By Sherri Robinson
Contributing Writer

Last weekend, the CARE Project came home, returning to Wrightsville Beach, where it all began a decade ago. They staged a weekend retreat for families with children who are deaf or experiencing profound hearing loss. Not only did these families enjoy wonderful weather, the sun, and the sand, they discovered they were not alone. They found out others shared their burdens and challenges, and more importantly, would lend a hand in helping them by sharing information and camaraderie. One of the most poignant parts of the weekend retreat held at the Holiday Inn Resort on Wrightsville Beach was the teen panel discussion. The panel included seven teens who shared their experiences navigating their deafness, hearing loss, or that of their siblings. Three of these teens are part of the Bob and Wyline McDonald clan; they are their grandchildren. Teens Ella and Tanner are seniors at Hoggard High School; Ella has a cochlear implant acting as her hearing device and Tanner has hearing challenges or attempted to bully. Ella Hosley provided a unique perspective as the sister to two siblings with impacted hearing loss, not only being forthright about her fears but radiating her pride and love for Luci and Tanner. That love was entirely reciprocal. Prompted by questions from parents with younger children who are deaf or with significant hearing loss, from CARE Executive Director, Dr. Johnnie Sexton, and occasionally prodded by Mom, Robin, or Grandma, Wy, all of the teens candidly shared their experiences, including their problems and triumphs with different technologies. They shared moving stories of how teammates and classmates "had their backs" when others made fun of their hearing challenges or attempted to bully. 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Lidl Launching on Eastwood this week

Something new is coming to the corner of Eastwood and Military Canal roads. The Cape Fear’s first German-bread supermarket, Lidl, will open early next month. Lidl announced it would open its first area location Wednesday, Dec. 4. A ribbon-cutting event begins at 7:40 a.m. at the store, located at 1451 Eastwood Road, with chances for customers to win groovy prizes.

The Wilmington store will be the 19th in North Carolina in the chain’s more than 1,000 stores. The grand opening for the new Eastwood Road location is Dec. 4. Grand opening festivities take place from Wednesday, Nov. 27, through Sunday, Nov. 30. According to a company brief, the first 100 customers will receive a special gift card rang- ing from $5 to $100 each. All customers will receive a free Lidl reusable bag, and if you sign up for the Lidl newsletter, you’ll own a chance to win a $500 Lidl gift card. There will also be all be amounts of samples all weekend long — Sherri Robinson
Hello, Wrightsville Beach. Many of you know me or at least know some of my images and articles in area publications. Now, I will be sharing things in this, the Community Cooler, a hodgepodge of news, notes, thoughts, and points for pondering. I wanted to begin this Thanksgiving week to bring to mind the many, many things we, living on or near Wrightsville Beach, have to be thankful for and to remind us they are well worth celebration – in moderation, of course.

Having weathered Hurricane Florence, dodged a bullet with Dorian, lost precious friends and made new ones, welcomed the next generations and cherished those older ones still among us, we have learned a lot, through tears and laughter. We’ve come together to support others and bonded in new and indivisible ways with one another.

With gratitude, immense gratitude, we will gather around and across tables, big and small, with those we cherish and with those who might need to know they are worthy of being loved. We, as a community, share our abundance just as we share our challenges. We are a community comprised of ordinary and extraordinary people with a common condition; we are grateful. Grateful for all that we have and all we can give.

So, as you bundle up to cheer the Turkey Trotters on Thursday morning or to trot yourself, be thankful for the air you breathe, the beautiful course those legs propel upon, and the forecasted sunny skies above. As you clasp hands around your table, feel the warmth in their embrace, and squeeze a little tighter.

When you take the family to watch the tree lighting and welcome the jolly guy in the red suit, look at the sparkles in the little one’s eyes, then smile, remembering wonder still exists in the world. With babysitters on board, make your way to the kickoff party beginning the 36th North Carolina Holiday Flotilla and know this night and tomorrow our island welcomes visitors from all over the world – all to support local, all helping us, remember to be thankful, be helpful, be kind. We, all of us, are Wrightsville Beach.

Then, when the island returns to normal on Sunday night, take a moment to be thankful and proud to have hosted the most Hosted the most dazzling and glorious holiday celebration in The Old North State. But, before you go bed, make sure to show a little gratitude to the hard-working town employees who installed all the beautiful lights and decorations, the flotilla committee, its vendors, businesses, and volunteers making everything possible and the tireless Wrightsville Beach Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation departments.

Most of all, know I am grateful for you, thank you for welcoming me to the community.

Reasons to be festive, and thankful, this Flotilla Holiday Weekend

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By Sherri Robinson

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