well-being, reduce stress, enhance cognitive function, encourage empathy, and strengthen community connections. Through this collaborative initiative, we're creating opportunities for individuals to express themselves, build relationships, and experience the joy of creating together.

This pilot program reflects the shared commitment of Birmingham Green, Didlake Foundation, and ARTfactory to expanding inclusive programming that enriches lives and strengthens our community.

We look forward to welcoming participants as we celebrate creativity, connection, and the belief that the arts are for everyone.

We hope you'll join us as we discover the power of art to inspire, connect, and create a stronger, more inclusive community. Please click "register now" below to participate!

artWORKS COLLABORATIVE

JOIN US!

COMMUNITY ART SERIES

BIRMINGHAM GREEN
WILLOW OAKS DINING ROOM

Wednesdays 2:00 - 3:15 pm
Aug. 19, Aug. 26 and Sept. 2



This **FREE**, multigenerational, ability-focused art series will incorporate theatrical performance, painting, drawing and dance. Designed to foster belonging, confidence, and social connections, this series will be fun and engaging.

Research shows that participation in the arts can boost mood, reduce stress, enhance cognitive skills, promote empathy, and strengthen overall well-being. You don't want to miss this!

Birmingham Green — Where Life Flourishes

Didlake FOUNDATION

ARTfactory

REGISTER NOW

DFoundation@didlake.org

571-632-1465

Meet Our Gala Emcee: Laura Evans



We're pleased to welcome Laura Evans Manatos, President and Founder of Laura Evans Media, to serve as emcee for the 2026 Didlake Foundation Gala on Saturday, November 7, at Magnoliya Grand Manor.

Laura is an award-winning journalist and former FOX 5 DC news anchor, where she spent 18 years sharing stories that informed and inspired our region. During her 26-year journalism career, she earned two Emmy Awards and numerous industry honors for her exceptional storytelling and commitment to excellence.

Today, Laura helps organizations and leaders share stories that connect communities and inspire positive change. A dedicated community advocate and nonprofit leader, she brings warmth, authenticity, and a genuine passion for making a difference.

We're honored to have Laura help us celebrate the people, partnerships, and purpose that make the Didlake Foundation's mission possible.

We hope you'll join us on November 7 for an inspiring evening of community, connection, and impact.

Save the Date
2026 Didlake Foundation Gala
Saturday, November 7, 2026
6:00–10:00 p.m.

Magnoliya Grand Manor | Manassas, Virginia

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available now at **bit.ly/DFgala26**. We hope you'll join us for an evening of inspiration, connection, and community.

Community Partner Spotlight

A heartfelt thank you to **EagleBank** for serving as the Evening Experience Sponsor for the 2026 Didlake Foundation Gala.

Their generous support is helping create some of the evening's special guest experiences while advancing our mission to expand opportunities for people with disabilities. Community partnerships like this make it possible for us to invest in innovative programs, strengthen inclusive communities, and create meaningful impact throughout the region.

Thank you, EagleBank, for your commitment to our mission!

DFoundation@didlake.org

571-632-1465

Building the Foundation

Every great organization is built one relationship, one opportunity, and one milestone at a time. As the Didlake Foundation continues to grow, we're excited to share a behind-the-scenes look at the progress we're making to create lasting impact for individuals with disabilities and the communities we serve.

Recent Progress

artWORKS Collaborative Officially Launched

In partnership with ARTfactory, we officially launched artWORKS Collaborative, bringing together artists, advocates, community leaders, and supporters to celebrate a shared vision of inclusion through the arts. This exciting initiative is creating new opportunities for people of all abilities to express themselves, develop new skills, and build meaningful connections.

Community Art Series Begins

This month marks the start of our new Community Art Series at Birmingham Green. Through visual and performing arts, participants will experience creativity, confidence, and connection in an inclusive, welcoming environment. We're grateful to Birmingham Green and ARTfactory for helping bring this vision to life.

Growing Community Partnerships

The Foundation continues to build relationships with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders who share our commitment to creating inclusive communities. These partnerships are expanding opportunities for future programming, workforce readiness, and community engagement throughout the region.

Momentum for Our 2026 Gala

Planning is well underway for our 2026 Gala, which will bring together supporters, community leaders, and partners to celebrate inclusion and invest in opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Building a Strong Foundation

Behind the scenes, we're continuing to strengthen the organization's long-term sustainability through sound governance and strategic planning. This includes implementing new board policies, empowering our Executive Committee, expanding board engagement, and laying the groundwork for long-term financial stability. These efforts ensure the Foundation is well-positioned to grow its impact for years to come.

While these milestones are worth celebrating, they're only the beginning. Every partnership formed, every program launched, and every supporter who joins our mission helps build a stronger, more inclusive future.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we're building something that will create opportunities, inspire belonging, and make a lasting difference for generations to come.







DFoundation@didlake.org

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