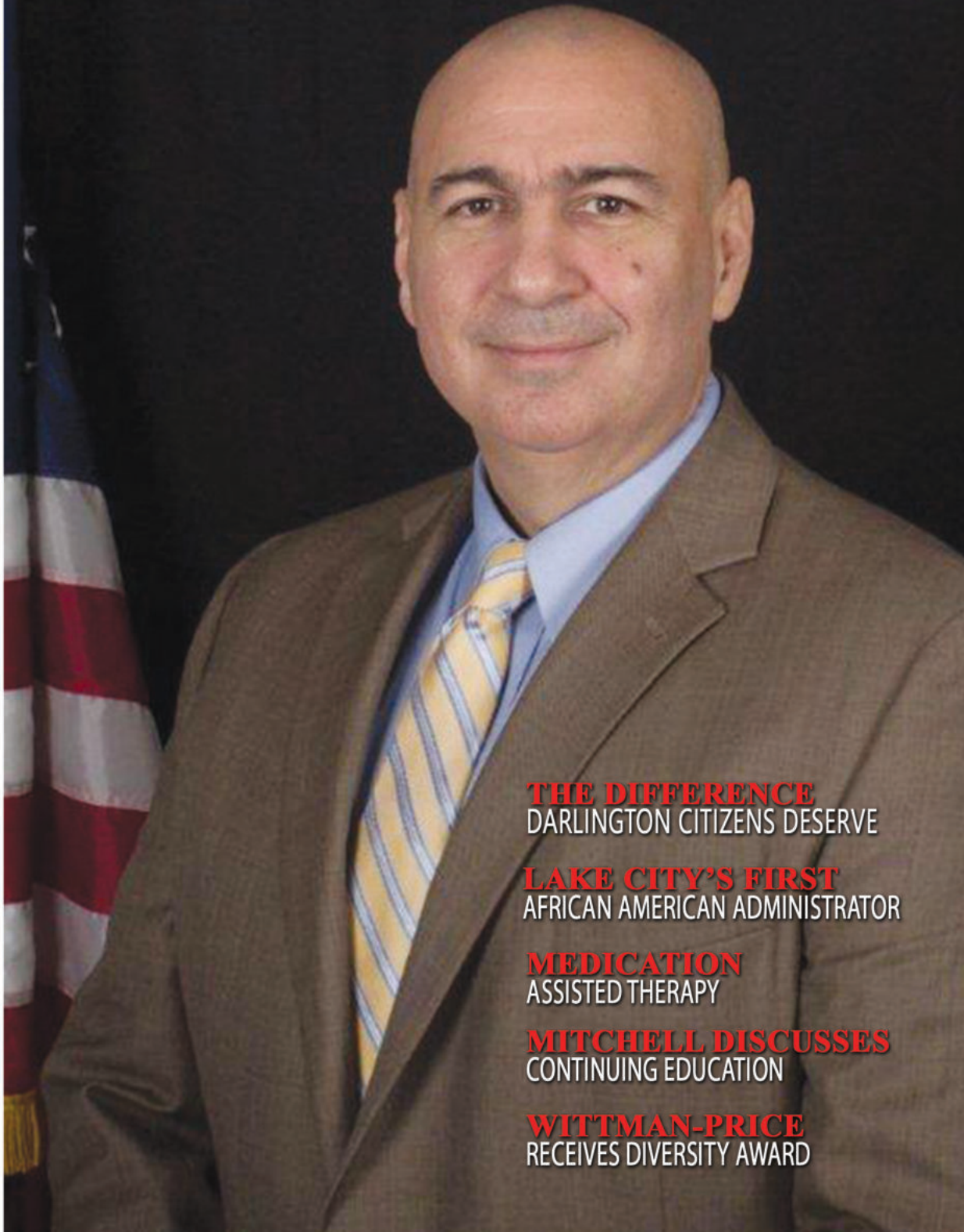


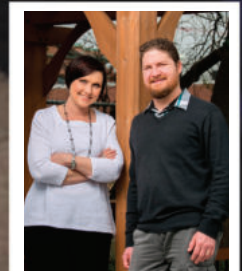
DIVERSITYWORKS

APRIL 2018 VOLUME 8 ISSUE 2

"For All of Us"



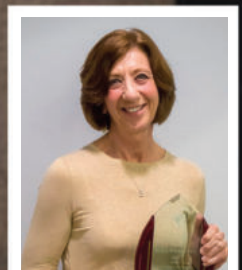
STEPHANY SNOWDEN



PAM WILLIAMS & MATTHEW JEFFORDS



GREG MITCHELL



DR. RUTH WITTMAN-PRICE

THE DIFFERENCE
DARLINGTON CITIZENS DESERVE

LAKE CITY'S FIRST
AFRICAN AMERICAN ADMINISTRATOR

MEDICATION
ASSISTED THERAPY

MITCHELL DISCUSSES
CONTINUING EDUCATION

WITTMAN-PRICE
RECEIVES DIVERSITY AWARD

FEATURING:

COVER PHOTO: SHERIFF TONY CHAVIS
DARLINGTON COUNTY

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MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION

Diversity Works© is a magazine for the socially conscious and responsible worker at any level. The magazine has a commitment to be a showcase for organizations and their individuals that represent best practices in diversity of the workforce and supplier choices. We feature articles on those displaying inclusionary vision in and for the marketplace and on those who can both encourage and provide role models to others. Diversity Works©, via its editorial content and other signature promotions, will be a vessel to inform the world about appreciating and accepting the physical, social, cultural and other differences in one another and promote better outcomes through interacting with those unlike ourselves. Our mission is to promote the concept "community" in the workplace, to stimulate literacy and save the planet via recycling printed matter.

OUR VISION

To create a more collaborative world wherein we practice diversity on a more balanced basis, to experience a return to reading and to reuse the ink and paper products that our reading materials are printed with.

Spanish Version

Translated by: *Yadira Santiago, MA*

NUESTRA MISIÓN

Diversity Works© es una revista dirigida a trabajadores, de cualquier nivel, socialmente conscientes y responsables. La revista tiene el compromiso de ser una vitrina para las organizaciones y sus individuos que representan las mejores prácticas en cuanto a diversidad de las opciones de plantilla laboral y proveedores.

Nuestros artículos muestran una visión inclusiva en y para el mercado; que a su vez estimulen y promuevan un modelo de conducta para los demás. Diversity Works©, a través de su contenido editorial y sus promociones de firma, será una fuente que informará al mundo sobre la apreciación y aceptación de diferencias físicas, sociales, culturales que promuevan mejores resultados a través de la interacción con los que son distintos a nosotros. Nuestra misión es promover el concepto de "comunidad" en el lugar de trabajo para estimular el conocimiento y salvar al planeta a través del reciclaje de material impreso.

NUESTRA VISIÓN

Crear un mundo más colaborativo en el que se practique la diversidad de una manera más equilibrada; experimentar un regreso a la lectura, así como la reutilización de los productos de tinta y papel con los que se imprimen nuestros materiales.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART

HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YOU...



*Dawn "D.A." Goodwin
Interim Editor*

Welcome to the April 2018 edition of Diversity Works Magazine©. We are super excited that you—our faithful, amazing reader—decided to check us out. And we hope that you have been enjoying the fresh, springtime weather we've been having. If not, we do hope that when you read this issue you will at least be reinvigorated and simply thankful to be alive and well.

To keep the excitement going, let's talk entertainment. You will be glad to know that ArtFields is returning to Lake City in April and will be featuring over 400 works of

art. The be prepared for the performance of a lifetime as Marshall Tucker Band hits the FMU Performing Arts Center's stage in May. Dillon will soon host its Celebrate Main Street event, and Marion has its 26th Annual Foxtrot Festival coming up. Continuous fun can be found by joining Crazy 4 Scrapbooking in Florence. Keep reading for details.

Several individuals featured in this issue have been cheerfully volunteering. As a result, others have seen their work and want to celebrate them for their selflessness. Susan Peters, Pastor Edward Graham Sr., and Patricia Singleton Parr are just a few of our celebrated volunteers. We also acknowledge Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month, and Autism Awareness Month and have a wealth of articles for you to increase awareness.

Our cover story highlights Sheriff Tony Chavis of Darlington County, a caring individual who has been putting in the work to better his community. Stay tuned to see the many ways in which he has been doing so. Here, you also get to meet Florence County's new Human Resources Director as well as Lake City's first female African-American administrator. Then you'll see the Marion Chamber of Commerce's Small Business of the Year winner and the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Person of the Year. This year Florence continues to redevelop its neighborhoods, and soon our mayor will proudly accept the 2018 Municipal Achievement Award for the City's redevelopment work thus far. Read on to see which projects are next in the City's revitalization plan.

Motivating individuals and strengthening families seem to be the themes many area organizations are focusing on this year. In fact, you'll find that Children's Trust recently awarded \$75,000 to First Steps to implement the Strengthening Families Program, and you'll learn how the Pee Dee Healthy Start's Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Program and The Dannon Project support high-risk families in rural communities.

In other news, find out what awards Carolinas Pines Regional Medical Center won for 2017. And let's join Carolinas Medical Alliance as they welcome Dr. Gregory Palutsis. Find out which community organization is introducing a Medical Assisted Therapy (MAT) to help its patients, and the United Way and Florence's Biggest Loser program shares nutrition and fitness tips to help you keep those New Year resolutions. Then join us as we congratulate the inspiring Michele Legette who shares her story

about losing both mental and physical weight. Definitely read about Dr. Charlton Conner's new dentist office in Florence, and HopeHealth is here to help seniors maintain and improve their health. But if you desire spiritual healing, we have you covered too. Robin Lewis introduces us to Lizanne Lee, a woman who helps individuals find healing through horses. Then learn about how the Killingsworth Home, a Christian-based organization, is advocating for and empowering women.

Local schools have tons to share with you in this edition. Florence-Darlington Technical College is here to tell you about its new "Ask An Entrepreneur" program. Greg Mitchell, Horry Georgetown Technical College's vice president of Workforce Development & Continuing Education, lets you know how you, too, can maintain a nine-to-five job while continuing your education. Then we check in with Dr. Kandace Bethea of Marion who discusses the E3 program that uses networking to improve student achievement. Also, we recognize several teachers who have excelled in educating the children of our future. Some include Amanda Stalvey, Charles Redfearn, Jeffrey Gaines, and others.

As parents, it is important to recognize our children when they do the right thing and do well in anything. For this reason, we must all celebrate with Trinity-Byrnes for scoring so well at its January math meet. We also celebrate with awards recipients like Dr. Ruth Wittmann-Price of Francis Marion University's School of Health Sciences. In other area college news, Claflin University just launched a Master of Science in criminal justice program. For those of you who know individuals interested in going to college but need help paying for an education, be sure to read about how the PACE Scholarship Academy prepares children for college. Find out how MUSC made the Forbes list, and discover how the hospital embraces diversity and inclusion as well as how you can become a part of it. Regardless of which company you are employed with, Simma Lieberman teachers employers how to sustain organizational cultures.

If you are a part of Santee Electric Cooperative Inc., we have great news for you because they are announcing a new program set to help control energy costs for its members. In the financial section, find out who Anderson Brothers Bank is welcoming to its offices, including Mitsy Lewis, Jeff Williamson and others. Then learn the five things you need to know about personal savings. In addition, New York Life helps you determine if your employer offers adequate life insurance.

We have so much more to share, including the co-founder of Chapman product's story. And be sure to look for Phil Noble's chilling story with his modest proposal to improve race relations in South Carolina, and find out about the Racial UnityTeam that has been working to engage our community in "truth-telling conversations."

The importance of us coming together, embracing diversity and uplifting spirits can't be stressed enough. So, the question to leave with after reading this awe-inspiring edition of Diversity Works Magazine© is, what are you doing to become the positive difference needed in the community or in the world? Take a moment today to think about it. Then give back, be sincere and always be thankful for even the smallest blessings.

Enjoy!

MASTER YOUR WORKPLACE USING LEADERSHIP SKILLS



Have you ever had a disagreement with a co-worker? You probably have at one time or another. Workplace conflicts are very common. There are very few offices where all the employees get along. Because of this, conflict resolution is a necessary component of the workplace, and those in a leadership position must be skilled in conflict

resolution techniques.

When conflicts go unaddressed, they can have a negative impact on productivity and teamwork. Using conflict resolution strategies in the workplace will help maintain a healthy work environment. Conflict resolution requires specific leadership skills, problem solving abilities and decision making skills.

Conflict Resolution Techniques

Consider the following conflict resolution techniques to help resolve issues in your office:

• Listen, Then Speak Out

• Believe it or not, just listening to an employee's issue is the first and most important step in resolving conflict. You should simply listen to all parties involved to completely understand the nature of conflict, and then start troubleshooting solutions.

• Gather the Group

• As a leader, you'll need to arrange a meeting with all involved parties to discuss the issue. Give everyone a chance to speak. This is a good opportunity to hear all sides and gain a full understanding of the conflict. Having a group meeting may also expedite a resolution that will satisfy everyone.

• Be Impartial

• Don't take sides! In a leadership position, you shouldn't display any sort of opinion that favors one person over another. If you are partial towards one person, try to access the situation from all sides to come up with a fair and reasonable solution.

• Do Not Postpone Conflict Resolution

• Address the conflict immediately. Otherwise, the situation could escalate and could affect employee performance. Just make sure not to address the situation too quickly or without careful consideration, as your decision will directly affect the demeanor and performance of your staff.

• Promote Teamwork

Encouragement and motivation are powerful. Remind your staff of successful projects that required teamwork to complete. This is one of the most effective conflict resolution techniques and will really make the employees think about the importance of working in a team.

• Broadcast Praise

As stated above, the power of encouragement and motivation can be multiplied when it is spread to recognize those who are modeling the teamwork and cooperation that is desired within any conflict. Try to give suitable models in these instances because behavior modeling can be risky if there are elements in the model that are undesirable.

It's important to note that while resolving workplace conflicts, you need to consider your company's regulations and policies. With the right

conflict resolution training, you'll have the tools and techniques necessary to keep harmony among your team!

The steps of the cycle are as follows:

• **Plan:** Plan work and establish the processes necessary to deliver the

expected outputs.

• **Do:** Implement your plan and processes. Collect data both during and after implementation, including metrics on how you are meeting customer needs.

• **Check:** Did your output meet the expected targets? Did your processes perform in the manner expected? Carefully analyze the results.

• **Act:** Determine what plans and processes must be revised, including those that might need to be changed completely. Execute corrective actions as necessary.

Improvement Plan Tips

Implementing a new continuous improvement plan can be difficult, and the details of how it's best accomplished can vary from one business to another. But there is some advice that works broadly, even across industries.

1. Start in the c-suite: Your organization's executive leadership team must be on board if building a continuous improvement plan is going to succeed. They have to understand and support every facet of the plan. Even if the initiative began with executives, it is still important to make sure everyone in a top-level leadership position is well-informed. You can't assume the CFO grasps and accepts the plan simply because the CEO and CTO are behind it. Make sure everyone in the c-suite is fully involved.

2. Use a pilot program: Implementing a new continuous improvement plan throughout a large organization is risky. Rank-and-file employees may have lots of questions and objections, and middle managers could become overwhelmed trying to handle them. Even making sure everyone has a basic understanding of the plan can be tricky if you're talking about more than a few dozen people.

It's much wiser to roll out your new plan to one team or one department first. This pilot program can help you educate and gain the support of a smaller group and also provide insight into the questions and doubts employees are likely to have. Additionally, it gives you the opportunity to fix any initial problems in your continuous improvement plan before the entire company gets involved.

3. Keep employees engaged: From the beginning of your pilot program to the eventual organization-wide implementation, it's critical for employees to understand the value of their participation in the continuous improvement plan. Ask for suggestions, and when you get a good one, put it into action quickly and recognize the person who submitted it. This lets employees know their input matters.

4. Allow for errors: When implementing a new continuous improvement plan, don't be afraid to fail. There will be some amount of trial and error—you often won't know what works and what doesn't until you try. If it looks like your initial plan is not going to effectively address a specific problem, ask for suggestions and give the best ones a shot. Your employees know your organization and the products or services it provides. They can be your best resource when refining your plan.

Also keep in mind that your entire continuous improvement plan might take several attempts to implement. You want to get it right on the first try of course—that's why strong pilot programs are so important—but don't despair if you have to fix and then reposition your plan within the company. It could be that a false start was necessary to show you how continuous improvement can work best and where it really fits into your organization.

5. Put success on display: Sometimes a continuous improvement plan can make changes that are relatively small and hard to see. Be sure to regularly review the benefits and gains so that employees understand what they're being asked to do makes a positive difference. Employees will often become more invested if your organization's goals are clear and they can see how their participation in the continuous improvement plan is helping everyone achieve them.



MEET LAKE CITY'S FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN ADMINISTRATOR

by Tameka Epps



Stephany Snowden

LAKE CITY - Lake City is one of South Carolina's oldest agriculture communities and home to over 6,500 residents. Lake City's city government includes a mayor elected by the citizens (for a four-year term), an appointed city administrator (appointed by the elected council) and a six-person city council (elected to single-member district for a four-year staggered term of office).

During Black History Month 2018, history was made in Lake City when the vacant city administrator seat was filled by Stephany Snowden, making her the first African American female to be appointed to the position. Snowden hails from Virginia Beach, Va. and now calls the Midlands and the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina home as she and her husband of four years, Wesley Culler, look to become fixtures within the community of Lake City.

Snowden has served in fiduciary capacities for most of her professional career, most recently as the major for Richland County Sheriff's Department. She has worked in public relations, worked as a journalist and has managed millions of dollars while employed with Lexington County's Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Federal Program.

The city administrator works closely with the mayor and council to enact policy on a day-to-day level. Snowden will help policy makers set the tone on how the community will continue to develop and advance. When asked how she intends to carry out her duties as city administrator she responded with surety in her voice, "Ethically, prayerfully, invoking wisdom and with heart."

As the city administrator, Snowden--like all other elected representatives, appointed officials or members of government staff--owes to the public fiduciary duties of care; loyalty; impartiality; accountability; and maybe the highest duty, to preserve the public trust. These duties arise upon entering the public service work sector in a superior position to that of the individual citizen due to the expertise, government knowledge and experience needed to fulfill the position.

The duty of care requires the public official to competently and faithfully execute the duties of the office. Snowden understands the responsibility of being a good steward of the public treasury and the need to use due diligence when making decisions which will impact

the city and the residents long after her work on Earth has been completed.

The duty of loyalty requires an absolute obligation on the part of the public official to put the public's interest before his or her own direct or indirect personal interests. The duty of impartiality requires public officials to represent all of their constituents fairly, overcoming any inherent bias he or she may possess. Snowden operates as the city administrator knowing it is not a solo act and that the members of the community, their needs, issues and concerns must be handled with care if continued growth of the city is to be expected.

With the duty of accountability, the public has the ability to monitor the behavior of public fiduciaries within the scope of them being able to perform the duties of their position in a professional and effective manner. From the duty of accountability flow the duty of transparency and the concepts of disclosure, open meetings, and accessibility of public records by the citizens.

The public is willing to delegate authority and sacrifice some freedoms in exchange for an orderly and civilized community and only when they believe the government is acting in the public's best interest. When the public loses trust in government, public cooperation suffers, compliance with laws fail, and investors and consumers lose confidence in the local government's abilities to effectively fulfill their duties.

"Government should be efficient and be efficient for the people and the tax dollars of the people and provide efficient and effective services to all the constituents. Being new to the position and the city of Lake City," Snowden said, "I must get to know the people by getting out in the community meeting the people and understanding their needs. Then collaboratively with other public officials, we create a plan of action benefiting the people."

Snowden believes quality, affordable, and aesthetically pleasing housing that will not break the bank and leave a family financially strained is a need for the community. She is committed to identifying grants and partners to make it a reality. Recreation for youth, pre-teens and teenagers sits at the top of her priority list as well as making the community attractive to retaining the talents of the local residents once they have completed their high school career or have gone away and now desire to return home.

Snowden knows the work before her is great. However, she knows all the experience and exposure she has gained prepared her for a moment such as this, and by being efficient and transparent, she will continue to be a consistent community builder.



Lake City, South Carolina lives art: Whether it's our annual ArtFields® festival or the simple art of bringing Southern flavor and craftsmanship to everything we do, Lake City is a place for artists of the everyday. When you visit our historic downtown, you'll see just how we bring that spirit of creativity to life. Our art is everywhere—outdoor sculptures stud our downtown and unassuming buildings house world-class art—and our residents and retailers are our artists. With unique dining experiences and expertly curated boutique shops that sell everything from bowties to motorboats, downtown Lake City isn't just a historic district: it's a masterpiece.

Discover the art of downtown at www.visitlakecitysc.com



ARTFIELDS RETURNING TO LAKE CITY



LAKE CITY -The sixth annual ArtFields® competition will showcase 400-plus works by Southeastern artists in 40 downtown venues. This year, it will also serve as a public introduction to numerous arts-focused developments in a town that is truly humming with promise. ArtFields will take place April 20-28.

Competition artwork was chosen from a near record number of submissions and represents a wide range of subject matter and media from artists both new and established. The list of accepted artists can be viewed on the ArtFields website. Prizes of \$50,000 for the Grand Prize, \$25,000 for Second Place and two \$12,500 for People's Choice (one each for two- and three-dimensional work), plus eight Category Awards of \$1,500 each and 10 Citizens Bank Merit awards of \$1,000 each, will be presented to winning artists, who collectively represent every state eligible to participate.



Visitors to ArtFields taking a closer look

Visitors to ArtFields help determine the People's Choice winner through an easy 'text to vote' system.

Inspired by the success of ArtFields, Lake City is emerging as a year-round art destination. This year, the Lake City Creative Alliance (LCCA) will unveil the new TRAX Visual Art Center, or TRAXvac, one of South Carolina's

largest art centers. At 5,000 square-feet, the venue will feature two professional gallery spaces, along with a planned sculpture garden next door.

The long-time ArtFields storefront office will be transformed into

the 'AFO Gallery,' which, along with the Smithsonian-certified Jones-Carter Gallery, brings the town three permanent art venues, with a fourth planned soon to allow for ongoing, simultaneous exhibitions.

Meanwhile, during ArtFields' nine days in April, Lake City becomes one of the mostly densely galleried spaces, per capita, in the nation, as work is exhibited in a wide range of area municipal centers, galleries, shops and restaurants.

ArtFields Features New and Beloved Returning Events for 2018

For the festival surrounding the competition and exhibitions, popular events include ColorMeArtFields 5K Color Run & Walk (ticketed - 7:30



Admiring the painting on the wall

a.m., April 21) and the Portrait Contest (noon, April 21). Visitors can peruse the popular MakersMarket during the first weekend and can experience Brittany Watkins' (2017 Juried Prize Winner) work again in the form of a colorful outdoor art installation. For the full lineup of

events, visit the calendar page. Greenville, artist Jeff Sumerel will create humorous, irreverent daily video reports that will be released on social media and shown at Lake City's Village Green on a jumbotron, on which also the Jeff Sumerel Film Festival will run continuously during the week.

Also to be unveiled at ArtFields 2018 are two murals and one large public sculpture. Created by Florence artists Patz and Mike Fowler, the sculpture will honor Lake City native and astronaut Ron McNair. Among the murals will be a large floral composition by Tennessee artist Lance Turner and collaborating landscapers from Lake City's Moore Farms Botanical Garden.



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PDHS OFFERS PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES

Submitted by Kevin McCoy, Communication Coordinator



Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc. (PDHS), a community-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has been a staple in the area since 1991, primarily serving in Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg counties. PDHS is a well-respected organization with a 20-year history of successful service delivery. In response to the high rate of infant mortality, low birth weight in infants, and inadequate health care for women of childbearing age in the rural Pee Dee region, predominantly in rural counties of South Carolina, the PDHS Initiative began. With support from a federal demonstration grant, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Marion, Florence, Marlboro and Williamsburg counties expanded their health care resources for women of child-bearing age and children up to age two. At the heart of its programs, PDHS hires, trains and supervises community residents to provide education and support to high-risk families to connect them to a system of health care and community resources such as health and medical providers, job training, housing and food. PDHS supports rural communities through two components: The Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Program (HMRE) and The Re-Entry Demonstration Program/Dannon Project.

The Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) program provides marriage and relationship education/skills, pre-marital education, divorce reduction and reduction of disincentives to marriage for African American families and individuals between the ages of 16 and 45. Through collaboration across several agencies, HMRE addresses the social and emotional concerns of residents by offering relationship education sessions, conflict resolution and financial literacy money-smart programs including financial planning, money management and asset

development. The HMRE program is available for at-risk youth ages 16 to 24 who have experienced traumatic issues due to environmental and socio-economic concerns. HMRE also serves individuals and couples ages 25 to 45 to encourage healthy relationship skills and positive co-parenting skills. Sessions are inclusive of healthy relationship centered activities, workshops, and focus groups allowing for interaction between participants to help place relationship building strategies in the home for stronger and healthier relationships, ultimately resulting in a stronger community. HMRE serves Chesterfield, Darlington, Marion and Williamsburg.



The Dannon Project provides opportunities for individuals from Florence, Darlington and Marion who have been in conflict with the law to transform their lives through innovative, effective, and replicable programs that serve to reduce crime. Individuals ages 18 to 24 that have been involved in the juvenile or adult justice system and are looking to return to the community as responsible, productive law-abiding citizens, can enroll. Program participants engage in employment and educational activities to encourage long-term employment, sustainable residency and address any substance and/or mental health issues they may face. Participants have access to multiple programs including, but not limited to, Training for Work, Job Development Skills, GED Preparation, Computer Labs, Certified Nursing Assistant, Network Cabling Specialist and Leadership Training.

Pee Dee Healthy Start's main office is located at 314 West Pine Street in Florence. For more information on our services, visit our website at www.pdhs.org and call toll free 1-800-747-2229 or 843-662-1482.



Florence County Council

We Share Focus... Understand the Value of Patience... And Work Together to Attain Our Goals

Florence County provides basic and necessary services consistent with the needs of its citizens in a cost-effective, efficient, and customer friendly manner. County government assumes a proactive leadership role in determining the future direction of the county. County government exists to serve the needs of its citizens for a safe, secure, and healthy environment. It seeks to foster planned and managed growth and desirable economic development that creates prosperity and job opportunities for all its citizens.

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FLORENCE COUNTY'S NEW H.R. DIRECTOR

by Angela Crosland



Anita Taylor, HR Chief

It is said that the pathway to a fulfilled life is sometimes wrought with adversity. Well, it is hard to find that in the life of Anita Taylor, the new director of human resources for Florence County, whose life is simply full and filled. She is the mother of a 15-year-old basketball and football player for West Florence High School; an assistant in the finance department at her church, The Door of Hope in Marion; an associate with a local decorating company, A Beautiful Experience; and a part-time employee at Belk. It is even hard

to reckon how she finds time for rest.

And if that isn't enough, she still finds time to swing by her elderly parent's home on Sumter Street where she grew up. Taylor has certainly experienced some difficulty along the way, but that hasn't lessened her resolve to check all the boxes she can on her path to destiny. She placed a check mark most recently beside her goal of becoming the head of human resources for the County.

"My whole intent was to move through the department being promoted to the next level and to the next level but apparently God saw different," Taylor says. "I jumped a step. I jumped over the manager's position and came straight to director."

There is a reason for that too. In a department that is often thought of as the last bastion of bureaucracy, the function of the Human Resources Department in Florence County offers its employees everything but red tape. Just over one month ago, the County brought Taylor back to head its human resource efforts. By all accounts, she brings a wealth of experience, but more importantly, she has a heart for its people.



Taylor is no stranger to its employees. She has worked in various capacities within the County for nearly 25 years, 20 of which have been in the Human Resources Department. As a gatekeeper of sorts for years, the new human resources director has a cadre of compassionate

employees she calls specialists at guarding the County's most valuable asset – its employees. "We see a lot, but we don't say a lot. That is what makes them special," says Taylor.

She established this outlook in her first 20 years with the County, stressing the importance of confidentiality, respect and compassion in her daily interactions. A team of five professionals in the Florence County Complex is responsible for the processes related to the hiring and firing of employees as well as training workers and interpreting employment law, benefits and compensation for more than 800 employees. This might have been a daunting task for the run-of-the-mill HR Department but just another day's work for this well-oiled machine comprised of Brittni Elvington, human resources generalist;



From left to right: Teneae Reaves, Karen Johnson, Brittni Elvington, Christie Strickland and Anita Taylor

Karen Johnson, human resources Coordinator; Teneae Reaves, human resources specialist; and Christie Strickland, human resources specialist.

Hired as a clerk at Florence County Sheriff's Department in October of 1993, Taylor quickly transitioned to the Human Resources Department in August of 1994 as an assistant and eventually became a benefits coordinator. Not long after, she earned the title of benefits specialist. A few years in the position, Taylor had an inkling that it might be time for a change.

Equipped with an associate degree in business/office systems technology she earned in 1993, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Management from Limestone College and an MBA in Human Resources from Webster University she earned while working for the County, Taylor began her job search. The search didn't last long though. The change Taylor sought led her straight to the office of Probate Judge J. Munford Scott, Jr. where she was employed for the past four years. Scott and his staff welcomed Taylor with open arms, and she did likewise. In fact, Taylor says she would still be there if she hadn't seen the advertisement for the director's position posted. Again, it was on her list of things to do. On January 16, Taylor hauled her belongings into the department that was once occupied by her former supervisor.

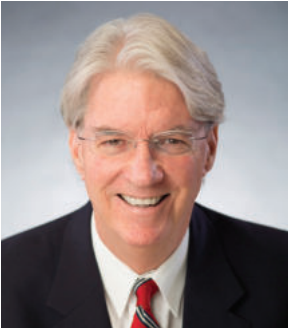
Of the experience, Taylor says, "It took me all the way back to my earlier days of just learning the whole scope of the Human Resources Department. It took me back to Mr. (T. Dwight) Hanna and Ms. Joyce (Miles)."

The two are credited with teaching her all she now knows about personnel. Taylor says they were preparing her for this very day. Armed with a stellar staff and the support of the County's officials, Taylor is poised to lead County benefit efforts and to be of benefit to all she encounters wearing any one of the many hats she dons.



IMPROVING RACE RELATIONS IN SC: A MODEST PROPOSAL

Submitted by Phil Noble



Phil Noble

CHARLESTON—When I was a young boy, my family moved from our native Greenville, South Carolina, to Anniston, Alabama, where my father became minister of the Presbyterian Church. Anniston was a small town in north Alabama in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains about 60 miles due east of Birmingham.

Growing up there as a middle-class kid was much like growing up in countless other segregated small towns across the South. The city was divided into an east (white) and west (black) side. I didn't think

much about it; that's just the way things were.

On Mother's Day, 1961, Anniston and my life changed forever when two buses of Freedom Riders came through Anniston on their way from Washington, D.C., to New Orleans, testing the new federal law desegregating interstate public transportation.

In Anniston, one of the buses was attacked and firebombed by a white mob, and when the passengers fled the bus, they were savagely beaten. That evening the iconic picture of the bus burning with thick clouds of black smoke billowing upward and the wounded riders in the grass beside the bus, was flashed across the news wires in the United States and around the world. Suddenly, my placid little town was now a vivid symbol of racial hatred and violence.

Shortly thereafter, two African American ministers my father did not know called him and asked to talk about the racial situation in Anniston. They were shocked when he agreed to meet as every other white minister had refused.

My father was not an activist, outspoken or even a liberal. He was an eighth-generation Southerner and a simple preacher who believed all God's children should be treated the same. As it turned out, that simple idea was a radical idea in the Alabama of George Wallace and the Ku Klux Klan.

My father became the chairman of a bi-racial council appointed by the Anniston city government. It was the first of its kind in the South, and President Kennedy praised it as a model for the country. Over the next few years as the council sought to bring about change, the Klan and others responded with continual death threats, violence, beatings and shootings into homes and churches.

Every day before my father took me to school, he checked under the hood of the car for a bomb. He slept with a loaded shotgun under the bed, and there were frequent phone calls of death threats in the middle of the night. But unlike so many others, our family was spared personal violence. We learned later from FBI records that my father had the dubious honor of being number one on the Klan's hit list.

On July 15, 1965, there was a mass rally of segregationists at the county courthouse with one speaker effectively urging the crowd to kill black folks at random. Before the night was out, Willie Brewster was dead. Brewster was a 38-year-old black man with a wife and two small children who was driving home from his job on the second shift at the local foundry. He had never been involved in any civil rights activities but simply had the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The response from the black community was predictable, but the response from the white community was not. They quickly came together and put up a \$20,000 reward (\$150,000 today) for information on the shooter, and they also listed their names in a full-page newspaper advertisement offering the reward. It was a stunning act of defiance of the Klan.

A witness came forward and Brewster's killer was arrested, tried and convicted of murder by an all-white jury—the first time that had happened

in the South since Reconstruction.

In time Anniston slowly moved away from the most egregious forms of segregation. The schools and public facilities were desegregated, and blacks registered to vote and elected their own to public office.

In 2003, my father wrote a book about this time called "Beyond the Burning Bus." It sparked what has become an ongoing re-examination of race relations in Anniston with oral histories, exhibits, theatrical performances, school programs and other events focused on teaching all young people about their shared history.

A few weeks ago, 50 years after Brewster was shot, there were special ceremonies in Anniston. The mayor and the city leadership—black and white—installed a series of historic markers commemorating "Anniston's Civil Rights Trail." My father, now 94 years old, spoke at the event and was listed among those on the markers. They gave him a key to the city. There are even plans under way for a Freedom Riders Park on the spot where the bus was burned, and a big-time Hollywood screenwriter has been visiting Anniston talking about a movie.

No one would contend that Anniston is today an oasis of racial brotherhood. It still has a lot of problems. But the town has had a transformation and has turned its troubled history into a platform to try and build a better future.

Today we in South Carolina and America face a whole new set of different racial problems. In a recent poll, over 70 percent of Americans—black and white—say they believe that race relations are bad and getting worse. They are right. But it's not hopeless. Growing up in Anniston I learned a few things along the way. I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I'd like to humbly offer three basic ideas to keep in mind and help guide us—black and white—as we work our way through today's difficult times with its new racial challenges.

1) Race relations are like a marriage where divorce is not an option. We all have to work at it every day. No one is going anywhere—"this land is your land, this land is my land." We cannot get a divorce, and getting along is not something that just happens automatically. We all have to work at it every day; just ask anyone who is in a successful (or unsuccessful) marriage.

2) We are all in the same boat and one-third of a boat does not sink. It's all or nothing. Our state is roughly one third black, brown and other colors, and we will ultimately all rise and fall together. Sure, some folks will always be better off than others, but we as a state can ultimately succeed only if we all succeed. We tried "separate but equal," but it did not work. We are not separate — E Pluribus Unum: from many one.

3) We can't stop talking to each other. Talking alone is not enough; we must do things, but to do anything we must be able to forge a consensus together of what we should do to fix our problems. Today we are in danger of dividing into two (or more) groups and just yelling at each other. The rhetoric turns up the heat, the heat inflames passions and passions can fuel rash acts.

Again, talking is not enough, but it is a precondition of change. Real change is possible in South Carolina and nationwide—but we must all keep working and keep talking.



BEARD DISCUSSES REBRANDING THE FLORENCE CENTER

by Les Echols

Since it was first built in 1993, the former Florence Civic Center has gone through several phases of growth, development and change. None of the previous improvements were as well defined as the latest efforts of the newly re-branded Florence Center. According to its website, the Florence Center is ‘The largest convention, entertainment & exhibition facility in northeast South Carolina with over 75,000 square feet of multipurpose space. This includes the 10,000-seat Arena, the 14,500 square foot Ballroom, a Jr. Ballroom, 9 meeting rooms and oversized pre-function area.’ We caught up with Paul Beard, general manager of the Florence Center, to discuss this exciting developmental endeavor.



Paul Beard

Beard was born in Mt. Olive, N.C. and raised at Fort Bragg in a military family. Beard began to be involved with events early when his parents opened two convenience stores and local drag strip. In elementary school, he helped with everything from working concessions and merchandise sales to setting up for events. With a degree in mechanical engineering, Beard was hired for his technical expertise to help when the Crown Coliseum was being built in Fayetteville. Because of his entertainment background and experience, Beard was promoted to event manager. His ascension with the company continued, as he went from event manager to director of operations and eventually became the general manager. “I was literally the guy who ran off and joined the circus when Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus offered me a job. I moved to New York and worked over 300 circus events and over 40 Monster Jam events,” said Beard. Then he got a call from Kendall Wall, the general manager at the Florence Center at that time. Afterwards, Beard went in and took his vast experience to the operations team.

Beard expressed the great partnership between the City and County in working toward improving the facility. “They gave us a multi-million-dollar infusion to make numerous upgrades, including LED state-of-the-art lighting and air conditioning. Shortly thereafter, we started the expansion process. We are booking the new facility left and right and picking up new bookings.”

Aside from the usual events and concerts, the Center hosts weddings, family reunions and corporate conferences. It also serves as a central location for agencies and corporations from across the state in crisis-type situations. While one portion of the Center hosts events like the different genres of concert, ice-skating, and rodeos are for quality-of-life events. The other side of the facility, the convention and conference area, is where we make economic impact. Fiscal year 2017, the Center had an economic impact of 42 million dollars for the community. According to Beard, “In addition to all of that, we are growing at a rapid pace with three more hotels being built nearby.”



Beard was very positive about his staff and the direction they are going in. “We have done a lot of reorganizing with staff by promoting Brian Davison to the position of business development and hiring two new salespeople, Patricia Taira and Mary Hudson. We have all the right people in the right places, making operations even more efficient. We have new events coming, like the Greater Pee Dee State Fair, which we hope will become one of the premier events in our region,” continued Paul.

“The term ‘conference and convention center’ gives an entirely different connotation than ‘civic center.’ When people hear ‘civic center,’ they tend to think it’s a small isolated building in a desolate rural area. The ‘Center’ is more appropriate, because it not only alludes to the fact that we are literally the halfway point between New York and Miami, but that we want to be the ‘center’ of a diverse experience, and the ‘center’ of an inclusive universe,” Beard concluded.

By The Numbers:

- 75,000 sq. ft. adaptable meeting space
- 28,000 sq. ft. renovated meeting space
- 25,000 sq. ft. newly constructed meeting space
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MARION CHAMBER'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Cindy B. Rogers, Executive Vice President



Left to right: Cindy Jowers, Bennye King (owner Bennye's Sandwich Shop), Beth McPhatter, and Charlie King. Cindy and Beth are Bennye's daughters.

MARION-The Marion Chamber of Commerce Small Business Award was started in 2000. Some of the criteria used in selecting the recipient are:

- A successful business record of responsibility toward employees, customers and community
 - A high level of respect within the business community for financial performance and service to the community
 - Increased number of employees, sales or created significant business activity
 - Provides a "high level" of customer service
- Shows innovative and creative business skills.

This year's small business award recipient is a well-known fixture on Main Street even before the doors of the business opened four years ago. It all began with an idea that people in Marion might be missing something since the closing of another business. She had served many a milk shake, a bowl of soup, a sandwich, a hot dog or many other lunch items as well as conversation and a meeting place for people to visit and catch up on the "news" around town.



After the closure of a local drugstore, she began to think all those people that ate lunch might be missing that small town lunch counter fixture. Therefore, she decided to do something about it and she opened her own business, kept the same menu and added a few items. On any given day you can drop in for lunch and great conversation with locals and out-of-towners. They all know

where to get a quick lunch and see familiar faces. It has become a much-loved fixture on Main Street in these past four years. This small business welcomes customers and helps us to reminisce on why we love living in a small town where we can go, and everyone knows your name, and Bennye knows what you eat.

The Marion Chamber was proud to announce this year's Small Business of the Year as Bennye's Sandwich Shop (Bennye King, owner).



*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
- M. Gandhi*

HOW TO LEAD A CULTURE THAT LASTS

Submitted by Simma Lieberman, The Inclusionist



It seems like everyone and their dog is now touting their organizational culture. But there is often a disconnect between the PR and marketing campaigns and what employees have to say. In this issue, we discuss the role of leadership in building and sustaining organizational cultures.

The case of Soraya the new CEO

When Soraya, the new CEO of a mid-size company told me she wanted her organization to be considered a best place to work, I asked, “When do you want to talk vision and strategy?” Her reply: “I’ll introduce you to Angelina, our director of human resources.” I said, “Before you do that, I need to ask you three questions.

- 1- Who leads the development of the vision for the company culture?
- 2- Who leads the direction of the organization?
- 3- Who ultimately is responsible for overall business strategy and the financial results of that strategy?”

To all three questions she answered, “I do, along with the executive team.” When I pointed out that organizational culture had to be in alignment with vision, direction and strategy and that its an ongoing role of leadership, she suddenly realized that human resources alone didn’t have the por resources to build the great, inclusive culture she envisioned.

Are you an absentee leader?



If you lead an organization, department or team and want to build and lead an inclusive culture that lasts, then as a leader, you have take leadership. Stop delegating culture development to the Human Resources Department, and abdicating your leadership responsibility.

Building a Workplace Culture that

lasts- great vs terrible

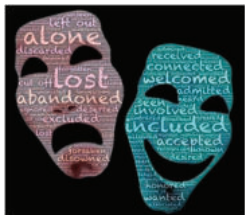
Workplace culture is how you do business, how you engage your employees, how people work together, how leadership sets examples, and how you serve the customer. Workplace culture is what brings people together to collaborate or sets them up in silos with no mutual support or information sharing. A great workplace culture is what makes all employees feel welcome, included and part of a community.

A bad workplace culture can make new employees have to fend for themselves while employees who’ve been there longer hesitate to take time to help newcomers.

A great workplace culture that lasts makes people want to work there and bring other talented colleagues. A bad workplace culture shouldn’t last but often does. It makes people go to work because they have to and warn their friends away. Leadership makes or breaks the culture.

Envisioning, developing and nurturing an inclusive, innovative culture that lasts is a process. It’s ongoing and needs to be embedded in every system and process. It can’t be left to one separate department, or consist of just lunch and learns, online-training or pot lucks. Workplace culture is a way of doing business. It’s not a one-time event.

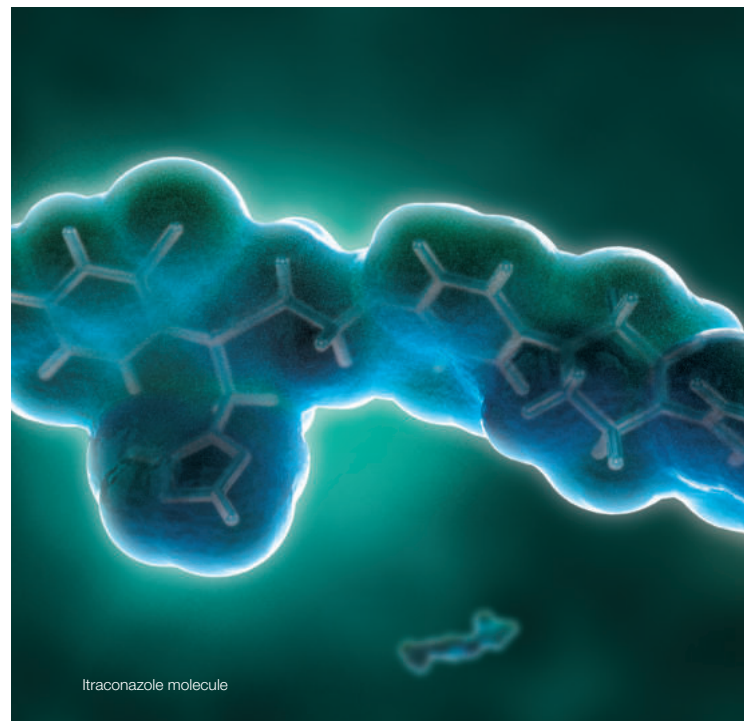
Who Needs to be Involved?



As a leader, you and the executive team need to lead the process. That doesn’t mean it’s all up to you. Everyone needs to be engaged since it’s the people at the top, the middle and the lower levels that live, embrace and practice the culture. Bring in leadership from sales and marketing, research and development and every other

department if you have them.

Want more information about how to build and lead inclusive cultures? Contact Simma Lieberman via email atsimma@simmalieberman.com or by phone at 510-697-8226.



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HYP DONATES TO HARTSVILLE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President of Greater Hartsville Chamber



On Feb. 1, the Hartsville Young Professionals (HYP) delivered a donation of \$8,000 to the Hartsville Boys and Girls Club. HYP and the Sonoco Young Professionals partnered to host the 2nd Annual Mingle & Jingle in December to raise funds for the youth in Hartsville. Pictured are members of HYP, Dianne Montgomery of the Hartsville Boys & Girls Club and club members.

HARTSVILLE-The Hartsville Young Professionals (HYP) presented an \$8,000 check to the Hartsville Boys & Girls Club on Feb. 1. The HYP and Sonoco Young Professionals (SYP) organizations hosted the second annual Mingle & Jingle event on Dec. 8. With the help of gracious sponsors and attendees, the event surpassed the goals set and will provide much needed assistance to the club.

Raising \$3,000 more than last year, this year's event was a very exciting accomplishment. The evening raised awareness of the needs of the Hartsville Boys & Girls Club, while also celebrating all of the successes that the group has had impacting youth in our area. Local youth from the Club performed as carolers at the event. With over 120 attendees, it was a great night of networking and fun.

Hartsville Young Professionals provides social, networking, and professional development opportunities to new and native Hartsvillians,

making Hartsville a city where young professionals want to live, work and play.

The Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based business advocacy organization founded in 1910. The Chamber provides a voice for local businesses, supports economic development, and promotes the vibrant and personal community that makes Hartsville appealing to businesses and residents.



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ADVANCING FULL LIFE FULL FORWARD WITH NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Amanda Pope, CMO Administrator



Ribbon cutting

Neighborhood Redevelopment is in full swing in the City's three historic neighborhoods, offering a variety of housing options to a diverse group of residents. City Council and staff recognize the importance of addressing housing and neighborhood conditions to provide for the City's long-term social and

economic well-being. The 2010 City of Florence Comprehensive Plan and 2016 Plan Update called for the reinstatement of neighborhood planning and the revitalization, stabilization and maintenance of these neighborhoods.

City staff worked closely on this project with the Neighborhood City Council Committee and Neighborhood Consultants, APD Urban Planning. The planning process identified four areas of need: 1) acquisition and redevelopment of vacant/abandoned properties 2) protection of historic neighborhoods 3) community infrastructure and 4) infill of residential development. To date, the City has acquired 53 residential properties, demolished 20 abandoned houses, and designed and/or completed street/infrastructure enhancements in the three designated neighborhoods of East, North and Northwest Florence.

To foster neighborhood redevelopment, the City committed over \$3 million General Fund dollars to property acquisition, housing construction, and incentives and \$6 million to neighborhood street/infrastructure improvements from a one-cent Capital Project Sales Tax. Additional funding included a low-interest \$700,000 loan from the SC Community Loan Fund to provide

construction financing for a catalytic housing development; a \$296,000 Neighborhood Initiative Program grant to acquire and demolish blighted properties for redevelopment; and a \$370,000 Community Development

Block Grant (CDBG) for down-payment and closing-cost assistance.

The City is excited to announce the Neighborhood Redevelopment Project has earned the 2018 Municipal Achievement Award in the economic development category. The mayor will accept this award on behalf of the City of Florence at the Annual Meeting of the Municipal Association of South Carolina this summer. This will be the 6th consecutive award for the City of Florence.



Vista Place House 412

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House was held on Mar. 15 for the city's initial project, Vista Place Development. This development currently has three new homes completed, with one already under



Vista Place House 414

contract. The homes are located on the corner of N. Irby Street and Vista Street adjacent to North Vista Elementary School. The homes bring a fresh new look to the area, which accentuates the existing character of the neighborhood.

What are the next steps in the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy? The City will continue to invest in the roadways and parks infrastructure in designated neighborhoods to improve neighborhood aesthetics while also improving connectivity and creating

vibrant and safe places for residents to live and work. Next steps for the Neighborhood Redevelopment program include three additional housing developments (Old Carver Station, Sumter Station and Historic Pine). The bid opening for Old Carver Station occurred on Mar. 13, and construction is expected to begin on the project in early April with an anticipated completion date of early July. Streetscape projects are planned for Pine and Sumter Streets. The Pine Street project will include repair of existing sidewalks and dilapidated drive entrances, street tree plantings and new handicap ramps. The Sumter Street project will include installation of new curb and gutter, drive entrances, stormwater



improvements, new sidewalks on both sides of the street, street tree plantings and the first bike lanes in Florence. New home construction is planned to begin early Summer, 2018 for Historic Pine on

existing lots and will develop with a new subdivision and homes projected for completion in the next two years. The Sumter Station housing development is in the early stages and city staff is currently acquiring land for the project.

The City's Community Services Department is working diligently to locate qualified home buyers and has offered several home buyer ownership and credit counseling workshops for residents. Incentives are available for qualified buyers. If you are interested in purchasing a new construction home in Vista Place Development or a future development in our target neighborhood areas, contact our Community Services Department at 843-665-3175 to inquire. For additional information about Vista Place, future developments, or the Neighborhood Revitalization program, visit our dedicated website, <http://florenceneighborhoods.com/>. To learn more about the City's Community Services Department and Housing program, visit the City of Florence website at <http://www.cityofflorence.com/departments/general-services/housing.aspx>.



SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Susan N. Farver, Chief Operating Officer, Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce



Irby Wilson, director of operations for Orr Company named the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year. (Photo Credit Morning News)

Irby Wilson of the Orr Company was recently named the 2018 Small Business Person of the Year during the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's Outlook Luncheon at the Florence Center. Jim Ivey of Dedicated Community Bank, which sponsors the award, presented Wilson with the honor. The award is given annually to recognize a small business owner who exemplifies professionalism, strives to enhance our community and has made a positive impact on the local economy.

"We at Dedicated Community Bank are pleased to sponsor the Chamber's Small Business Person of the Year Award and our committee is delighted to honor Irby Wilson this year," said Ivey. "Irby's success in business and commitment to serving his community are exemplary."

Wilson got his start in the restaurant business at "The Yard," located on Hwy 52 & I-95 interchange while attending Florence Darlington Tech. Thirty-seven years later he is one of the owners and vice president of operations for the Orr Company, Inc. He, along with his brother Earl, operate six Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants and four Arby's restaurants in Florence and Sumter. He is leading the growth of the company by adding new stores. Wilson is also very involved in the community and serves on numerous boards including the Pee Dee Coalition, United Way of Florence County, Boys and Girls Club, UNCF and Florence County Progress, to name a few.

"Irby is one of those individuals that you just like to be around—soft-spoken, but influential in his actions," said Mike Miller, president of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. "We have enjoyed having him on the Chamber board over the years, and we look forward to watching his continued success."

CHOSEN TO LEAD

Contributed by Liberty Fellowship



Mike Reichenbach



John Florence

GREENVILLE— A Florence car dealer, Mike Reichenbach, owner and president of Mike Reichenbach Ford Lincoln, Volkswagen and Chevrolet in Florence and Hilton Head, along with an executive general counsel at Sonoco, John Florence, were among the 21 leaders chosen for

Liberty Fellowship's 14th class. Both leaders are accomplished and impressive. Connected to the broader network of 290 Liberty Fellows working collaboratively across South Carolina, they are an engine for change.

"Adding new perspectives and expertise to the Liberty Fellowship network amplifies the Fellows' efforts to find creative solutions to issues facing South Carolinians," commented Luanne Runge, president & CEO of Liberty Fellowship. "Each of these new Fellows has a unique role in this network and helps us leverage our differences for the good of South Carolina."

For the lifelong program, Liberty Fellowship selects diverse leaders and immerses them in five seminars over 18 months. Through Socratic, round-table discussions, Fellows reflect on what makes a just society, thereby deepening knowledge, broadening perspectives and enhancing their ability to tackle issues. A highlight of the program, the Globalization Seminar has Liberty Fellows interacting with Fellows from the Aspen Global Leadership Network in locations such as South Africa, India and China. Other key components for each Fellow are being paired with a mentor and undertaking a leadership project aimed at enriching South Carolina.

"Chosen in part for the work they are already doing, these Fellows are community builders, innovators, and problem solvers," added Hayne Hipp, who co-founded Liberty Fellowship with his wife, Anna Kate.

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WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY'S TENTH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Submitted by Sarah Shelley, Executive Director



Brandolyn Pinkston

Women in Philanthropy, a giving circle at Eastern Carolina Community Foundation, held its annual membership meeting on Mar. 1 at the Drs. Bruce & Lee Foundation Library, Stukes Meeting Room, featuring guest speaker Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston. Brandolyn Pinkston's message to Women in Philanthropy was on the Joy of Giving: why it's good to give, and give, and give!!

Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston is a visionary who, by example, helps bring about change for the good of others. As the former administrator of the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs, she boldly used her position to improve the quality of life for the good people of South Carolina.

Distinguishing herself as a people's advocate, Pinkston successfully implemented innovative consumer programs and championed legislation that protected the interest of consumers, specifically on predatory and mortgage lending. She also directed an expansion of the Department's outreach services by opening consumer locations across the state and advanced ongoing dialogue with businesses. Pinkston currently serves on the SC Ethics Commission.

But really, Pinkston loves to give. She gives her time, talents and treasure to numerous boards including serving as president, Columbia Chapter, The Links, Inc.; past board chair, National Consumers League (Washington); past board chair, Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, Palmetto Richland Hospital; and past member, National Executive Board of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She was recently named as one of the 50 Most Influential Women in Columbia.

Membership in Women in Philanthropy (WIP) is open to anyone who cares about the quality of life in the Pee Dee. Eastern Carolina Community Foundation founded the giving circle in 2009 to bring about change through the power of small grants made annually to programs and organizations throughout the seven-county region. Members of WIP believe that by combining both enthusiasm and financial resources, they can best address the Pee Dee's high-priority issues collectively and strategically, and bring change through the power of small grants.

The WIP's annual grant program has awarded \$400,000 over the last nine years, funding more than 40 nonprofit organizations throughout the Pee Dee. This past year, \$50,000 in grants was given to All 4 Autism, CARE House of the Pee Dee, Hemingway's Caring and Sharing, Lighthouse Ministries, Marion County's Habitat for Humanity, Mercy Medicine Free Clinic, Resurrection Restoration Center, STARS of Florence, Wright Foundation for Southern Art, Darlington's The Lord Cares Food Bank, Kingstree's Felician Center and Bennettsville's Our Children – Their Future.

"This dynamic group of women is really making a difference in the Pee Dee, and all the members agree it is the best money we have ever given away," said WIP chair, Julie Allen. "The impact that diverse women in our community—professional women, stay-at-home moms and women from a broad range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds—have on philanthropy is amazing. Our goal this year is to double the amount of money we raise and give away so that by the end of ten years, Women in Philanthropy will have invested half-a-million dollars in helping the Pee Dee."

For more information about Women in Philanthropy, visit www.easterncarolinacf.org/learn/womeninphilanthropy. Additional contacts for comments: Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston: 803-351-9232 orbtpinkston@yahoo.com and Julie Allen: 843-229-3338 or jrarun26@aol.com

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MEET THE CO-FOUNDER OF CHAPMAN PRODUCTS

by Anna Bowman



Kimberly Chapman

FOUNTAIN INN- When asked what advice she would give to others, Kimberly Chapman stated, “In business, I have found it is better to be of service to people, to be in business to help others. No one should be in business just for the money.”

Chapman, a graduate of Southern Wesleyan University, illustrates the word “visionary” daily as the co-founder of Chapman Products Inc., the umbrella that houses Nairobi Professional, CongoProfessional, Kerafena Natural Hair Smoothing System, Chapman Foundation Inc. and “Sheen Magazine.” With Chapman’s illuminating zeal for people and immeasurable organization of business infrastructure, Chapman Products Inc. has become a household name around the world for all cultures and ethnicities.

Chapman saw the need for better hair care products and filled the void with an initial product line. She prudently built her small business into a regional, national and international brand. With tenets of hard work and diligence, she turned her dream into the extraordinary company it is today. Chapman Products Company Inc. has over 200 distributors, 32 employees and has a thriving international footprint. With Chapman Products Company Inc. on the rise as a prominent hair care company in the industry, it was important to expand the brand awareness into media and community outreach.

In 1999, she founded the Chapman Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization born out of her and her husband William’s innate desire to give back to the community, which helped in their own success as business entrepreneurs. The Chapman Foundation, Inc., which was created specially to receive and administer financial contributions, provides

scholarships to high school students, delivers school supplies and toys to the less fortunate, and makes charitable contributions to strengthen community relations, and donates a minimum of \$250,000 per year to students nationwide.

In 2006 Chapman expanded her brand when she founded “Sheen Magazine,” which combined all her favorite things: beauty, fashion and hair. “Sheen Magazine” went on to create the Ultimate Beauty Guide for the modern-day woman while also promoting self-care and self-love.

Chapman’s success as an entrepreneur has also allowed her to bring awareness to important causes within her community, as well as nationally. The Chapman Foundation and “Sheen Magazine,” will once again join in the Celebrating Life, Survival & Purpose at the 5th annual PYNKALYCIIOUS Breast Cancer Awareness 4K Walk, Oct. 13, 9-2p.m., at the Younts Centers for Performing Arts, 315 N. Main St., Fountain Inn, SC 29644. This event is designed to raise funds for breast cancer survivors and research to benefit the Pearlie Harris Center for BreastHealth at St. Francis Hospital Greenville. Simultaneously, a PYNKALYCIIOUS Breast Cancer 4K Walk is also being held in Indianapolis, IN, to raise funds to benefit Little Red Door Cancer Agency Indianapolis, IN.

Chapman is married to chemist and co-founder of Chapman Product Inc., William P. Chapman, and has been married for 27 years. They have two children, William “Tre” Chapman and Antonia Chapman Merced (Rafi-Diyn Quiles-Merced). She has two grandchildren: Little Rafi and Sophia. As a mother, entrepreneur and business extraordinaire and philanthropist, Kimberly Chapman attributes being focused as a means to achieving her success.

For additional information about Chapman Products Inc., please visit the website www.sheenmagazine.com



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FIVE WAYS SMALL COMPANIES CAN THINK BIG ABOUT AFFINITY GROUPS

Submitted By Dr. Nika White, President and CEO, Nika White Consulting, Best Selling Author of "The Intentional Inclusionist™"



Dr. Nika White

GREENVILLE-Affinity groups can be a great tool for diversity and inclusion (D&I), but what if your organization is too small to support a group just for women, Hispanics, or some other demographic not widely represented in the company? That doesn't have to be the end of the conversation. With some creative thinking and the adoption of a few best practices from large companies, you can develop affinity groups that support minority populations and improve the entire organization.

Turn Up Your Megaphone

Looking back at the recent nationwide **Women's Marches** held a year to the day after the first such event that drew 4.2 million for the largest single-day demonstration in U.S. history, it's interesting to note how diversity issues cropped up even there – again. Although women and allies turned out by the hundreds of thousands, there was the lingering criticism that the event excluded the voices of **women of color, transgender women, and anti-abortion feminists**. Some feel the messaging failed to account for intersectionality, the notion that people have multifaceted identities and face issues of marginalization that cut across those identities. As intersectionality gains more recognition in D&I work, it introduces new perspectives that are advantageous to small organizations building affinity groups.

Redefine Your Group

For small organizations, it might not make sense to have narrowly focused groups. Instead, affinity groups can be created to broadly address exclusion and the reduced opportunities that multiple minority groups experience compared to their majority-group counterparts. Not only does this tactic make practical sense, but it can also help acknowledge the role of intersectionality in diversity and inclusion. Rather than groups for a particular race, consider starting a multicultural professionals group. Similarly, a multigenerational group can address the needs of the youngest and oldest employees who often find themselves **facing discrimination**.

Find a Buddy Organization

If your organization doesn't have enough people to warrant developing a formal affinity group, try looking outside its doors. One success tip I've shared with groups such as chamber organizations is to identify other small organizations with which to form groups. Two or more organizations can join forces to improve equity for key demographics, or smaller organizations can partner with larger ones whose established affinity groups are already making strides.

Involve Key Leaders

Executive sponsorship and involvement is crucial for the sustainability and effectiveness of affinity groups, especially at smaller organizations. Executives should serve as direct liaisons to company heads. Their involvement with affinity groups underscores that these groups don't exist solely for the sake of a minority demographic. That's a big part of it, but equally important is that the group is aligned with the larger organizational mission. Direct involvement of key leaders can help the group stay in line with the organization's objectives, and it also maintains a channel for reporting back to higher-level leaders on how the group's work is improving issues such as employee engagement, talent retention, innovation and more.

Stand on the Bottom Line

Small organizations with their limited time and resources might be under greater pressure to show how healthy affinity groups can impact the bottom line. Luckily, there are plenty of examples for them to point to for the practical functionality of such groups. For instance, when Coca-Cola formed its LGBTQ affinity group, part of the work of that group and its supportive stakeholders was to identify how the company could better and more effectively appeal to the LGBTQ community. Out of that came some very strategic ideas that the organization probably would not have conceived or implemented without having first given the LGBTQ group a very specific

business challenge to solve. LGBTQ groups outside of the company have praised Coca-Cola for its inclusive Super Bowl ad this year, so the affinity group ended up being advantageous for its members and consumers as well as the company's bottom line through a specially crafted appeal to an important customer base.

A combination of two or more of these approaches can help even the smallest organization become more inclusive through the implementation of viable affinity groups. It might require **bringing in some help** to get started, but the payoffs can be long-term for its members, its leaders, and the bottom line.

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SEC ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM

Submitted by Adrel S. Langley, Manager of Community Relations



KINGSTREE-
Santee Electric Cooperative recently announced the start of its Beat the Peak program, a free and voluntary effort to help control energy costs for all cooperative members. Through Beat the Peak, members

of the co-op can sign up to receive alerts asking them to reduce their energy usage during critical periods when wholesale electricity prices spike. These times, known in the industry as “peaks,” are when demand for electricity is the highest, usually on summer afternoons and winter mornings. Like most commodities, when the demand for electricity rises, so do the costs. When the cooperative purchases large amounts of energy during these peak periods over the course of a year, the electricity rates the co-op and its member-owners pay can be adversely affected.

“The idea behind Beat the Peak is to shift energy consumption from times when demand is highest,” said Rob Ardis, president and CEO of Santee Electric Cooperative. “Potentially, this effort can save the cooperative and its member-owners significant money over time by keeping the wholesale power costs low and stable. We’re excited about the program and the opportunity to work together with our member-owners to keep the cost of power affordable for everyone.”

When Santee Electric Cooperative staff determines a peak energy use period is coming, the co-op will issue a Beat the Peak alert to program participants. Members will have selected to receive the alerts by text messages, emails or phone calls. Santee Electric Cooperative will also alert members through social media.

During a Beat the Peak period, Santee Electric Cooperative members are encouraged to use power wisely until the peak demand falls. These are a few of the actions members can take to help reduce use:

- Adjusting thermostats by 3 degrees – moving higher during summer afternoons and evenings and lower during mornings in the winter

- Delay certain activities that require hot water, such as washing clothes, taking showers or washing dishes

- Postpone using heavy appliances, like dryers and ovens

“The important thing is that we are not asking our member-owners to altogether stop using certain appliances,” Ardis said. “We want to get them to consider shifting their usages to different hours of the day to help hold down everyone’s costs. If we can work together, it’s a win-win for everybody.”

To sign up for alerts, go to www.energysmartsc.org/beat-the-peak

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WHAT HONDA OF SOUTH CAROLINA IS DOING

Submitted by Honda of South Carolina

Business Resource Groups (BRG's) are: associate-led groups whose members are aligned across broad constituencies such as gender, race/ethnicity, ability, life-stage, experiences, and other unique vantage points through which to address organizational challenges and opportunities.

BRG Mission:

- To engage professionals desiring to maximize their career and professional growth
- Cultivate talent
- Attract and retain talent
- Actively engage associates with professional development opportunities

Business Resource Groups also serve as a critical means for energizing the Honda culture and brand by fostering **Dreams**; creating **Joy**; igniting and channeling **Passion**; **Challenging** the status quo; and demonstrating **Respect** for the highest potential of all current and future Honda associates and customers.

It is an opportunity to mentor others, cultivating future leaders while operating within the context of the organization's mission, values, and goals.



Membership in any Honda BRG is completely voluntary.

Name: Intently Working for Change

Category: African American

Team Members: 25

Vision: To create an inclusive environment that fosters the growth and development for all associates in order to support Honda's global vision to be a company society wants to exist.
Mission: To strengthen Honda of South Carolina by utilizing the unique perspective of African Americans and allies to employ and retain a diverse workforce.



Name: Women Empowered to Step Up

Category: Women in Industry

Team Members: 14

Vision: Engaging and empowering individuals to step up to affect change – personally, within Honda, and in the community.

Mission: A team of diverse individuals committed to empowering leadership within

ourselves and mentoring others. Through our own unique perspective, we will create opportunities for individuals and community development.



Name: Variations- "Thinking Outside of the Box"

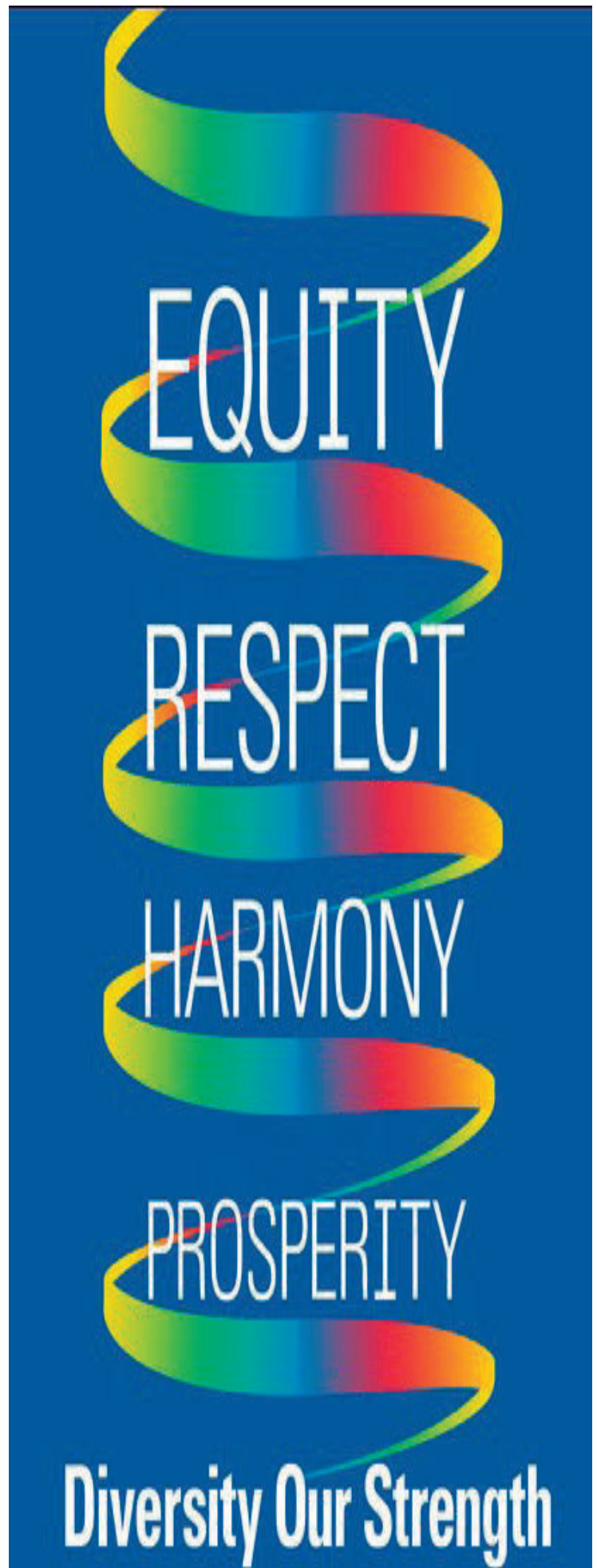
Category: LBGQTQ

Team Members: 11

Vision: To create an inclusive environment that truly reflects and

practices Respect for the Individuals. Demonstrating but please keep all conversations and discussions to on site teams only; the Core Values in the workplace and in our community.

Mission: We strive for acceptance and equality within the workplace and our community through involvement and mentoring those in and outside the LBGQTQ community as well as our allies who support us.



BFAA'S EFFORTS TO PAY OFF

by Angela Crosland



Thomas Burrell speaks to those in attendance

A hopeful Dorothy Page Thomas of Marion recently joined hundreds of others at the Florence Civic Center to discuss compensation for black farmers who the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled were discriminated against by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The impetus for the gathering—to discuss the status of pending litigation against the USDA by the Black Farmers and

Agriculturalists Association, Inc. (BFAA). It is one of many stops that Thomas Burrell, president of BFAA, is making to keep his constituents abreast of the organization's efforts on their behalf. Burrell brought word of a recent decision passed down by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that denied the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) motion for a summary ruling that would have thrown out claims of some 15,000 black farmers and their descendants. The ruling could result in more than \$1 billion dollars in judgments and is expected to be one of the largest civil rights settlements in the history of the nation.

"I came because it was two or three years ago (that) we went to Bennettsville to fill out papers for black farmers (compensation)," says Thomas. "My grandfather was a farmer and had never been compensated."

Morning and afternoon sessions convened with Burrell leading the discussion. Though the word hadn't reached all of Burrell's intended market, the morning session was full, and the afternoon assembly filled quickly as word of the meeting spread. Thomas admits she learned of the gathering while in a local grocery store and decided she should attend. She felt an obligation to represent her family, many of whom have become disillusioned.

"Most of my family feels like they are tired of going after it," Thomas says. "They've been beat down and so discouraged they've lost initiative

and hope."

Burrell brought with him a message of optimism. That message was that if attendees could substantiate their claim, they would receive compensation. "These were individuals who were denied an opportunity to participate, deliberately discriminated against by the Department of Agriculture," says Burrell. "It's egregious."

This latest case follows one settled in 1999 in favor of black farmers to the tune of \$1.06 billion. It was found that the USDA had, in fact, exercised discriminatory practices against black farmers in its allocation of farm loans and assistance between 1981 and 1996. A provision to this decision was added with the knowledge that there were thousands of farmers who missed the September 2000 deadline. An additional round of settlements was allocated but did not include the latest plaintiffs. He told onlookers that he will continue to encourage the support of President Donald Trump for the implementation of the court's ruling on their behalf.

Burrell is scheduled to hold similar gatherings for the next few months in Lafayette, La.; Selma, Ala.; Houston, Texas; Albany, Ga.; and many other cities. The foremost advocate for black farmers, Burrell hails from a farm in Covington, Tenn. He was one of the first to publicly wage the war against the USDA in 1981. A wave of demonstrations on his part led to overwhelming support of the initial lawsuit filed on behalf of black farmers. It was then that BFAA began to formulate, unofficially. In 1997, Burrell founded the organization and assumed the role of president in 2001. The group (BFAA) has now grown to more than 15,000 nationwide and is still growing. For decades now, Burrell has been fighting for the rights of these farmers, their heirs and administrators. No stranger to fighting, Burrell is a Vietnam War veteran and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Michigan in 1975.

For more information, contact Burrell at his Memphis office via email at bfaadoc@gmail.com or at 901-522-8880. Or visit the website mybfaa.us or Facebook page at BFAA-Memphis.



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TRUTH-TELLING DISCUSSION SERIES ON RACE COMES TO FLORENCE

Submitted by the Racial Unity Team



Throughout history, some of the most heinous acts have been precursors to some of the greatest displays of courage and heroism. From ancient history to the civil rights era, many community activists have followed this trend. Ken

and Joy Mendis, have, in many ways, followed this same pattern in their work to alleviate systemic racism and intrinsic bias.

It was June of 2015. A week after nine black members of Charleston's Emanuel AME Church were shot and killed during Wednesday night prayer, Ken Mendis attended the memorial service he had organized for them at his church in Exeter, New Hampshire. As the names of the victims were read and their faces shown on a screen, Mendis, a former Florence resident, thought, "Is that it? There has to be more to this. What more can we do?"

That thought led Mendis to organize a group of like-minded people called the Racial Unity Team (RUT). "Dylan Roof wanted to start a revolution of hate. What we need is to start a revolution of love," Mendis told the start-up group. Now a registered non-profit organization, RUT's mission is to advance relationships among people of different racial identities, increase understanding and reduce bias in our community.

Fast forward to late February 2018. Mendis and his wife, Joy Meiser Mendis, brought the work of the Racial Unity Team to Florence, which is now their winter home. They organized a six-week Truth-Telling series of discussions based on the book "Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race" by Debby Irving. The Florence Library provided a meeting room where participants explored together how white privilege

has continuously shaped systemic racism in our country. They faced their own biases and tackled topics such as discovering the meaning of unearned advantage, understanding systemic and institutional racism, overcoming racial stereotypes, the power of inclusion and how to get from tolerance to engagement. In this setting of trust and honesty, each person was able to tell the story of their racial identity and history.

In one particularly disturbing chapter of "Waking Up White," author Debby Irving described learning about how the 1940's GI Bill provided a free education to WWII veterans, but "Americans of color, including the one million black GIs who'd risked their lives in the war, were largely excluded." This, combined with the Federal Housing Authority's "red lining" practices that shut black people out of many neighborhoods, "blockbusting" that deflated housing values in black neighborhoods, and banking policies that denied black people mortgages, excluded them from achieving the Great American Dream. Irving wrote, "My white skin, an epidermal gold card, has greased the skids for a life full of opportunities and rewards that I was sure were available to everyone."

"As a white person leading a discussion about white privilege with a mixed-race group of people, I often found myself uncomfortable with the facts we were facing," said Meiser Mendis. "But it's a discussion that needs to happen. And white people need to step forward and counteract the effects of our own unearned advantage."

The Racial Unity Team has been working closely with Chris Handley of Helping Florence Flourish and will continue to engage the community in ongoing Truth-Telling conversations. If you would like to get involved and participate in this ongoing discussion, you can be part of a Truth-Telling group. For more information on how you can keep the dialogue going, please contact Ken Mendis by email at racialunityteam1@gmail.com or on Facebook at Racial Unity Team SC.

FAITH IN HORSES AND FAITH IN GOD

by Robin Lewis



Lizanne Lee

COWARD—Just outside Coward, about 20 minutes south of Florence, Lizanne Lee pulls off her work boots to sit down and share her story. “I grew up in Connecticut. I loved horseback riding from the age of eight, but at school I never felt like I fit in. I spent a lot of time alone as a child. I struggled in school to focus and finish assignments.” In her attempts to feel included, Lee dove headlong into socializing in college through parties and drinking.

Letting her studies go, she left school after one year.

Her first marriage was filled with psychological abuse. Lee says, “I used alcohol to help me handle the degradation and verbal assaults from my husband. After nineteen years, I somehow mustered the strength to leave. My husband wanted me to go into rehab first.” When she agreed, he served her with divorce papers and gained full custody of their children. Shame, fear and horror followed as she wondered if she’d ever have them in her life again. After two weeks in rehab, her counselor encouraged her to recreate her life. Forced to start over, she got her own apartment and a job and began rebuilding her relationship with her children.



As a child, Lee had been introduced to horses and wanted her children to have that experience too. Lee had worked as an equine assistant at a boarding school she attended and knew the value horses add to children’s lives. Her daughter fell in love with horses, and Lee could see how the bonding with horses was helping her daughter heal

from the past.

Several years later, Lee met a wonderful man named Tony and shortly after marrying, they moved the family from Connecticut to South Carolina in 2009. This was a big step for someone who had endured ritualistic abuse. “Looking back, I believed in God, but I didn’t trust God,” says Lee. Life had been punishing, but she was determined to rebuild her life.

During the first few years, the couple had to help their own children overcome drugs and walk through several difficult and tangled events. No parent wants to see their children make bad choices and suffer. “We became desperate for our children to be okay. I remember going home and screaming at the devil to get out of my house. I anointed the rooms with oil and kept praying.”

Seeing the brokenness and needs that not only her children but also the problems and labels all youth have today birthed a desire to bring healing through horses. Therefore, Lee and her husband bought a farm outside Coward. “I wanted to offer the same help and experience to other children that had blessed me and my daughter and decided to open a therapeutic riding stable. My goal was to help troubled youth by giving them a place where they could be around horses, learn to ride, and experience encouragement,” said Lee.

Lee has obtained her Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) Certification and has established her endeavor

as Horses for Healing, LLC. Some of the special needs served at PATH centers are ADD, developmental delay, learning disabilities, brain injuries, substance abuse, amputations, in addition to children with



mental, emotional and behavioral challenges.

“We currently have children with ADD, autism, and troubled teens who come to the farm. Other children come too, and the experience of bonding with horses creates a healing effect mentally and emotionally and builds confidence, strength, responsibility, combined with

a sense of accomplishment and happiness in addition to balance and coordination. I began with a vision that kept coming to mind and decided to completely trust God. I am amazed at how it has grown and the effect it has on the children who come.”

In a small community like Coward, there’s not much to offer children. “In 2017, we offered weekly summer camps. Now there are more than 20 children coming for the after-school program. They feel loved and are growing in their skill and ability. The horses are changing their lives,” says Lee with a smile.

In addition to horsemanship, children learn about composting, recycling and gardening, while having fun with a mud kitchen and a sandbox. Everyone is included in raising Ralph, the miniature pig. One student with ADD has not gotten in trouble at school since she started attending. Lee credits the student’s increase in self-esteem and confidence to her behavior change. “She is beginning to believe in herself,” said Lee.



As her life purpose has revealed itself, Lee said, “God has given this life to me, and it makes a difference. I know God has directed me to open our PATH center, and whether a

child needs restoration, healing, or simply encouragement, I know that God has guided my journey.”

Now Lee and her husband work and serve others together. “The last thing I lost was the fear of being judged and not being good enough. My husband, Tony is supportive in every way. He has a big heart and looks for the good in everybody.” Lee says their plans are to improve the programs offered and continue to inspire others. One of her assistants is also seeking her PATH certification.

For families who are interested in signing up for classes and camps, Lee encourages them to call early. For those who are concerned about affordability, financial aid is available. All profits are reinvested in the program. Horses for Healing is also looking for volunteers. For more information on Horses for Healing, contact Lizanne Lee at 843-356-0284 and visit their website at www.horses-for-healing-llc.business.site.

This story was submitted by Robin Lewis, certified life coach and writer, who loves finding the God-stories and seeing others live their fullest life possible. For more information, visit www.RobinLewisLife.com or call 843-319-5390.

FDTC EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION LAUNCHES “ASK AN ENTREPRENEUR”

Submitted by FDTC



Mike Reichenbach speaks to students in the 5000 Building on the main campus of Florence-Darlington Technical College.

In January the Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) Educational Foundation launched the “Ask an Entrepreneur” series at the college’s main campus in Florence. This speaking series features members of the FDTC Educational Foundation Entrepreneurial Forum interacting with students and sharing their advice and business expertise.

The Entrepreneurial Forum at Florence-Darlington Technical College was created in 2015 to honor and recognize prominent business leaders who have contributed to the prosperity and entrepreneurial spirit of the Pee Dee region. The most recent members of the Forum were inducted at a gala in November.

One of the goals of the Forum is to connect these leaders with students, especially those who are aspiring entrepreneurs. The “Ask an Entrepreneur” series includes a different member of the Entrepreneurial Forum once to twice a month, and it comprises of both, open discussions in student common areas and closed classroom sessions. Members of the Forum may choose to speak broadly about their business experiences or tailor their presentations to specific business-related topics, such as marketing, management, investment pitches or business partnerships. Each “Ask an Entrepreneur” session includes a question and answer section during which students may voice any questions they may have.

Doris Lockhart kicked off the series on Jan. 23 with an open discussion in the student common area in the 5000 building. Lockhart is a member of the 2016 Entrepreneurial Forum. She and her husband, Nathaniel Lockhart, are co-owners of Accustaff of Florence, one of the region’s premier staffing agencies. She is also the co-owner of MiLadies 182 boutique in Downtown Florence.

Lockhart’s discussion focused on the benefits of opening a franchise, tips for securing investors and advice on choosing business partners. She spoke to students about the realities and challenges of starting a business, and answered questions from students interested in entrepreneurship.

Starlee Alexander, another member of the Entrepreneurial Forum, spoke to an evening marketing class on Jan. 31. She shared her story of how she came to own her own business as an insurance agent, as well as the challenges she faced as an African American woman in her field. She also shared tips and advice on how to market oneself in the local business community.

Alexander is an owner/agent with State Farm Insurance Company in Florence. She has been in business for 32 years. She is also one of the co-owners of Miladies 182 Boutique and is a charter member of the Inaugural Entrepreneurial Forum.

February’s speakers were Jerry Ellison and Mike Reichenbach. On February 19, Jerry Ellison addressed two different business classes at FDTC: Business Law, and Management Decision Making. Ellison is the president, founder, and CEO of JBE, Inc. in Hartsville. JBE, Inc. provides supply chain management, warehousing, kitting, sorting, inspection, sequencing and distribution for a wide client base of diverse industries. Ellison serves on several boards, including the FDTC Educational Foundation, and he is a member of the 2016 Entrepreneurial Forum. Ellison discussed the history of his company as well as the steps that led him to starting his own business. He focused on the importance of understanding how business and tax laws affect a company and on the importance of ensuring that one never enters into a contract without considering all the financial and legal implications. He also emphasized the importance of creating a sound business plan and reviewing the company’s progress regularly.

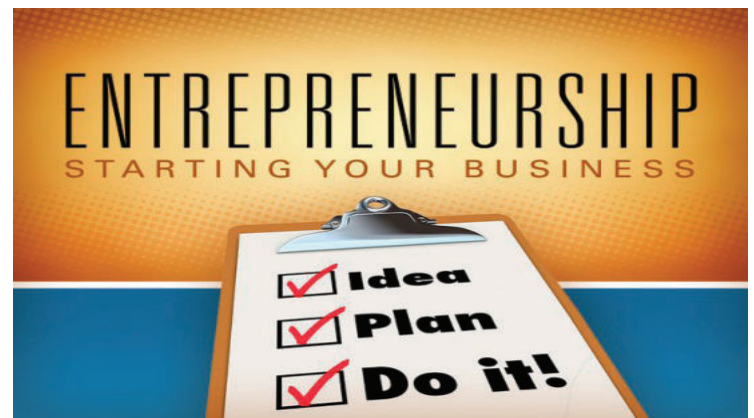
Mike Reichenbach, owner of Mike Reichenbach Ford Lincoln, Inc., spoke to FDTC students in an open session in February. Reichenbach serves on the board of the FDTC Educational Foundation and is a charter member of the Entrepreneurial Forum. He is the owner and president of Mike Reichenbach Ford Lincoln Volkswagen in Florence and Mike Reichenbach Chevrolet in Bluffton. He is active in the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and with many other organizations, including Disabled American Veterans.

Reichenbach’s discussion focused on the significance of ethics, perseverance and integrity in business. He told the story of his journey from working in the corporate world to owning his own car dealership, and he shared the trials he and his wife faced when they risked it all to open a family business. Reichenbach also pointed out the importance of securing adequate cash flow and hiring good employees in order to keep a business running.

“Students responded really well to these sessions and have asked some great questions,” said Celeste Kahn, director of Development for the FDTC Educational Foundation. “So many of our students have the goal of owning or managing a business someday, and it’s extremely valuable for them to get to dialogue with successful entrepreneurs in our community.”

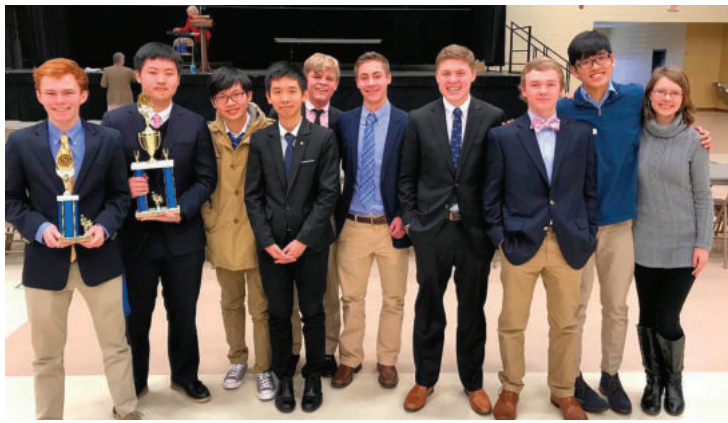
The FDTC Educational Foundation plans to continue holding “Ask an Entrepreneur” sessions throughout the year. The next entrepreneurs scheduled to speak are Grey Raines of Raines Hospitality (Mar. 14), and Britt Poston of Zaxby’s (April 18).

To learn more about the Entrepreneurial Forum, please contact Celeste Kahn at 843-661-8111 or celeste.kahn@fdtc.edu.



TRINITY-BYRNES SCORES BIG AT MATH MEET

Submitted by Leslie Olsen, Interim Director of Marketing



Pictured: John Saverance, Eric Liang, Adam Cheng, Sky Yu, Eddie Buckhouse, Harrison Corns, Bennett Joyce, Trae Buck, Bang Tran, and Amy Maistros

DARLINGTON—The Trinity-Byrnes high school math team won high honors at the SCISA Math Meet on Jan. 31. Team 1 scored second overall. Team 2 scored tenth overall. Senior Eric Liang was the highest scoring student at the meet. Senior Adam Cheng was the eighth highest scorer. Harrison Corns was also recognized at the highest scorer for his team.

Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School is a coeducational, non-discriminatory, college-preparatory day school serving students in grades seven through twelve located in Darlington.

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CLAFLIN LAUNCHES M.S. IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

Submitted by J. Craig Cotton, Director of Public Relations

ORANGEBURG -In its continuing effort to sustain and enhance its role as a leader in higher education, Claflin University launched a Master of Science in Criminal Justice program in March. All classes will be offered online, and students will be able to complete degree requirements within 15 months.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved program began classes in March. The first cohort of students is expected to earn degrees in May 2019. The criminal justice master's program also addresses a national need for professionals with an advanced degree in the industry, according to Dr. Deborah Laufersweiler-Dwyer, Claflin's interim chair and associate professor in the Department of Social Sciences.

"This program is another major step for the University as we now offer a high-demand program that allows professionals in the field an opportunity to earn a master's degree in criminal justice at an accelerated pace," Laufersweiler-Dwyer said. "Students from throughout the state of South Carolina and beyond can enroll in the program with the confidence they are receiving a high-quality education."

In 2016, Claflin gained approval by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) to promote and market its online programs in more than 40 states across the country. The Master of Science in Criminal Justice program joins the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction (M.Ed.) and Master of Business of Administration (MBA) as fully online graduate programs. Claflin's fully online bachelor's degree programs consist of the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management; Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice; Bachelor of Arts in Psychology; and the registered nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

"We have an impressive number of students who have been waiting eagerly for this program to begin," said Dr. Caroletta Ivey, assistant professor of criminal justice. "Many of these students and others who will enroll in the program are already working in criminal justice related positions. However, they need a master's degree to be eligible for promotions and other opportunities. Law enforcement, correctional agencies, and the court are seeking employees with advanced degrees who can apply critical thinking when solving problems or making decisions."

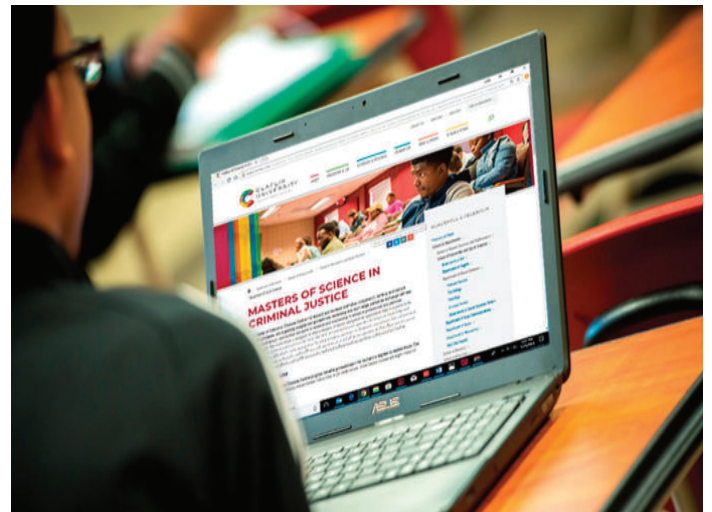
"We are attracting students from Florida, Georgia and other states outside of South Carolina to our program," Ivey said. "The flexibility of our program is significant. Students can maintain their employment and manage their family responsibilities while taking classes from anywhere and anytime. That is very important."

Prospective students interested in registering may contact the Department of Social Sciences (dlaufersweiler-dwyer@claflin.edu/803-535-5896) or Mark Roberts, associate executive director for the Center for Professional & Continuing Studies (maroberts@claflin.edu/803-535-5573). Contact Tonya A. Sanders-Govan (tsanders@claflin.edu/803-535-5384) for financial aid information.

"The Master of Science in Criminal Justice program is consistent with Claflin's Strategic Plan 'Claflin LEADS: A Shared Vision for the 21st Century,' which has leadership development as a focus," said Claflin President Henry N. Tisdale. "Our vision is that Claflin will be recognized as a leading 21st Century institution of higher education that develops a diverse and inclusive community of globally engaged visionary leaders. This program provides the University a tremendous opportunity to produce diverse and inclusive visionary leaders in the discipline of criminal justice."



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Contact:

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Mr. Mark Roberts, associate executive director
for the Center for Professional & Continuing Studies
(maroberts@claflin.edu/803-535-5573).

Mrs. Tonya A. Sanders-Govan
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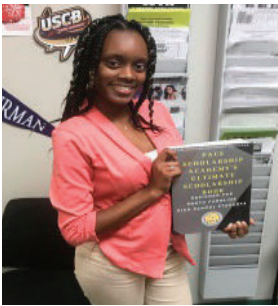
PACE PREPARES STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE

by Ta'Meeka Epps

PACE Scholarship Academy



LtoR Malaysia Mack, Melinda Mihlbauer and Tiesha Davis



Janaysa River



Lisa Kenner-parent and winner of one of the 12 printers from the Scholarship Fair with Melinda Mihlbauer



Blair Floyd-\$25,000 Horation Alger Scholarship recipient

SUMTER-The cost of living rises every year. Minimum wage, however, does not nor is it a guarantee a salaried position will offer an annual increase in pay. However, more careers are requiring an advanced education, making a college education critical to financial stability. The cost of higher education is also on the rise leaving students and parents alike wondering, how will we pay for college?

Melinda Baker Mihlbauer is a certified high school professional counselor and the founder of PACE Scholarship Academy, LLC. The acronym PACE stands for Professional Assistance for College Prep Excellence. PACE was created three years ago with the mission to assist students and parents with understanding the research of scholarships, the application process and ultimately obtaining partial and/or full ride scholarships to the University/College of their choice. PACE utilizes scholarship fairs, webinars and scholarship books for purchase to advance its mission and bring awareness to the multitude of scholarship funds available on the local, state and national levels.

"The PACE Academy was created because I kept meeting parents and students in various settings who talked about having high GPAs and college entry exam scores and not knowing how they would pay for college or where to start looking for funds. Out of necessity, I created the organization needed to fill the void," stated Mihlbauer.

Time, the amount of work and dedication students put into applying for scholarships + Effort, how determined students are to securing a free college education + Support, the vital role parents play in encouraging students in the best possible way= Success, securing a financial plan through awarded scholarships. This the equation employed to motivate and inspire the participants of the PACE Academy to set a plan in place, execute and lastly follow through on their

plan.

PACE Scholarship Academy provides comprehensive presentations to assist high school and college students through the scholarship seeking and achievement process. By working with Counselor Mihlbauer, the students will be well prepared to meet the challenges of locating, completing and acquiring scholarships.



Nyra Govan Beta Club volunteer at Scholarship Fair

PACE Scholarship Academy, LLC presented its first annual statewide OnePalmetto College and Scholarship Fair at Sumter High School, the fourth largest high school in the state of South Carolina on Feb. 24. The purpose of the free event was exposure for high school and current college students to available college and scholarship opportunities. The initiative encourages collaboration between similar-driven organizations while providing a platform for parents

and students to meet with local and state scholarship representatives and college admissions counselors. The ultimate goal was to effectively prepare students for their post-secondary education, without the fear of financial barriers or insurmountable debt once they obtain their degree. Based on registration, over 2,500 high school, college and graduate students (and their parents) attended from across the state.

Melinda Mihlbauer is the founder of PACE Scholarship Academy, the wife of Brooks A.J. Mihlbauer and the mother of four children. She credits her father as the reason she chose her career path. "My father would pack my friends and me in his van and drive us to different schools when we were in high school. That was our first college tour. He would help my friends and his athletes complete college applications and mail off their test scores and transcripts for them. Although he is a track and PE coach, he was really our guidance counselor. Believe it or not, he is still doing the same thing 50+ years later! I get everything that I have learned from my father."

The PACE Scholarship Academy has collected and assembled two ultimate scholarship books for high school through graduate level students. The high school scholarship book is designed for students in public, private, charter and home schools who graduate from a South Carolina system. Many of the scholarships are accepted anywhere in the United States. The college and graduate level program book includes over 1000 scholarships. For more information on the organization and to order the books visit the website www.pacescholarshipacademy.com.



Chanelle Denise Baker, daughter and recipient of 63 scholarships and 13 full ride offers

"PACE Scholarship Academy was founded after my process was complete. My process, my friends and other students that she helped at her school to achieve the same results laid the foundation and added inspiration behind creating The PACE Scholarship Academy. For as long as I can remember, my mother has always had a passion for helping the youth. When I got to high school, her role as a guidance counselor began to shine at home with me. It wasn't until results continued to pour in, I really started to understand the true importance of all she does. I credit most of my career and entrepreneurial success today to my mother; for instilling such a strong foundation and progressive mindset in as many ways as possible. I received a total of 63 scholarships and 13 full-ride offers. In choosing to attend Francis Marion University, I was offered the FMU Robert E. McNair full academic scholarship beginning the Fall Semester of 2011 and graduated with a BA in English-Professional Writing in the Spring of 2014."

~ Chanelle Baker

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A GUIDE TO CULINARY ARTS

by Anna Bowman



Kia Smith

SUMTER— Kia Smith is truly living her passion. She is the Culinary Arts instructor for her Alma Mater, Sumter Career and Technology Center.

As the Culinary Arts instructor, Smith is overjoyed walking through the corridors that offered her an opportunity to take her baking lessons instilled by her wonderful and loving grandmother and turn them into a successful career.

Smith recalls, as a little girl, how wonderful it was to be treated so special by her loving grandmother and how those moments, without her knowledge, allowed her to experience two things: being loved and learning her passion. “Since I can remember I have always been in the kitchen with my grandmother, just me and her. Being in the kitchen with her felt warm and embracing, like a great big hug! And the smells of savory meals and delicious sweets always let me know how much she loved her family and her granddaughter!” Smith said that her grandmother is without a doubt the number one reason why she enjoyed being in a kitchen environment as a youngster and now as an instructor.

As a teenager, Smith was introduced to the culinary arts through coursework at Sumter Career and Technology Center (SCTC). She stated, “I was able to shine in the class with the passion that I had accrued throughout my life.”



Kia Smith and her students enjoy the selfie station at our Purple Pop-up Day to raise money for Relay for Life

With the guidance of her mentor, Kimberly Ray, she was awarded the title of Student of the Year at Sumter Career Center in 2008. After graduating, from Sumter High School in 2008, she attended Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte, N.C., where she excelled as a member of the University’s Dean’s List.

Because of her grandmother and her mentor, today, as an instructor, she is able to provide her students with the type of guidance that will allow them to become productive citizens as they advance in their careers, be it in the culinary arts or other endeavors. “I feel like a legacy has started. It was great being a student and now I get to be on the other side making the program and school great for the next generation.” She said, “My mentor, Miss Kimberly Ray helped me through some tough times in high school. She was one of those teachers that left a lasting impression on her students. That was a trait that I wanted to take with me when I decided to become a teacher. She hand delivered the job to me, which was an honor. When I’m ready to move on I want to be able to do that same.”

Smith, who has an associate degree in applied sciences (baking and pastry), a bachelor’s in applied science (restaurant management) and a master’s in education (instruction and curriculum), would like to become a principal of a career and technology high school in the immediate future. She is also interested in pursuing careers as a sommelier (a wine steward) and a dietitian/nutritionist and maybe one day even owning and operating a bakery!

Kia and her husband, Darius, (who is also her best friend), have been married for four years, and they have two sons, Darius Jr., age 5, and Jamal, 7 months old. The Smith family resides in Columbia.

LIVEWELL AT CCU

Submitted By Abby Barnes, CCU Student Marketing Assistant



Mike Cruise

CONWAY - Coastal Carolina University (CCU), located near the tourist destination of Myrtle Beach in Conway, is invested in healthy living. CCU heightens the standard of living with a university initiative started in 2014 called LiveWell. This program promotes the holistic well-being of students, faculty and staff by connecting them to resources that support healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

Health educator Mike Cruise is dedicated to the LiveWell initiative. He earned degrees in health science from the University of Missouri and health promotion and wellness management from Missouri State and now teaches the CCU community how to live healthy, productive lives. "LiveWell is not only an initiative at Coastal. It is a way of life," he says.

LiveWell began as a movement for a tobacco-free campus and has grown into a comprehensive initiative.

"I've only been here for about a year, but the LiveWell program has grown immensely just from that short period of time," says Cruise. What started as one idea has blossomed into a campus-wide movement for healthy living and self-improvement.

The holistic nature of the program emphasizes on every facet of a person's life, including a healthy body, mind and spirit. LiveWell focuses on various subjects within those holistic fields such as emotional or psychological health, healthy eating, sexual health, active living, faculty and staff wellness, and alcohol and other drugs. By addressing these subjects via the LiveWell initiative, CCU hopes to help the university community address problems and equip them with what they need to become their best selves.

LiveWell promotes societal, community, relationship and individual wellness through nutrition consulting for healthy eating; educational experiences and presentations within the classroom; volunteer and service learning opportunities; internships for students; biofeedback (controlling body functions); exercise consulting; body composition testing (body proportions); and alcohol and other drug counseling. These amenities are offered to the CCU community at no cost. "Students don't have to go somewhere and spend a ton of money; LiveWell offers the same services for free," says Cruise.

LiveWell is aimed toward the students, faculty, and staff of CCU; however, "not only does LiveWell benefit Coastal, but it also reaches out to the Conway community," says Cruise. By impacting the CCU community, it naturally reaches others outside of the University, whether it is a peer institution or a Conway business. LiveWell is setting a higher standard of living for its community.

LiveWell hosts fun and functional events that include free regular HIV testing, free flu shot clinics, recreational color runs, and participating in CCU's local's farmer market. LiveWell also engages the community through social media hashtags and posts, like Workout Wednesday, Fitness Friday, and Thursday Thoughts.

For more information about CCU's LiveWell Initiative, visit coastal.edu/livewell

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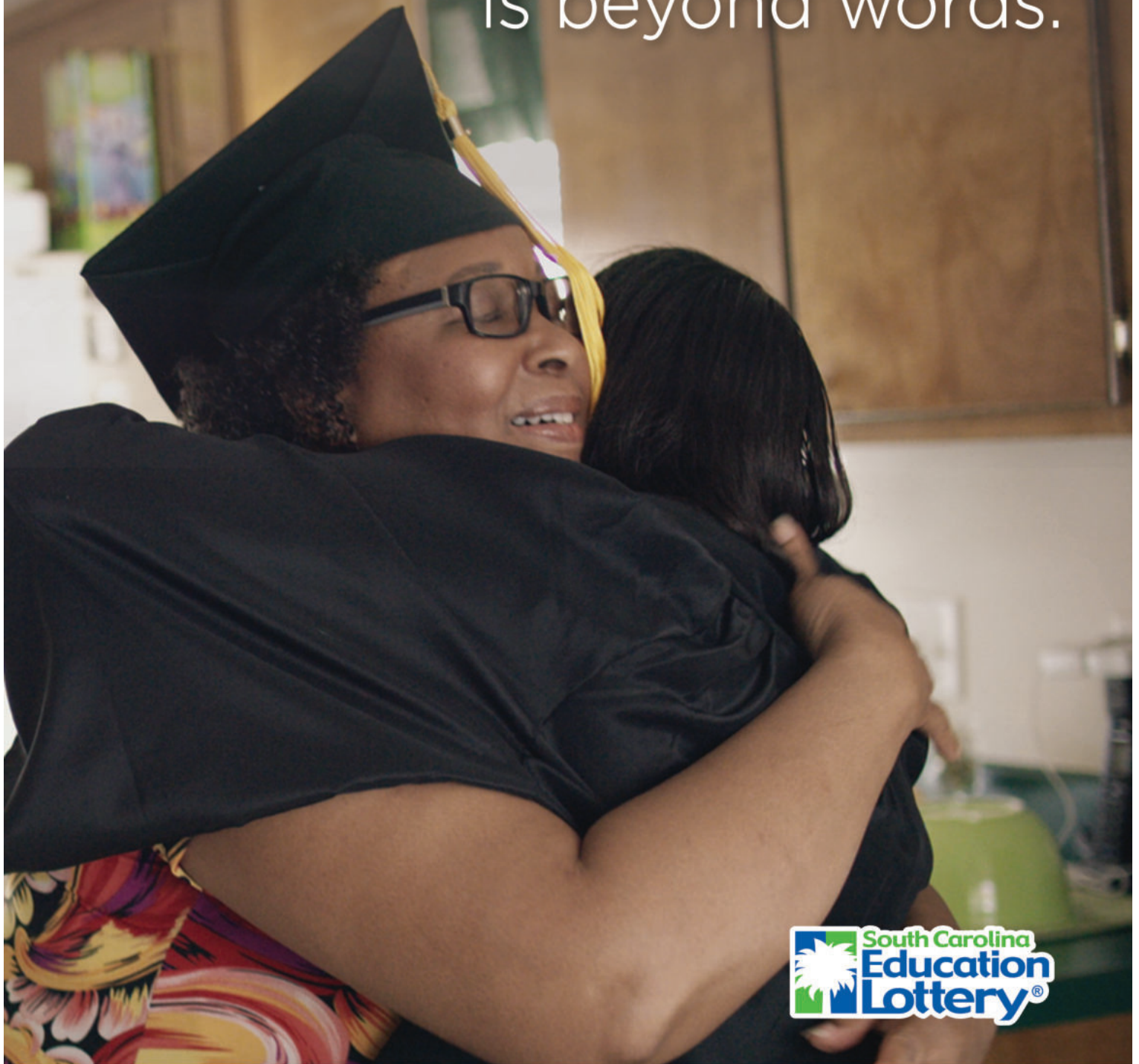
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Staff Report



MUSC has about 13,000 employees. Photo by Brennan Wesley

CHARLESTON - The Medical University of South Carolina has been ranked No. 53 out of 250 organizations on the **Forbes 2018 list of America's Best Employers for Diversity**. In addition, MUSC ranked No. 6 among the 20 institutions listed in the education category.

In collaboration with **Statista**, Forbes asked 30,000 employees working for large U.S.

companies and organizations to evaluate their employers on issues of diversity in the workplace. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were recruited from thousands of sources to maximize reach and representation of the U.S. workforce.

A company's score is determined by four parts:

- Direct employee recommendations
- A public perception score
- Percentage of women who fill top executive and board positions
- An index of objective and publicly available diversity key performance indicators

One of the indicators used in the scoring is proactive communication of diverse company culture.

MUSC President David Cole said his team takes great pride in the recognition from Forbes because it notes MUSC's progress toward achieving one of the five goals of its strategy for the future: embracing **diversity and inclusion (D&I)**.

"Together, the D and I implementation teams led by our two chief

diversity officers are pushing MUSC forward as an institution in a thoughtful, strategic and measurable way," Cole said. "The work these teams are doing is vital to the continued success of MUSC, and we need the ongoing commitment and engagement of our entire institution if we are going to succeed—not just in the short term, but long term as well."

Forbes' leadership editor Fred Allen said diversity makes businesses better places and richer in every sense of the word. "We hope that by introducing the definitive listing honoring the top performers we will stir discussion of the importance of diversity and inclusion and reinforce employers' determination to do the best at it they can."

Statista CEO Friedrich Schwandt agreed. "Our large survey of employees has shown that diversity is a highly relevant factor when choosing an employer."

MUSC has two chief diversity officers: Willette Burnham-Williams for the university and Anton Gunn for the health system. In addition, each of the six colleges at MUSC has a diversity officer, focused on achieving shared institutional diversity and inclusion goals. Burnham-Williams and Gunn collaborate across a workforce of more than 13,000 employees, along with nearly 3,000 students and 700 residents, to address the strategic diversity and inclusion goals and outcomes identified in the organization's five-year strategic plan, called **Imagine MUSC 2020**.

Cole and his leadership team say there are three reasons why embracing diversity and inclusion is of pivotal importance:

- It is who MUSC should be as an institution.
- It is how MUSC builds on what it is and what its employees can achieve together.
- It affects the bottom line. People who feel valued are empowered to contribute and to be at their best.

MUSC seeks diverse, talented students, faculty and workforce

As the largest non-federal employer in Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina recognizes the value and importance of embracing diversity and inclusion.

- It is who we should be as an institution. We are creating an environment where all individuals – students, faculty, staff, patients and visitors – truly believe they are in the right place, and they belong here.
- It is how we build upon who we are and what we can achieve together. MUSC aspires to change the future through innovation in all of our domains – education, research and patient care.
- It affects the bottom line. It is about being our most productive and effective. People who feel valued are empowered to contribute and to be at their best.



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Future students, please visit musc.edu/admissions.



Changing What's Possible

MITCHELL DISCUSSES CONTINUING EDUCATION AT HGTC

By Anna Bowman



Greg Mitchell

CONWAY – Greg Mitchell is the vice president of Workforce Development & Continuing Education and provost at the Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC), for its Myrtle Beach and Georgetown campuses. Since 2005, Mitchell has been entrusted with guiding the workforce development, non-credit instruction, career enhancement and continuing education services.

In his current position, Mitchell provides leadership and direction for a comprehensive program of continuing, community and contractual education and training and serves as the college's chief economic development, industrial development and continuing education officer. In the early part of the '60s when continuing education began on the collegiate level, the courses were intended for adult learners, who had no desire to be a part of a traditional college/university setting, primarily because of their age and/or work schedule. Even though these two factors still exist today, major manufacturers are partnering with technical colleges to help train their workforce.

Mitchell is quick to acknowledge that companies that focus on growth and profitability recognize that a well-trained workforce is loyal and more valuable. "We have been approached recently by Caterpillar, Inc. and Blanchard Company regarding a Diesel Mechanic Certificate program and have been working on ways to implement this

program in the near future. We have also been working with Yamaha Motors and Marshall Marine on a Marine Motor Technician Certificate Program, which we anticipate beginning in the fall," said Mitchell.

Online classes have made continuing education courses more accessible and affordable for people who still have to maintain a 9 to 5 job while training for a new job or getting certified or re-certified for their current position. "Our Continuing Education courses, both in classroom and online, have shown a definite increase in the past few years. Online class popularity has grown significantly as technology advances allow us to offer more educational opportunities to those who wish to learn."

Mitchell is excited about the forthcoming pilot program initiative between the city of Myrtle Beach and HGTC that will implement "train a-to-work" program for residents in the Myrtle Beach area. "We feel the success of the program is most important for the citizens of Myrtle Beach and the surrounding communities. This pilot program will offer training to individuals that will assist them with employability. This in turn will help local businesses gain and retain good employees. It is a win-win for everyone involved."

Mitchell and his wife Bevelyn, who are both native South Carolinians, are the parents of two adult children. He received his bachelor's in management as well as a graduate certificate in higher education leadership from the University of South Carolina. He also holds a master's in management from Webster University.

For additional information about Horry-Georgetown Technical College, visit the website at www.hgtc.edu/jobtraining, or contact Mitchell via the Continuing Education Division at 843-477-2020 or emailing CEInfo@hgtc.edu.



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CHILDREN'S TRUST AWARDS \$75,000 TO FIRST STEPS

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist



Representatives with Children's Trust present a check for \$75,000 to West Hartsville Elementary School and Darlington County First Steps during the February meeting of the Darlington County Board of Education. The funds will be used for a Strengthening Families Program at the school.

HARTSVILLE—Children's Trust has awarded a \$75,000 grant to Darlington County First Steps to implement the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) this year. The program's first 14-week cycle will be delivered this spring at West Hartsville Elementary School. Another cycle will take place in the fall.

SFP is an evidence-based program that works closely with families with children ages six to 11 to develop positive discipline practices, stay resilient in tough times, reduce conflict, improve parenting skills, and assist children with social skills, relationships and school performance. All of these factors play an important role in keeping families strong while protecting against potential child abuse or neglect.

"With the capability to deliver evidence-based programs and community-based prevention services, Darlington County First Steps is a proven partner that operates with fidelity, transparency and integrity," said Sue Williams, CEO of Children's Trust CEO. "We are proud to support them in this important work within their community. Our experience has proven that when we invest in South Carolina's communities, all of us working together can create long-term sustainability and impact."

Children's Trust is supporting the Strengthening Families Program in 24 counties across the state. Our organization provides training, collects data and monitors the program to ensure it reaches maximum potential.

The Duke Endowment and the S.C. Department of Social Services are the funding partners in this effort.

"We are so excited to be a part of the Strengthening Families Program and to have a partnership with Children's Trust, Darlington County First Steps and The Child and Family Resource Foundation," said Julie Mahn, principal of West Hartsville Elementary. "The program will began in February and will run for 14 weeks. Staff from the Child and Family Resource Foundation has been in our school since the fall working on this program. We have had lots of interest from parents, and we already have a waiting list for Cycle 2."



A county partner of South Carolina First Steps serving Darlington, Hartsville, Lamar and Society Hill, Darlington County First Steps strives to ensure the most efficient resources and information are available so families in these communities are strong. Program services focus on family well-being, school readiness, parenting skills, reproductive health and contraceptive education.

The Child and Family Resource Foundation has a multilayered approach to providing psycho-emotional and social support for children in the local community. The Foundation's programs include grief camps, mentoring programs, hosting community dinners, assisting teen moms with physical and emotional support, and Back to School backpack programs for Title I schools.



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DR. WITTMANN-PRICE RECEIVES AAFSC DIVERSITY AWARD

Submitted by FMU



Dr. Ruth Wittmann-Price

Dr. Ruth Wittmann-Price, the dean of the Francis Marion University School of Health Sciences, received the African-American Faculty & Staff Coalition's (AAFSC) Diversity Award at the organization's annual gala.

The diversity award was just one of many highlights at the event. The AAFSC also recognized 12 recipients of AAFSC-sponsored scholarships at the gala, listened to an inspiring message from keynote speaker Yvonne Davis, and heard about new honors for Davis and long-time university administrator Dr. Joseph E. Heyward.

The 12 scholarships were provided by AAFSC fundraising as well as university support. The AAFSC funds named scholarships for Dr. Joseph E. Heyward, Dr. Leroy "Pete" Peterson, Rebecca Lunn, and Dr. Dorothy Harris.

In honoring Wittmann-Price, the AAFSC noted her involvement in helping secure two grants, totaling more than \$2 million to assist in creating a more diverse healthcare workforce throughout the Pee Dee.

Wittmann-Price is a native of Palisades Park, N.J., who joined the FMU faculty in 2010 after working as an assistant professor and coordinator for the Educational Track in the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program at Drexel University. She received her AAS & BSN degree from Felician College in Lodi, N.J., her MS as a Perinatal CNS from Columbia University and completed her PhD in nursing at Widener University, Chester, Pa. and was awarded the Dean's Award for

Excellence.

Yvonne Davis, a former FMU staff member who served the University for 34 years, was the event's keynote speaker. Besides her long service to FMU, Davis is also an advocate for more accessible healthcare in some of the Pee Dee region's more rural areas. She talked about her work in that area and also highlighted FMU's role in the region. "The brightest light that shines in the Pee Dee is Francis Marion University," Davis said.

FMU President Dr. Fred Carter announced a new scholarship honoring Davis, and in her name. The scholarship will go to a Francis Marion student with a passion for community service.

Carter also announced that university would name two of its two most prominent streets after Heyward, who served as provost and in a number of other roles, including, briefly as acting president just before Carter's arrival in 1999.

The AAFSC was founded at FMU in 1995 to stimulate and enhance cultural awareness, and to promote professional development and welfare among faculty, staff and students.

The organization's goals include increasing morale and communication among members; creating an atmosphere of community for FMU African-American faculty, staff and students; serving as a liaison between the administrative personnel of FMU and the African-American faculty and staff; and examining the university's efforts in recruitment and retention of African-American faculty and staff.

Past winners of the AAFSC Diversity Award included Dr. Rebecca Lawson, Dr. Louis Venters, Angela Crosland, Dr. Rhonda Brogdon, Yvonne Davis, Crystal Graham, Dr. Will Wattles and Dr. Jason Owens.

Detrek Browning

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Irmo, South Carolina

Psychology Major

President's List Scholar

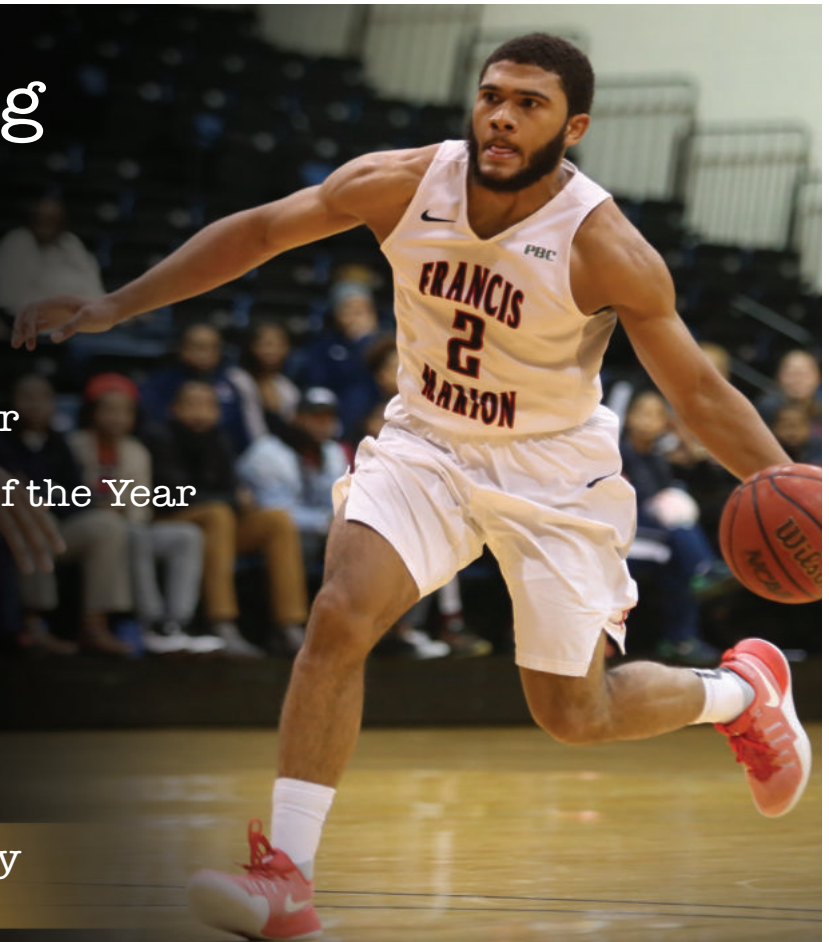
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NETWORKING TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea



Dr. Kandace Bethea

MARION-Leaders in the world of business and industry often network to achieve company goals. Networking is the art of building relationships with like-minded individuals who share techniques and knowledge unique to their particular product or clientele. Traditionally, education has not taken full advantage of this powerful tool. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the Marion County School District is in a position to network with like-minded school districts not only outside of our county but also outside of our state. As one

of five districts in the Empowering Educators to Excel (E3) program, our schools will partner with 37 other schools in South Carolina, Delaware, Indiana and Texas in a network improvement community context. E3 will focus on the greatest school-related influencers on student achievement: the recruitment, development and retention of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals. Through the network, educators from across the districts—where there is a disproportionately high percentage of economically disadvantaged students and students of color—will learn and share together on three powerful levers that lead to improving both principal and teacher effectiveness, including instructional leadership teams, instructional and executive coaching and professional learning communities.

E3's logic to improve teaching and learning is quite linear. There is no greater school-related impact on student achievement than the teacher in the classroom. The second greatest school-related impact on student achievement growth is the effectiveness of the principal, which also affects teacher retention through administrative support and school culture. The research is also clear that our most economically disadvantaged students are disproportionately served by higher percentages of ineffective and/or first-year teachers. Instructional feedback and timely, relevant coaching

are critical to improving classroom instruction.

All of our teachers and school administration will receive ongoing coaching and support in two ways. First, building-level administrators provide feedback to teacher-leaders and teachers who provide feedback to one another. Second, as part of the networked improvement community, building administrators are coached by the project-level team while principals, teacher leaders, and teachers may give and receive feedback from colleagues and peers from other schools in the Network Improvement Community via a coaching platform that supports live and recorded video. Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, our leaders will have the opportunity to participate in a cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Academy, specifically for diversified leaders, to provide training, coaching, support and a pipeline into E3 districts committed to ensuring a diverse cadre of leaders. All our schools will have at least three rungs on a career ladder, including teachers, master, and lead teachers. The career ladder provides a career trajectory, which includes eligibility for additional compensation commensurate with additional work and responsibilities.

To promote retention, our schools will use a combination of incentives/stipends for lead and master teachers as well as recruitment/retention bonuses for new teachers. School leaders who remain and are effective are eligible for performance-based compensation. Our teachers will be provided with extensive, job-embedded professional development that is directly linked to the classroom. In addition, school leaders will take advantage of individual, on-site coaching and cohort-based experiences facilitated across the network by project coaches and through the Leadership Academies for Principals, Assistant Principals, and Aspiring Leaders. Professional development will be tightly aligned to teacher effectiveness priorities. The most important goal of this project is student achievement, which will be realized by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness by evaluating the return on investment of every project activity versus student achievement.



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- ✓ The Academy of Early Learning: A renewed commitment to enhancing the education of pre-kindergarten students
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- ✓ Early College Program: A partnership with Florence-Darlington Technical School giving students the opportunity to earn college credit during high school
- ✓ STEM concentration: A heavy concentration on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities at Britton's Neck Elementary and Creek Bridge Middle/High School

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Diversity Spotlight

THE DIFFERENCE DARLINGTON CITIZENS DESERVE

by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Sheriff Tony Chavis

DARLINGTON - The Darlington County Sheriff's Office aims to serve its citizens and communities. Therefore, when the county elected its current sheriff, citizens expected nothing less than a leader who would follow its mission. The person they chose for the job and one who is dedicated to seeing the mission through is Sheriff Tony Chavis.

Chavis grew up in a rural Marlboro County community called "Chavistown" where they were considered "country-folk." He, along with three brothers, grew up on a

small farm. The way Chavis was raised is one of his reasons for knowing the importance of diversity and inclusion: "We were taught not to look at the outer appearance of a person and to not be judgmental."

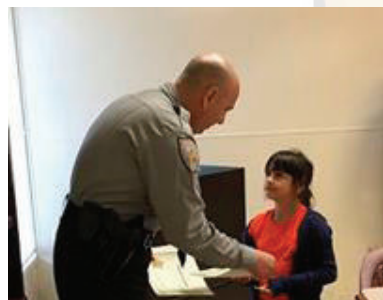
Chavis graduated from Wallace High School in 1985 and went on to attend SC State College (as it used to be known). It might surprise



you to find that as a student athlete he played college football as a 300-pound offensive center for Coach Bill Davis before joining the Marine Corps in 1986, where he graduated from Parris Island at a weight of 180 pounds. Chavis also learned a lot about

diversity and inclusion from being a Marine. "We were taught from the onset that no matter what ethnicity or background we came from, 'We are all now green!' I was a squad leader while at Parris Island and attained the rank of corporal during my service with the Marine Corps. Diversity is important because it gives different ideas and solutions to any crisis or situation, big or small."

Chavis ran for Darlington County Sheriff because there was a need for positive change. "There is more to law enforcement than just locking individuals up and depriving them of their freedom. I knew that as Sheriff I could do things that should have been done all along, such as increased property checks, checking on our homebound and widowed seniors, feeding the needy, providing a smile on a child's face with a gift at Christmas, creating a citizens advisory council and building strong relationships with our community--doing for others, not because you have to, but because you can!"



Chavis is also a former trooper for the South Carolina Highway Patrol (SCHP) where he served for 27 years before retiring as a lieutenant. "The SCHP was good to my family and me. I miss the day-to-day interactions of the troopers. I still maintain contact with numerous officers that I established

friendships with throughout the years."

Upon entering the Sheriff's Office, Chavis immediately began working to get body cameras for his officers. He stated, "At present, the cameras are on order. Hopefully, the cameras will be issued out in April 2018. Having body cameras is just one of several ways the

Sheriff's Office is looking to help the community overcome challenges, but there are others. Chavis stated, "When I took Office, I had deputies that had expired body armor that were working the streets for the citizens of Darlington County. This was unacceptable! We asked County Council to allow us to use money from our fuel budget to purchase 48 new body armor vests for those deputies, and it was approved. We have started programs at the Sheriff's Office that no other Sheriff in Darlington has done before. We started checking on our seniors through our 'Hello Neighbor Program.' We provided fans, bottled water and a few air conditioners to our seniors and the needy during the summer. We have fed our homebound seniors for Thanksgiving and provided coats and gifts to children for Christmas."

Re-establishing the trust and support from Darlington citizens is another challenge. But for members of the community who might fear and/or hate police, the Sheriff offered the following: "Communicate. If you have an issue that is bothering you, talk about it. Invite a law enforcement officer to church, lunch or to a community gathering. Get to know your law enforcement."



On the other side of the challenge are officers. Chavis added, "We, as law enforcement, need to get out into our communities to let our citizens know that we are here for them, to serve, provide protection and assistance with their needs. My plans and vision will always be about the people

of our great county. We will continue to build relationships and establish trust by being in our schools, churches and communities providing service, training and protection to the people. We will continue to grow our programs to assist the elderly, children and those in need."

And Chavis' work has not gone unnoticed. Lieutenant Kaynnera T. Capers of the Darlington County Sheriff's Office stated, "The Love and Compassion that Sheriff Chavis has for the citizens of Darlington County is beyond amazing. Faithful and caring, he is always concerned about the needs of others. He is genuine in his commitment to serving all the citizens and visitors of Darlington County. With all that's going on in America, especially the division between some law enforcement agencies and communities, Sheriff Chavis is a true example of what community law enforcement should be. I am proud to serve with him, and I am more so proud to call him my Sheriff."

Chavis' accomplishments and motivations as a leader reveal how determined, sincere and humble he is, which attribute to him being the perfect person to grace this issue's cover. "My family and the bond and love we share for one another are a great accomplishment on a personal note. I've been married to my wife Denise for 24 years, and together we have 3 children and 1 grandchild, but we lost a grandson in April 2016 at just 2 ½ months old. Coming from a small rural farming community in Marlboro County, and going on to attend college, join the United States Marine Corps Reserves, the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office, the South Carolina Highway Patrol and attaining the rank of Lieutenant, and finally being elected by the people to the Office of Sheriff, are all great accomplishments. However, serving the people motivates me. Being able to do for others and to provide a sense of security and protection is what God put me here to do."



Celebrating Our Volunteers

BLANKETING THE COLD, WARMING OUR HEARTS

by Jennifer Guiles Robinson



Dr. Susan Peters

From listening to the schedule that Dr. Susan Peters has, she definitely has the heart to serve the community. I had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Peters in her wonderful home in Florence to talk about her love for her community and the people. “Volunteering was instilled in me as a child. I was always taught that I was blessed to be a blessing,” she stated. And a blessing she is!

In July 2017, Peters was named the Thomas Family Distinguished Professor in Entrepreneurship at University of North Carolina Pembroke. She enjoys working with small business and potential small businesses in the bi-state area. Her vocational passion has afforded her wonderful opportunities throughout the United States and abroad. But she never loses sight of what is happening in her home community.

Her heart to serve leads her to volunteer for organizations and to create masterful works of art to bring joy to those who are considered less fortunate. As a tribute to her father who was a military veteran, Peters began making quilts for veterans who were homeless or hospitalized. That service then turned into quilting for seniors and others who needed to feel the love and warmth of not only a blanket, but also the warmth of knowing someone cared. With the help of her mother, Donna Junge, they contribute about 100 handmade lap quilts and afghans a year to local hospices, nursing homes, and veteran’s homes. One story she shared from her experience with a patient from one of the homes helped her to see that what she is doing is greatly appreciated. She stated that one of the patients who received a blanket had not spoken in some time, but the blanket the patient received was so vibrant in colors, that she used non-verbal cues and expressions to show how much she enjoyed and appreciated the blanket. Peters stated, that was an exciting moment for me! To watch this woman enjoy the

blanket, makes it all worth the time and effort!”

Peters also volunteers in several capacities for her church, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church. She is the financial secretary and helps out with making banners, playing organ, helping with the Parking Lot Ministry and pitching in wherever she is needed. Another volunteer role Peters has is as chairperson to the executive board for Empowered to Heal, a local grassroots non-profit that provides support and resources for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Peters stated that when she seeks to volunteer is not by design. “I see a need, and if I can assist, I do. I know my strengths and I use those to help and empower others. I often feel like it’s not volunteering because I love helping people. I’ve volunteered for so long and have done so much that I cannot stop now.” She jokingly stated, “I almost feel selfish because I get so much joy from helping others. I’m doing what I love to do.”

I asked her how she would encourage others to volunteer. She stated, “I would ask the question, ‘Has anyone ever helped you? Has a coach, a teacher, a friend or anyone ever helped you in your life? If so, that is reason enough to pay it forward and help someone else.’ Volunteering is simply giving of yourself for and to the next person. It does not have to be an organized effort, nor does it have to be monetary. It does take time and willingness to get involved. But you also have to know your limitations. It is important to know what you can and cannot handle.”

We ended our conversation with Peters quoting Luke 12:48 (NIV): “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.” She added, “I have been given so much, I want to share it others.”

We appreciate Peters for all she does to make our community brighter! She is an OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER and for all you do, we salute and thank you!

Dr. Susan Peters is married to Dave, an owner of Seminar Brewing in Florence, and they have four children and nine grandchildren.

MENTORING FROM BOYS TO MEN IN THE COMMUNITY

by Tory White



Pastor Edward Graham Sr.

LAKE CITY- Pastor Edward Graham Sr. is a native of Lake City. He is the pastor of Amazing Grace Church of God International Ministries. He has an associate degree from Florence-Darlington Technical College in business management and a bachelor’s in interdisciplinary studies from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. He is also a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Graham states that after 20 years in military service to his country, he had the opportunity to observe a plethora of youthful men and women entering into the ranks. Many of these young people didn’t possess the tools needed to be productive citizens. Graham was deeply afflicted by this and yearned to one day dedicate his life to the mission of preparing the young men back home to be all they could be.

Graham organized the Boys to Men mentoring group in Lake City.

Once a month he would meet with young men ages six and up. The focus was to build productive citizens and better men. The program grew and did well but hit a snag. Graham reached out to his community Boys and Girls Club to expand and collaborate. Boys to Men got a new home and began to meet every week. Since 2009, Graham has mentored students at the Poynor Adult Education, Florence School District One and Williamsburg County School District. He helps them to navigate through family, financial, social and other issues that arise in their life. He serves as an on-call mentor for Florence School District 3. Along with close friend, Bishop Talbert Burgess, he also operates a prayer ministry. Together, they go to homes, hospitals or anywhere there is a need and offer prayer and support.

Graham feels his wife is an asset and inspiration. She is a career development specialist for the Williamsburg County School District and the mother of their four adult children. They have adopted four children whom they love and consider a ministry. Graham allocates his drive and desire to the Spirit of God.



Celebrating Our Volunteers

IN RECOGNITION OF AN OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER

by Jennifer Guiles Robinson



Patricia Singleton Parr

Patricia Singleton Parr has had a stellar career in the Florence community since the mid- 80s. She is a retired assistant district attorney from the 12th Judicial Circuit Office of the Solicitor and is currently the administrative hearing officer for Florence School District One. Though her career has afforded her various successful ventures, Singleton Parr stated, "Volunteering, for my family, has always been the bedrock of our existence." Parr has an even more impressive volunteering resume. From being active in her church to

providing leadership in the Florence Alumnae Chapter of her beloved sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., her volunteer services have enriched those to whom she has reached, and it looks like she does not plan to slow down anytime soon.

Parr's faith is the foundation of her service. The leading act of service is with her church, Cumberland United Methodist Church. She serves there in various capacities. As active as she has been with her church, she still makes time to include volunteer opportunities within her community. Her current volunteer schedule includes being a member of the Corporate Board of the Boys and Girls Club (BGC) of the Pee Dee. She also takes a more hands-on approach with the members of the BGC by being a unit cooking instructor. Her continuum of service also includes Family Promise of Florence and Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated.

When asked how she decided with which organizations to volunteer,

she stated that she determined what the need was in the community at the time of her decision. For instance, in the mid-1980s, sexual assaults were on the rise. She and her husband did not have children at the time, so she became active with the grassroots team of the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault. After Parr and her husband began a family, her community service had more emphasis on children's issues.

Though volunteering for Parr has been mostly individual efforts, she proclaimed her appreciation for the times spent with her husband and other members of her family when they volunteer together. Parr does not have to find the time to volunteer. She makes the time to volunteer. She is a retired district attorney now, but she also volunteered when she worked full time. Parr says that her husband and a close friend accuse her of "over committing."

Parr, if "over committing" means making yourself available to meet the needs of others, then we all should aspire to being "over committed."

Our final inquiry of Parr was about the value of volunteering. Many people believe that if there is no monetary reward to serving others, then it is a waste of time. She stated, "I do believe in the old saying that 'service to others is your rent for being here.' It is not about the monetary award, but about the euphoria of making life a little better for someone else."

That is why we have chosen to salute you, Patricia Singleton Parr for Outstanding Volunteer! You have sacrificed and given much to encourage the citizens of Florence county and beyond. Thank you for allowing the bedrock of your existence to be an example of a foundation for our community.

PUTTING FAITH TO WORK FOR KIDS

by Tory White



HELP 4 KIDS

FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

A nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization

In 2013 a Bible study group of 17 ladies was studying the book of James. Inspired by the text, they decided to put their faith to work. They searched for an opportunity to live out their faith by helping others. After diligent research and considering several programs, they discovered one out of four Florence county children is hungry. Determined to fill the weekend gap for these young people, Help 4 Kids of Florence was born.

A nonprofit organization, Help 4 Kids of Florence is an all-volunteer group. With more than 200 volunteers, they have no paid employees. A member of the Bible study group anonymously donated \$5000 to get the program started. With that donation, Help 4 Kids went into six Florence School District One schools. The first year the group served 193 children.

Diane Welsh began to write grant proposals and to pursue donations as they formulated a five-year plan to serve all of Florence County. The lions share their resources, which come from local benefactors, which include their warehouse building location where all the work is done. Welsh is proud to say that 100 percent of all donations is applied directly to food. \$100 will provide a meal for one child for each weekend of the academic year. Among the volunteers and benefactors are school students such as the IB program, special service class's sports teams, private schools, beta club, local businesses and church groups. Help 4 Kids enjoys having the public come in to assist with the daunting task of

stocking goods and preparing the bags that create love and support for a plethora of young people.

Help 4 Kids reached their goal of the five-year plan in 2½ years. The group is now serving all the elementary schools and head start programs in all five Florence County districts. The program serves an average of 2000 children each week of the school year. It also has a food pantry at Southside Middle School. There is collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club of the Pee Dee to service children during the summer months.

Help 4 Kids' vision is to fill weekend hunger gap from Florence County children because hunger does not take the weekend off. Each bag has spaghetti and meatballs, Vienna sausages, Beanie Weenies, Pop-Tarts, Grits, noodles and fruit bars along with a note on the outside that tells every child "you are loved."





Celebrating Our Volunteers

CELEBRATION OF SUCCESS AND LEADERSHIP AT CHAMBER MEETING

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President



Chair Darnell Byrd McPherson & Martin Driggers

HARTSVILLE -Tenacity. Courage. Strength. Devotion. Class. These are a few of the words used to describe award winners during the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce's 97th Annual Membership Banquet, held on Feb. 26. The banquet is a night where the board updates attendees on last year's accomplishments, talks about the plans for the present year, and presents several of the community's most prestigious awards.

The theme of this year's banquet was "In Full Bloom." The Harris E. & Louise H. DeLoach Center was adorned with hydrangeas to symbolize the new growth the chamber experienced in 2017 and to represent the freshness of ideas and concepts the chamber is implementing this year.

Immediate-past chair Martin Driggers shared that the chamber experienced an 11 percent growth in membership in 2017, bringing the total membership base to 341 members. Several HR Managers meetings as well as Small Business Development meetings were held that focused on topics ranging from Apprenticeship Carolina to the Small Business Administration's government contract and funding opportunities.

The biggest success for 2017 was the new Women's Leadership Symposium. Over 175 women attended and enjoyed a day in which Duke Energy's CEO Lynn Good was presented with the first Chrysalis Award, and SPC's Linda Weatherford was given the Woman of Achievement Award.

Chair Darnell Byrd-McPherson next spoke about the bright future the chamber is looking toward in 2018. To begin this year, another new event was held: the first Economic Development Outlook Luncheon. Members from around the county joined to hear updates from leaders in economic development from both the county and state levels. Byrd-McPherson also talked about new Champions for Education program that will connect the business and education communities. In May, Leadership Hartsville will graduate a class of 17 who are currently working on their project of Boys & Girls Club beautification.



Pilot Club Caregiver of the Year



Duke Energy Citizenship and Service Award



Hartsville United Way Volunteer of the Year

Driggers thanked outgoing board members Tim Browne and John Griggs for their service and welcomed new board members Kelly Benton and Sue Shugart.

Moving on to the awards portion of the event, two women were presented with Women in Business scholarships. Florence-Darlington Technical College presented its scholarship to Courtney Rogers, a dual major student who has remained on the Dean's List her entire college career while always working. Coker College awarded their scholarship to Megan Friedt, who attends their Hartsville Adult Degree Program.

Next, Janie Campbell presented the Pilot Club Caregiver of the Year award. Given since 2008, this award recognizes a volunteer who has enhanced the life of someone in need. This year's recipient was Charles Douglas, who was described as being dependable and someone whose acts of kindness to friends, neighbors, and strangers may go unknown.



Chamber Ambassador of the Year

Mindy Taylor then presented the Duke Energy Citizenship and Service Award to the Christmas in April board, accepted by Joann Delong. Typically on the last Saturday in April, churches, community groups, and individuals mobilize to repair owner-occupied housing of low income, elderly families in the Hartsville area. Christmas in April has helped over 700 families stay warm, safe, and dry and changes the lives of Hartsvillians each year.

Fresh off of winning an award, a teary Joann Delong presented the Hartsville United Way Volunteer of the Year award to a recipient described in the nomination as "very dependable, you can always count on her to step in when needed and she has the best interest of the girls and heart. She continues to be a positive role model and is committed to the principal of the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law." Michele Brown was presented with this award for being a devoted volunteer to the Girl Scout Organization.



HYP of the Year

Kelly Benton, 2016 Chamber Ambassador of the Year, then presented Brandy Johnson with this year's award. Benton thanked all of the ambassadors that give 100 percent, but described Johnson as someone who always gives 115 percent. Brandy helped the chamber secure several new members as well as strengthened relationships with current members.



Business Person of the Year

Patrick Rogers presented the Hartsville Young Professional (HYP) of the Year award to Jordan Pupa, who held almost every HYP board seat last year. Pupa helped to live out the mission of the HYP organization, which is to make Hartsville a place where young professionals want to live, work and play.



Citizens of the Year Award

The chamber's Will Woodham Business Person of the Year 2016 recipient Danny Johnson came to present this year's award. This award was given to a couple who is gearing up to celebrate the 20th anniversary

of their business this year, Leigh Ann and Willie Bizzell. Bizzell's has been a staple in downtown Hartsville for 20 years, all while the Bizzells have helped young entrepreneurs flourish and have partnered with different charitable organizations to raise funds through their Sunday buffets. Johnson explained how this couple embodies the entrepreneurial spirit in which Hartsville has come to be known.

Finally, the Hartsville Rotary Club presented the Citizen of the Year Award to Adlena Graham. Described as being "someone who came forward and made a difference," Graham was the only one in the room shocked that all of the praise describing such a remarkable woman was, indeed, about her. As someone who Bobby McGee stated as being "the embodiment of the Rotary motto, Service Above Self," Graham received the award with utter shock and was completely speechless.

The chamber is working hard to fulfill its mission by being a catalyst for community success through member support and advocacy. For more information about the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, visit www.hartsvillechamber.org or call 843-332-6401.



Celebrating Our Volunteers

DARLINGTON CHAMBER WINNERS

Submitted by the Greater Darlington Chamber of Commerce



Citizen of the Year, Sheriff Tony Chavis

DARLINGTON—The Greater Darlington Chamber of Commerce recently held its annual awards banquet and celebration at the Darlington Country Club. The winners of the Chamber awards were as follows:

- Citizen of the Year- Pat Cavanaugh and Sheriff Tony Chavis
- Community Pride- Darlington Garden Club
- Lifetime Achievement Award- Connell Delaine

In addition to these awards, Jannie Lathan was recognized for her dedicated service on the Board of Directors for the Greater Darlington Chamber, as well as our new Chamber president, Harriet Hobbs, for her great job of transitioning from chairman of the Board to president.



Connell Delaine, Lifetime Achievement Award

This year's banquet featured Lonnie Page from Man2Man as the keynote speaker. He gave great insight and testimonial on the work Man2Man is doing in our community. Anthony Green, of Man2Man, talked about the program, which has spread across the state of South Carolina over the past 18 years. "We connect families and help bridge the gap," Green said. "Our purpose is to work with people for economic development, personal development and healthy relationships. We help people find jobs and mentor young parents who are going through tough times because it's all about the children."

Connell Delaine, thanked the chamber and everyone who was involved in this selection. Delaine said, "When I see people in need, which I see every day when I visit the school system, I want to be able to help. I want to take care of people, and I'm very honored to win this award."

Delaine is a veteran of the United States Army, in which he served for more than 25 years, and now works to mentor young men, in addition to helping with the Boy Scouts of America and many other local programs.



Darlington Garden Club, Community Pride

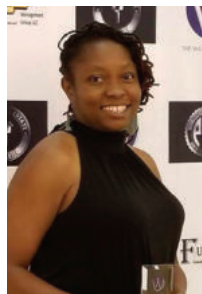
The Darlington Garden Club was given the 2018 Community Pride Award. The organization has been part of Darlington since 1949, helping perform beautification projects, including downtown revitalization and many other tasks around the Darlington community. Last, Pat Cavanaugh and Tony Chavis were both named as the 2018 Citizens of the Year. Cavanaugh was originally from Pittsburgh before moving to Darlington in 1993. He is a past captain of the Darlington Rescue Squad and was appointed fire chief in 2012.

Chavis echoed Cavanaugh's sentiments as a recipient and said that he couldn't think of a better place to raise his family. "I'm not originally from Darlington County. I'm from Marlboro County," Chavis said. "I became a deputy in Chesterfield County in 1988. After I got back from Desert Storm, I was stationed in Darlington County. I fell in love with the people of Darlington County. I live and I work to make sure that you're safe here, and this is truly an honor and blessing. I've been a servant since I was 18 years of age, and I look forward to continuing to serve."

The chamber is up to 144 total members, one of which is Man2Man Fatherhood Initiative Program.

DIVAS BEATING THE ODDS

by Les Echols



Ruby Bridges

BENNETTSVILLE - When Marlboro County resident Ruby Bridges started her organization, DIVAS, it was based on a sometimes overlooked need she noticed in her community. Bridges first began working in her community as a volunteer cheer coach for Marlboro Parks and Recreation. She loved working with the cheerleaders and noticed that many of the girls lacked self-esteem, family attention, or just a friend to talk to. Bridges said she prayed about what she could do to help, and her vision, DIVAS, was born.

DIVAS is an acronym that stands for Divine Intelligent Virtuous Anointed Sisters. The organization works with young girls ages nine to 18. It is intended to build self-esteem and self-awareness of who you are through structured curriculum, fellowship and service. The foundation of the program is built around parents, community and a curriculum that teaches young girls how to love themselves and reach for the stars through their goals. Three key principles DIVAS participants are taught are to love themselves, know their purpose and have a voice. Although the primary focus is building self-esteem and relationships with the girls in the group, it consistently incorporates numerous projects for the girls as well. Some of its past projects include a winter coat drive, collecting donations for the Pee Dee Coalition, Relay For Life of Marlboro County and Princess for a Day. The number one goal for DIVAS is to help curve the teenage pregnancy rate in Marlboro County.

"Just a few years ago, Marlboro County ranked number one in the state of South Carolina in teen pregnancies. I was a teenage mom twice, my junior and senior years in high school. I saw young girls making the same mistakes I made when I was a teenager but remembered it did not start in my teenage years. It started with the cutest boy in the fourth grade telling me I was ugly. I believed what he said, and I saw this same pattern in young girls and teenagers. I wanted to help enact change by creating a space where girls could be themselves, learn, love and build rapport with one another," said Bridges.



DIVA Team

"Through our DIVAS program, we teach the girls that they are responsible for their lives and can be whatever it is they want to be in life," continued Bridges. "We expose the girls to many different career paths and opportunities, from sports to STEM workshop, to cooking classes. Overall, we try to give the girls options that will place them in any area of their choosing. We inspire our girls to beat the odds of everything that is believed and expected of them," Bridges continued.

Bridges currently works for the Children's Defense Fund in Marlboro County as the senior administrative assistant. She earned an associate degree in computer technology, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education, and a Master of Arts degree in Education with a concentration in Reading Literacy. "I have taken two of my passions--children and literacy--and placed them together," said Bridges.

To find out more about DIVAS visit their website at: <https://www.facebook.com/divasinchristunited/> or their Facebook page: <http://divasinchristunited.wixsite.com/divas>.



Celebrating Our Volunteers

NICOLE GRIGGS, WE CELEBRATE YOU!

Articles by Les Echols



Nicole Griggs and family

Florence is full of citizens who take an interest in social issues and community service. Some people, like Florence native Nicole Griggs, raise the bar even higher and become synonymous with consistent service and philanthropy. Griggs stresses that she was raised by a single mother who worked hard to ensure that they had everything they needed. And, in Griggs' own words, "We were unaware of the fact that we were actually poor." This helped mold Griggs' philosophy on helping people.

Aside from a stint attending college in Missouri, Griggs has been in Florence most of her life. When asked how she became so involved in the community after earning a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Griggs began telling the story of her extensive community service. "Initially, out of college, I was looking for opportunities to serve, and the first organization I became a part of was the Florence Lions Club. The Lions Club is an international civic organization whose motto is 'We Serve.'" As a part of the Florence Lions Club, Griggs could help with projects like delivering groceries at Christmas, helping with toys for children in need around the holidays, as well as helping with sight conservation throughout the year by providing glasses to those in need. Griggs has been a member of the Lions Club for 16 years.

When talking about other aspects of her service, Griggs was more emotional. "I lost my aunt to cancer and had an up-close and personal view of what the American Cancer Society helps with. I immediately wanted to be part of Relay for Life. Having a team raising money during the relay is both a way to give back and fun at the same time, and serving on the committee to help put on the relay is a rewarding experience."

Griggs is also heavily involved in the execution of the SC Pecan Festival, an annual event in Florence that regularly sees up to 50,000 in attendance. For Griggs, it's all about unity and bringing people together. "People always want their community to be fun and vibrant and have lots of things going on, and I think often they miss that they could help that to happen by being a part! This year is the 15th Annual SC Pecan Festival, and we strive to bring the community together to enjoy a great time for all ages and races. I love watching the downtown and community in general grow and seeing everyone work together," continued Griggs.

Incredibly, this was only a portion of Griggs' service and organizations she helps and gives to. "Another very close to my heart is the Foster Care Clothing Closet. We area 501(c)(3) in Florence with a goal of helping children who are going into foster care to feel loved and cared about with community support. The children are provided with clothing, needs and luggage, so they feel like they have things that are theirs and not just transferred to a totally new place with nothing or maybe a couple of items in a trash bag. These kids are special and valued and, by no fault of their own, have found themselves in this situation. Our goal is to help that child as well as ease the burden of the foster family that is willing to open their home and hearts to them. What I did not realize is that there are over 200 children each year in our community alone that go into foster care," Griggs states.

Griggs is a stark advocate for diversity and inclusion, and she demonstrates that service is a great way to start that trend. "I truly hope that people will look for needs and see them as opportunities to make a difference. It does not matter what your background is or what your age is or what your capabilities are. There is always something that you could do to help! There are many opportunities to get involved and make a difference, even if it's

only in one life. There are so many needs out there, and it does not take very long at all to find something that you can do to pitch in. I think the more we focus on helping others, the better we will all be," concluded Griggs.

OVER TEN YEARS OF SERVICE AND STILL GOING



Katrina Graham

The American Cancer Society is a well-known organization when it comes to any discussions about community-based organizations. Katrina Graham is an Operations Manager for ADP Tax Credits who also serves as an avid volunteer for the Relay For Life. "I am passionate about helping others," Katrina said plainly. Graham has served as a volunteer for the Florence County Relay For Life of Florence County for over ten years, including two years as the Florence County Lead.

"The support that the American Cancer Society provides to those impacted by cancer is priceless. The American Cancer Society is one of those organizations in which I can see donations being utilized on a day-to-day basis. It feels great to refer someone for a free mammogram, knowing that in some instances, the mammogram may have saved their life," said Graham.

Graham has witnessed the success of the Look Good Feel Good Program, a program that helps to teach beauty techniques to people with cancer to help them manage the appearance-related side effects of cancer treatment. Graham has also met people that have received assistance through the Hope Lodge Program. Hope Lodge offers cancer patients and their caregivers a free place to stay when their best hope for effective treatment is in another city.

Graham feels it is imperative for businesses to be involved in the community because the people they employ are members of that community. Helping those that are less fortunate or simply putting resources back into an area that you are pulling resources from is the only way to keep the cycle of service going. "I am grateful to the American Cancer Society and the Relay For Life event. Although cancer impacts all of us I had never received the knowledge and opportunities to give back as I have with this organization. The Relay For Life events provide a wonderful atmosphere to celebrate, remember and fight back. During the event, participants are educated on the latest innovations in cancer research and best practices for screenings. The people that attend Relay for Life events witness businesses giving back. It is a perfect time to interact with the community while fundraising for a great cause. And when people see businesses actively giving back to the community they are more likely to support those businesses," continued Graham.

Graham also talked about how service impacts diversity and inclusion. "When you are exposed to new communities, new people and new experiences, the exposure helps you gain new knowledge about those people, cultures and communities," said Graham. "It is an exciting time to be a member of the Florence community. There is so much growth happening. I believe that we must do a better job of creating places, activities and events for our young adults to take advantage of. If we want to keep their talents here, we must find ways of entertaining and involving them," said Graham.

Katrina Graham is originally from Milwaukee, Wis., but has lived in the Carolinas for 12 years. She graduated from Alverno College. She and her husband Frederick are active members of Pentecostal United Church of Christ Apostolic.

THE JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE FOR THOSE WITH AUTISM

Submitted by Jamie Sullivan, Program and Office Administrator



MYRTLE BEACH--The month of April is especially important to many families all over the country because it is National Autism Awareness Month. Autism “refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences” (Autism Speaks).

Currently, the rate of diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder is one in 68 children (CDC). The journey to independence for those with autism is as unique to each individual, as is each person with autism.

SOS Health Care is a non-profit organization founded in Myrtle Beach in 1989. In the mid-2000s, SOS’s creator, Dr. Bill Davis, acknowledged the need of a growing population, those with Autism. Over the years, SOS has grown to serve individuals across nine counties in South Carolina and provides 13 different programs for children and adults with autism and intellectual disabilities and their families. The heart of SOS’s programs is its Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy program. Applied Behavior Analysis is the evidence-based treatment for autism and helps children with autism develop language and communication skills, social and functional skills and so much more. All the programs offered by SOS are steeped in this evidence-based method to train individuals in various skills.

Another program offered by SOS focuses on social skills development, where children and teens learn to interact with one another, take turns during conversations, see things from another person’s point of view, understand and respect others’ views as they may differ from one’s own, and develop friendships. These are all things that individuals with autism struggle with, so seeing the lasting friendships that are built in this program is truly heartwarming.



Reading Time

Children with autism cannot attend typical daycares during the summer months because staff are not trained or equipped to handle the needs of a child with autism. About eight years ago, SOS began offering an annual ten-week Summer Camp program that

provides a safe and supportive environment with specially trained staff so that parents can continue to work during the summer months. Children have a curriculum, guest speakers and go on field trips into the community.

SOS continually surveys the individuals it serves to see what other needs there are and how SOS can assist them to be independent and fulfilled. A few years ago, SOS recognized the need for supported employment services for individuals with autism. SOS has since become a DDSN approved employment services provider and currently provides job coaching in several counties. The SOS Job Coach works with the individual to assess his or her skills, train him/her in employment skills, and work on building resumes and interview skills. The Job Coach builds relationships with businesses in the community and trains the employer on how to work best with an individual with autism and even attends orientation and training with the new employee.

About two years ago, SOS began a program for teens and adults with autism and intellectual disabilities that focused on independent living skills. Lessons taught in this program include kitchen safety, how

to grocery shop, time management, self-advocacy, money management, and essential social skills and relationship skills. The program also teaches household skills, including cooking, laundry, washing dishes and meal planning.

One of the increasing concerns across the nation for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities is housing. According to Autism Speaks, over the next ten years 500,000 individuals with autism will become adults. There is no national plan for housing for these individuals. Those who work, often have entry-level, part-time employment. Those that are unable to work due to issues associated with their diagnosis or co-morbid health issues rely on Social Security Income of \$750 per month or less. In Horry County, the Department of Disabilities and



Life Skills Group

Special Needs has only 66 beds available for the thousands of individuals in the county with autism and intellectual disabilities.

SOS acknowledged this necessity and began the development of their latest and biggest project to date, an affordable housing community called Oak

Tree Farm. For the last year and a half, SOS Health Care has been meeting with families, builders, engineers, and anyone else that could offer insight or support to this important project. In July, leaders of SOS visited another community in Lakeland, Florida called Noah’s Ark. This community currently houses over 100 individuals and was orchestrated by a group of parents. During their visit, SOS leaders learned valuable information about how to develop such a community in Horry County and how to make it safe, supportive, and affordable for adults with autism and intellectual disabilities.

Oak Tree Farm is the first housing community of its kind in the area. With an expected ground breaking date of August 2018, the 10+ acres of land in Conway are being built in phases so individuals can move into the community before the entire project is complete. Oak Tree Farm will house about 90 individuals, have space for live-in caretakers, on-site staff, a Transition House, a Life Skills Training Center, social skills development opportunities, Job Coaching and so much more. The Life Skills Training Center will be the “hub” of Oak Tree Farm as it will provide a communal space for continual growth and independence among the residents. The community will have a busy schedule of activities including fitness classes, cooking lessons, social events, recreational activities, and more. Oak Tree Farm will consist of duplex style homes and apartment style living, all with single-room occupancy units so each resident has their own bedroom and bathroom. Individuals must be 18+ to live at Oak Tree Farm, and families are encouraged to visit. Options for green sources of energy are being explored, and there are plans for a greenhouse that will serve as a source of food, income, and jobs. SOS leaders have also been assisting groups in Charleston and Greenville with their housing endeavors by sharing information to replicate the Oak Tree Farm community.

The road to independence is a learning experience that is life-long for us all. The goal of SOS’s programs is to aid individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities along each leg of their journey so that they may be able to reach their utmost potential and lead happy and fulfilling lives just like their neurotypical peers.

HEAVEN'S HOPE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

Submitted by Corrie C. Mim, RN



Rachel Lee (Photo by Collin Smith photography)

Can you imagine spending all of your childhood as a patient in a hospital setting? There are many children who have to do just that. Medically fragile children are those who need some form of higher-level medical intervention to care for them on a daily basis, and their needs vary greatly from one child to another. Needs may include long term ventilator support, specialized feeding methods, supplemental oxygen, and specialized medical and supportive therapies. Unfortunately, many of these children in the state of South Carolina

have to live in the hospital because there isn't a special home specifically designed to meet their needs. Parents are either unable or unwilling to care for some of these children. Heaven's Hope, Inc. is working with great passion to create the first children's home for medically fragile children in our state. This children's home will provide the daily medical care required with the warmth and nurture of a home-like setting while also providing for the social and educational needs of these special children.

Rachel Lee, registered pediatric intensive care nurse and founder of Heaven's Hope, Inc., has been preparing for this day for over 20 years. Her inspiration initially came from a very special medically fragile child named J.J. whom she came to know as a "candy striper" in the PICU where her mother worked. She watched as nurses cared for him for years, teaching him to walk and potty-training him, pouring their hearts out to nurture him the best they could in a hospital setting. When it was time for J.J. to go to a home, there wasn't one in South



Medically Fragile Models (Photo by NDC photography)

Carolina equipped to handle his medical needs, so this precious little boy had to be taken to a children's home in North Carolina for medically fragile children. Lee went to this home with a group of nurses to inspect it and make sure it would be a good fit for their beloved J.J., and what she found changed the course of her future forever.

This home, Lee observed, was exactly that: a home. Children were able to be children there. Medical needs were met with great skill, but also the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of these children were being abundantly provided for with equal importance to their physical needs. After becoming a PICU nurse herself, Lee has continued to work toward her dream of creating a home like this in South Carolina. She, along with six great members of the community who make up the board of directors of Heaven's Hope, are finally at the place of fundraising and promoting and educating the public to make this dream become a reality.

We have an obligation, a duty, a privilege to care for these children who cannot care for themselves. Many of us would not be able to bring these children into our own homes and provide the specialized care



they need, but we are able to give of our abundance and help spread the word to build a forever home for them. Heaven's Hope, Inc. needs your support to move forward, to break ground and make history in a mission that has eternal value. We have the opportunity to make a daily and lifelong difference for children who

desperately need and deserve our help.

For more info and to join in this mission, please visit www.heavenshopesc.com. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @heavenshopesc.



IF YOU HAVE MET ONE, THEN YOU HAVE MET ONE

Articles by Kim Williams



Hughes Family

Rylie is a bright and beautiful ten-year-old child, making her way in this world. She enjoys playing with friends and spending time with her family. Just last summer, she traveled all the way to Niagara Falls and enjoyed camping out with her parents and little brother, Liam, for 16 days! It was a wonderful trip that left many precious memories they will surely treasure for a lifetime.

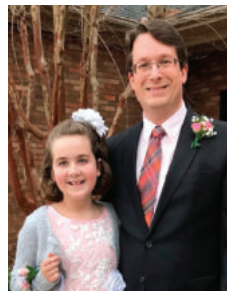
Recently, Rylie's parents shared some other memories they have, including thoughts of their early years becoming parents. It was 2007 when

Rhett and Farrah began celebrating the arrival of their baby girl. Like other parents to be, they shared many joyful emotions. Those emotions turned into concern and questions as they realized baby Rylie faced different struggles than other babies her age. She was born without the sucking reflex and had to be taught how to breastfeed over a period of weeks. Then, when it was time to transition to a bottle, she had to learn to eat all over again. From there on, she continued to miss many milestones like rolling over, sitting up, walking and talking. Rylie's parents knew that something wasn't quite right with the speed and how their daughter was developing. They had always been told that she was within the normal range of development, so they tried to push their worries aside.

However, when Rylie was 18 months old, the doctors agreed that she was behind. That was when the long road of therapies began and continue today. She started with speech, physical, and occupational therapies. As time went on, they also added ABA therapy a few times a week. Rylie was first diagnosed as having pervasive developmental disorder (PDD-NOS), and the insurance companies did not want to pay for very much. However, with the DSM-5, her diagnosis was changed to Autism Spectrum Disorder. This diagnosis brought with it many new fears for her parents. Both Rhett and Farrah recall thinking and wondering about the future, with questions like, "What if she never learns to talk and communicate?" or "What if she never has friends?"

Many "what if" questions swirled around their thoughts, yet through it all, they remembered that God was in control of it all and placed their trust in him.

Farrah shared about a pivotal church service when Rylie was just four and a half years old. The pastor was preaching out of the Bible in Acts chapter 2, about God's glory and the day of Pentecost. During that church service, Rylie prayed aloud during the children's message, and it was the first time others had been able to understand her speech. It was that day that Farrah gained peace and a renewed hope that, whatever they faced, Rylie would be okay. Rhett stated that although the diagnosis was very hard to hear and accept as a parent, as well as the challenges they would face, he realizes that he can look back over the last ten years and see God's goodness and grace in how Rylie has grown and, more importantly, how she has impacted everyone around her.



Rylie and her dad

There is a special program at their church that takes place a designated weekend out of the month, and the entire Hughes family takes a few hours to give back what they have learned through having a child on the spectrum, share with others and invest in their lives. This program is called Respite Night and is open to families who are raising a child with special needs. It allows the parents/caregivers to have a few hours to themselves, while providing a fun and safe place for their children. Having the opportunity to serve together as a family is reassuring because they get to see how others respond and interact with their daughter.

All of the support Rylie's received has benefited her tremendously. She is now a thriving fifth grader who enjoys computer club and participates in her school's morning show. Rylie's family would like everyone to know that if you have met one person with autism, you have met one person with autism. The Spectrum is so vast that there are no two people on the spectrum alike. Also, all parents have struggles, whether their children have special needs or not, and they want all parents to remember we are in this together.

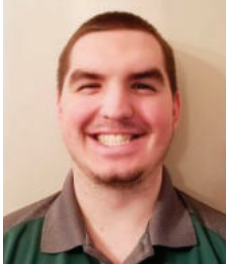
Symptoms of Autism in Children may include:

- Avoids cuddling or touching
- Repeated behavioural outbursts and tantrums
- Inappropriate attachments to objects
- Maintains little or no eye contact
- Has no fear of danger
- Unusual vocabulary for child's age or social group
- Easily overwhelmed by social and other stimulation
- Inability to cope with change or unstructured situations



Autism Awareness

ALL 4 AUTISM: HELP IS HERE!



Michael Westwood

There has been a wonderful resource available in our area since 2005 that many may not realize. It all began with some families who dealt with the Autism Spectrum Disorder coming together to offer support for one another. The group, All 4 Autism was born and continues to grow. Its main purpose is to increase awareness, resources, and support to people of all ages on the spectrum and their families.

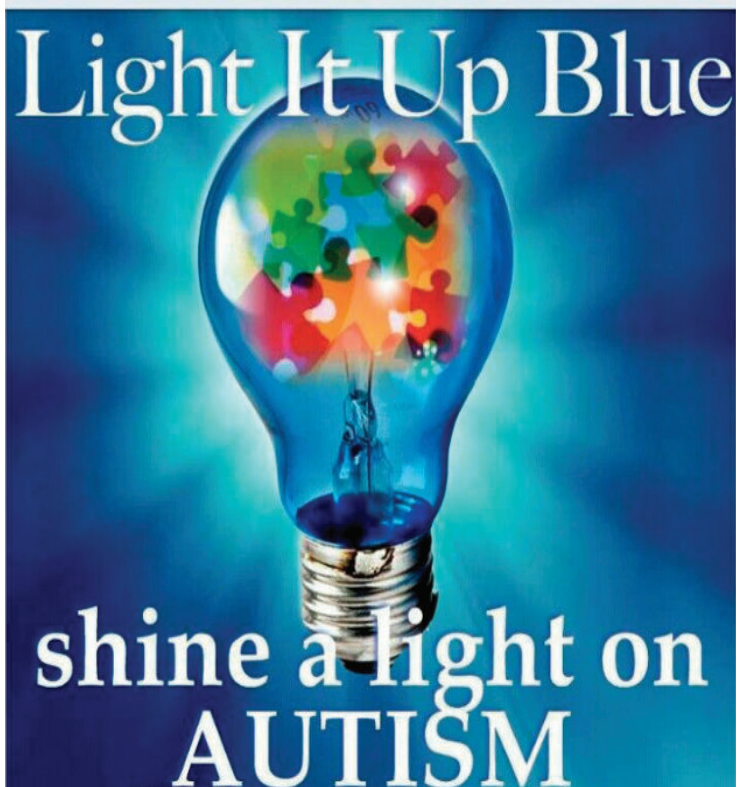
Recently, the group's website, <https://all4autism.org> began an exciting new feature. It is called "Ask Mike" and involves a young man named Michael Westwood. His desire is to help people who are curious about all issues concerning autism. This Curry College graduate is the perfect writer for this blog because he lives with and has learned to cope very well since he was diagnosed to be on the spectrum as a child. Elsewhere, you may find a variety of clinical responses and information about this quickly increasing developmental disability. However, thanks to this approach the link on All 4 Autism's page invites people to submit questions they may have, to Michael. In turn, he replies back publicly through the blog. This is amazing because his practical, substantial advice can be applied to specific circumstances. Mike has answered questions from a mother of a child with autism and shared with her something that worked well for him growing up. He also responded to a health professional who was looking for ways to better serve clients who are on the spectrum. The following is one entry that sums up what Mike is hoping to accomplish through his blog:

Q: If you were to help young children with Autism who were struggling socially in ways similar to how you did growing up, what is the most important thing you feel they should know and why? – Colin

A: Dear Colin,

Wow, this is a very insightful question as all autistic people may struggle at times throughout their lives. What helped me was receiving social skills therapy through my grade school years, which I took from grades 3 to 12. It was harder for me to make friends in elementary school and junior high school; however, in elementary school, the school psychologist came into my classroom when I was not present and explained to my classmates what autism is and why I behaved a little "differently." Young children are uncomfortable with what they do not understand, so to have my disability explained to them gave them the opportunity to ask questions about it. As it turns out, a lot of my classmates were open to interacting with me and were under the impression that I did not want to interact with them. It is a typical misunderstanding between autistic people and non-autistic people. While there is not a direct answer to this question, I am hoping that this advice will help even one autistic child have a better opportunity to be more socially accepted in their formative years.

If you would like more information, you can reach All 4 Autism during business hours, Tuesday -Thursday 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., and by appointment. You may also reach them by phone, at (843) 472-5215 or at 183 S. Coit Street, Suite B • Florence, SC





Sexual Assault /Child Abuse

NEVER LOSING HOPE

Articles by Ta' Meeka Epps



Alicia J. Morrison

LATTA - It takes great will to grow beyond the broken pieces and live your best life while standing in your truth. The previous statement summarizes the story of an adult survivor of child abuse/neglect and sexual assault. Children depend on the adults around them to provide a secure, loving and safe environment, protecting them from all hurt, harm and danger. Sadly, there are times children are harmed by those expected to provide and be the source of their love and security.

When the innocence of a child is compromised and the abuse goes undetected or mishandled, the child inevitably internalizes the pain of abuse, creating vulnerabilities he or she carries long into adulthood unless/until healing begins. What is healing for an individual victimized by child abuse, neglect and or sexual assault? It looks different for every person and every situation. However, the one constant in all situations is that it is a process, which begins with acknowledging the cause of the pain.

Alicia J. Morrison, a native of Dillon County, is an adult survivor of child abuse/neglect and sexual assault. At the tender age of five she was faced with living in foster care and being separated from her siblings for a year. Once reunited, the children were under the guardianship of their grandmother. Less than two years after the reunion, young Alicia would feel her security ripped for her yet again, and even then it would not be for the final time in her youth. An older cousin and a boyfriend of an aunt would move from the position of trust to violator of her innocence, and she would be left to carry the memories and feelings caused by the abuse silently long into her adult years.

From the ages of five to twenty five, Morrison lived with the vulnerabilities created by situations out of her control. She lived her life having trust issues with people in general. She lived surrounded by people yet felt alone and abandoned, making her questioned why she was ever born. She even felt like God had failed her, but then her healing began.

She found the courage to verbally speak the words of her sexual abuse shedding light on a dark issue affecting children all across the world. "I didn't know what I thought was a horrible mistake was really my mission from God." Those words were uttered by Morrison when she spoke of the time she spent volunteering with Pee Dee Coalition against



Alicia and her two daughters

Domestic, Sexual, and Child Abuse, and as the county coordinator/volunteer coordinator over Marion and Dillon Counties.

Morrison took all the pain of her past and allowed it to become her purpose. Her service work became a part of her healing process, which included her becoming a published author. "Lies, Love, and Life: Taking Back What the Devil Thought He Stole from Me; My Story!" was released in 2012 when her oldest daughter was two years old. The book was a continuation of the healing process. "My book tells the story of not being raised by my biological mom, not knowing the identify of my biological father, being molested as a child, finding out at the age 15 my biological father was my cousin, and other struggles I had to endure."

She endured thirty-one years of life, marred by so much pain, yet she embodies so much strength. "If it wasn't for the love of God and prayer my late Grandma instilled in me as a child, I don't know where I would be. I know, now, God heard that little girl Alicia crying, asking for help, a way of escape. I couldn't see it then. I know now it was all working together for my GOOD! I AM A SURVIVOR BECAUSE I NEVER LOST HOPE!"

Alicia J. Morrison resides in Latta with her two daughters and is the CEO of a nonprofit called Healing Mentors for Christ Inc. Morrison uses her story about all she has endured to mentor, empower, and mold single mothers and hurting women who are living parallel lives. Their motto is "Where Healing Begins!"

COMMITTED TO CHILD ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION



Tawanda Rouse

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. During the month of April, national as well as local agencies will promote awareness about the dangers of child abuse and steps that can be taken to prevent it within communities.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) is an annual campaign to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on strategies to help prevent sexual violence.

The theme for this year's campaign is: "Embrace Your Voice!" James Baldwin said it best, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

If we talk about sexual violence, then how we talk about it matters. Our words shape the world around us. The issue, although sensitive and delicate in nature, must be faced because the ones affected by child abuse and sexual assault are also sensitive and delicate in nature and

are owed the protection and safety because they are not able to defend or provide for themselves.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention cites that one in four girls and one in six boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before they turn 18. Children and adolescents of all races, cultures, and financial backgrounds are all equally susceptible to sexual abuse.

The Pee Dee Coalition of Florence County is committed to protecting every child of every community through advocacy and training to prevent maltreatment of children. Housed out of the Durant Children's Center, which is a program of The Pee Dee Coalition in Florence, is the family advocate for the third and 12th judicial circuits of the Pee Dee, Tawanda Rouse.

As the family advocate, Rouse's main responsibilities are managing the child and family's services from the initial appointment at Durant Children's Center to the adjudication of their allegations. Rouse advocates for the families by linking them to mental health services, applicable community resources; accompanying them to court proceedings; voicing concerns during center staffing and Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings; family follow-up and case tracking data collection for various statistical reports.



Sexual Assault /Child Abuse

COMMITTED TO CHILD ABUSE CONT'D



Bottom step: left, Brittany Graham - Parent Education Coordinator, right, Gracen Rivers former Intake Case Coordinator.

Top step: left, Katy Brown - Prevention Coordinator; center, Tawanda Rouse - Family Advocate, Florence; right, Gloria McClary - Durant Children's Center Program Director.

As a service worker, Rouse's heart is to serve others by advocating for them; providing opportunities for individuals and their families to become thriving participants in their own lives; and by activating actions for improvement of services and systems in hopes to bring about prevention of child abuse/maltreatment.

Prevention has three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. "Primary prevention programs, directed at the general population (universal), is an effort, to prevent maltreatment before it occurs; secondary prevention programs, targeted to

individuals or families in which maltreatment is more likely (high risk); and tertiary prevention programs, targeted toward families where abuse has already occurred (indicated)." - Framework for Prevention of Child Maltreatment. Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018. Children's Bureau.

The Durant Children's Center via the Pee Dee Coalition has a few

prevention programs that speak to the three levels of prevention: Talking About Touching (T.A.T), a sexual abuse prevention curriculum for 5K to fifth grade students; Reducing Our Assault Risk (R.O.A.R), middle and high school students learn how to avoid and confront issues such as teen dating violence and sexual assault; Parent Education Parent Support (P.E.P.S), a service offered for parents who have been identified by DSS-Child Protection Services as being at risk of child maltreatment, provides parenting education as well as support to reduce those risks; and Stewards of Children is a sexual assault prevention program aimed at adults and youths to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and change child protective behaviors.

The Pee Dee Coalition statistical reports account for the seven counties of the Pee Dee and all points in between that utilize the services. In 2017, Durant provided services to over 500 children with various allegations of child maltreatment compared to the previous year (2016) when it served 430 children and in 1994 the first year of operation when it served 134 children. The impact has been great. However, there is still so much groundwork to be completed.

Rouse is committed to the work she is doing while continuing to bring about awareness within the community. She is a single mother of four--two young ladies and two young men. Her life's philosophy is "God surely knows from the beginning what life will bring. He knows my ending; therefore, all things in between are working together for my good." She enjoys her family, community/cultural events, dancing, traveling and baking sweet treats.



Pee Dee Coalition
24 Hour Crisis Line
1-800-273-1820

Durant Children's Center
24 Hour Crisis Line
1-866-867-9857



Help Stop
Sexual Assault & Child Abuse
in April and all year long.

Volunteers working together to help make our communities safer.
www.peedeecoalition.org



MILLER WORKS TO REDUCE ASSAULT RISKS AND INCREASE SELF DEFENSE

Articles by Ta'Meeka Epps



Tracey Williamson Miller

HARTSVILLE - The Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to the reduction of rape, family violence, child abuse and to the needs of its victims. The organization educates the community about interpersonal violence, provides prevention training and provides services to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse.

The Pee Dee Coalition was organized in 1986 and has expanded into all seven Pee Dee counties: Florence, Darlington, Marion,

Chesterfield, Marlboro, Dillon and Williamsburg. Satellite Centers are located in all of the counties, and services are available 24 hours a day.

Tracey Williamson Miller is the Reducing Our Assault Risk (ROAR) coordinator and is over the self-defense Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) program for the Pee Dee Coalition operating out of the Durant Children's Center Hartsville site. As the ROAR coordinator, her duties include but are not limited to educating, empowering and helping to create and instill visions while coordinating and implementing the prevention initiatives of the Pee Dee Coalition. She provides educational sessions on topics such as self-awareness, gender stereotypes, teen dating violence and sexual assault/harassment. As a RAD instructor, Miller provides self defense classes to women ages 12 years of age and older. The nine-hour classes are specifically designed for the physical shape of a woman's body and instill safety skills that promote awareness of dangers as well as provide participants with viable options of disengaging and escaping what could potentially escalate into a dangerous situation.

Through her work with the Pee Dee Coalition the ROAR and RAD programs Miller has a long-term goal to create awareness while conducting effective and efficient trainings, which will bring about a reduction in sexual violence, harassment, and gender inequality across the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. She knows it is a lofty task.

However, with practical and intentional strategies implemented throughout the Pee Dee Region, she knows it is obtainable.

Child maltreatment is a complex problem with a multitude of causes and an approach to prevention must respond to a range of needs. However, it starts with the love and support of caring adults working diligently to help the child rebuild trust lost due to the maltreatment and continues with educating the community on how to notice the signs.

Child advocacy is an art, a calling, and for some it is even a passion. For Tracey Williamson Miller, it was never a question if advocacy would be her career path. She always knew it would. She just didn't know the capacity in which she would fulfill her calling. "I didn't choose this career path. It chose me. I always knew I would work with and for youth and their families, I was born an advocate but I believe seeing a difference being made before me very eyes is what quietly reassures me I am, indeed, operating within my calling."

The work being done by the Pee Dee Coalition and Tracey Williamson Miller is a tiny light of hope to many when it seems they are trapped in a dark room with no windows. Having somewhere to turn is essential while healing from the traumatic ordeal, and the Pee Dee Coalition and Tracey Williamson Miller will continue to be advocate for their clients while educating the community through awareness and prevention training.

Tracey Williamson Miller is a wife, mother, grandmother and cigar enthusiast. She is also a thinker, an engaging individual who loves meeting people and hearing their life's stories. To learn more about the Pee Dee Coalition, or to volunteer please visit www.peedeecoalition.org.



CEDRIC ABRAHAM: ON FINDING HIS VOICE TO HEAL FROM HURT



Cedric Abraham

to overcome his past.

Sexual assault can happen to anyone, no matter your socioeconomic status, your age or your gender identity. When sexual assault happens to a child, it is especially heinous. If the abuse is not discovered by an adult concerned with the child's safety and well-being, it may go unheard, and the healing process will extend into adulthood. As the child maneuvers through life they may harbor feelings of guilt, shame, and blame due to no fault of their own, resulting in misplaced anger and aggression.

"I was eight years old, in the third grade, when I was abused by a male member of my family."

Those words were spoken nearly 35 years after the abuse occurred. Imagine living with the scars of wounds that were never allowed to properly heal as no one except the victim knew they existed. Cedric Abraham does not have to imagine it as that was his story. Nearly thirty years after the child abuse/sexual assault, he found his voice to tell his story. He found his desire

If you have ever taken a psychology course, you have probably heard of Erik Erikson and his theory of personality, which loosely states an individual needs to successfully complete or have a favorable outcome on each lower stage before entering or starting the next to have a favorable outcome on said stage. If the school of thought is to be true, victims of child abuse or sexual assault who do not receive the proper care and treatment will endure difficulties obtaining favorable outcomes as they make their way through life.

Men and boys who are victims of sexual assault or abuse may have many of the same feelings and reactions as other survivors of sexual assault, and that is alright and should be expected. But due to social attitudes and stereotypical views regarding men and masculinity, males may also face additional challenges.

For these reasons and many others, the effects of sexual abuse may occur many years after the abuse has ended and may manifest itself in many forms. Each individual and every situation is different, and there is no set timeline for dealing with and recovering from the experience.

Abraham wasn't exempt from the growing pains of not being able to heal during his youth. He had to deal with feeling alone, scared and confused without guidance as to how to redirect all the emotions he



Sexual Assault /Child Abuse

CEDRIC ABRAHAM: ON FINDING HIS VOICE TO HEAL FROM HURT CONT'D

NO MORE

TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

could not place into words. "I was intimidated by everyone during the time of the abuse and afterwards, especially men or boys who were older. In elementary school I became the bully and intimidated others to feel superior to mask all the insecurities. I didn't want anyone to notice I was afraid. Long after the abuse, I still felt afraid and confused. I felt like I was the only one who had been sexually abused."

Abraham, like many who silently suffer, out loud attempted to mask the pain and erase the memories with alcohol and drugs, believing

it was needed to cope. He struggled with low self-esteem from having his personal safety violated or maybe even ignored. The pain made him doubt his self worth and fueled his desires to show he was "man enough." Says Abraham, "I got tattoos to feel more like a man and to be accepted by my peers. What I realize now is I lacked courage and discipline, and I needed to seek help if I was going to live...if I was going to survive!"

December 27, 2017, was the turning point when Cedric knew seeking help would be the only way he could move beyond the pain caused during his youth and start coping with the difficulties of his present life. He wants his resiliency to inspire someone to try one more time to speak the words that will release a deserving healing.

Cedric Abraham is a survivor who has been wounded and hurt. However, what was meant to take him out made him recognize how strong he truly is, and he used it as his purpose in life to help others survive. He owes it all to the love of God, his wonderful parents, Ebbie and Doris, his sister and his two beautiful children: Olivia and Kamille. Abraham knows God's grace is sufficient and is looking to continued sobriety of over three months.



Saturday, April 28th

STOP CHILD ABUSE

Costume contest for the best dressed SUPERHERO!

5K/10K - 8AM | FUN RUN - 9:30AM
1012 CONGAREE DRIVE, FLORENCE SC

Check in begins at 7am.
10K - \$35 early registration or \$40 on race day
5K - \$25 early registration or \$30 race day
Kid's Fun Run - \$5 (no shirt) or \$15 (shirt included)

To find out more information & to register
CapesForKidsRun.itsyourrace.com

QUESTIONS?
Email shill@thecarehouse.com.
Find us on 



All proceeds will be donated to The Care House of the Pee Dee in memory of a Carver student who lost her life due to child abuse, and will directly benefit abused children in our community.



Appreciating Our Teachers

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY DISTRICT TOTY



Charles Redfearn

CHERAW-Charles Redfearn, teacher at Long Middle School, was named the 2017 Chesterfield County District Teacher of the Year. Redfearn is a native of Cheraw who graduated from Francis Marion University (FMU) in Florence with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He also received a master's in instructional accommodations from FMU and a master's in counseling from Webster University in Myrtle Beach. For the past 17 years, Redfearn has been employed with the Chesterfield County School District, serving

as an Exceptional Education teacher in Pageland, Jefferson and Cheraw. He is a Junior Beta Club sponsor, Student Government sponsor, and has coached middle school baseball, softball, and boys' and girls' basketball. He is currently the JV basketball girls' coach at Cheraw High School and assistant coach for the Long Middle School boys' baseball team. Redfearn is married with four boys and enjoys spending time with his family.

"During my time as an Exceptional education teacher, the thing that makes me most proud is when my students are successful in life. A majority of the students I teach start their educational life with hurdles. I take it as my personal responsibility to help them see that the hurdles aren't that big, and they are capable of jumping each one. I also prepare them to clear hurdles on their own as they get older because I want them to realize they can also be strong without my help. It brings me great pleasure to see these students who are often overlooked because of their disabilities gain so much confidence and self-worth. They begin to compete with others who are expected to greatly exceed them. I'm proud to see my students with behavior issues remember the intervention strategies we went over so many times before and take a minute to self-evaluate themselves and make the right decision instead of going down the same old path. I'm proud when my students pass a test that they worked hard and studied for. To some this may look like unimportant things, but it's these 'trivial' things that build up to the bigger things. This helps students learn to accept their strengths and accept their weaknesses. This also teaches them not to let either of those things be a reason why they should not continue to push to do their best and be great because they already know how to overcome it all. They are already made for greatness."

DARLINGTON COUNTY TOTY

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



LaQuetta Johnson

DARLINGTON -Pate Elementary School's LaQuetta Johnson will represent Darlington County School District as Teacher of the Year for 2017-18. The thrilling announcement came during the district's annual Teacher of the Year Banquet held inside Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology's new conference center.

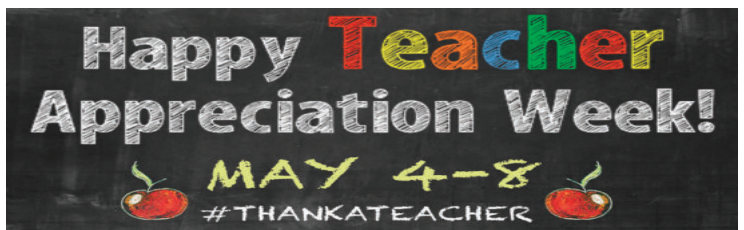
Johnson was selected after an intensive judging period that included an application, video of her classroom instruction and a face-to-face panel interview.

Surprised and excited, Johnson thanked her parents and principal, Emily Lunn, for supporting and encouraging her. She also offered words of inspiration for her fellow teachers.

"I just want to thank everyone for this opportunity," she said. "And I want to say remember that the students in your classrooms today are the future leaders of our world," she said. "If you always remember that, you will always excel at what you do."

Johnson holds a Master of Education in Reading and Mathematics from Walden University. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Coker College.

She explained her philosophy of teaching in an extended application required for consideration. "My philosophy of teaching is to teach the whole child. I cannot just focus on academics, but I must build relationships with each of my students," Johnson wrote. "Building relationships enables my students to become less afraid of making mistakes. I believe that every child that steps across the threshold of my classroom door will become a success. I believe that if I hold high expectations for my students they will strive to meet them."



MARLBORO COUNTY'S 2017-2018 TOTY



Wayne Usher

BENNETTSVILLE-Congratulations to Marlboro County's 2017-2018 Teacher-of-the-Year, Wayne Usher. Usher is a dynamic physical education teacher at Bennettsville Intermediate School. Through his kindness and energetic approach, Usher builds genuine rapport with all of his students and colleagues. Usher has been a role model in Marlboro County for numerous years. He challenges students daily to be the best student they can be, both academically and socially. As a long-time staple at Bennettsville Intermediate School, Usher's legacy will be that of kindness, encouragement, and support.



Appreciating Our Teachers

FSD1 2017-18 TEACHER OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

Submitted by Pamela Little-McDaniel, FSD1 Director of Public Relations



Megerlyn Davis

Wilson High School Choral Music Instructor Megerlyn Davis has been selected Florence School District One's 2017-18 Teacher of the Year. She was selected from over 20 applicants in Florence One schools. Florence One Superintendent Dr. Randy Bridges recently surprised Davis on with the announcement of her title for 2017-18. Accompanied by an entourage of school personnel and media to Wilson High School, Dr. Bridges visited the chorus room at Wilson, presented her with a bouquet of flowers, and made the public announcement as Davis' students watched.

Prior to the culminating announcement, the Teacher of the Year selection panel reviewed all school teacher of the year applications, and the four teachers whose applications received the highest scores emerged as Honor Roll Teachers. These four teachers including Davis, Pamela Daniels of Sneed Middle; Vanessa Harkless of Lester Elementary; and Carla Summersett of West Florence High School, all underwent classroom observations and interviews conducted by the three-member selection panel from outside Florence One with Davis emerging as the Florence One Teacher of the Year.

Davis, who teaches choral music at Wilson said, "Providing performance opportunities and field experiences are enriching, but having my students know that I believe in them and truly care about them are my greatest rewards."

Davis, who has twelve years of teaching experience, has served at Wilson High School for the past eight years. She also served as music teacher at Johnakin Middle in Marion (2005-06) and as general music teacher in Florence One for students at Wallace-Gregg, Delmae, Carver and North

Vista (2006-2009). Said Davis, "Being self-expressive in the classroom promotes a positive learning environment in which my students have the ability to construct and perform powerful musical performances."

According to her teaching philosophy, "Music is vital to learning. When learning styles are recognized, music generates outcomes in which a sense of accomplishment and pride connects to personal experiences. I do my best to give them (the students) the tools and the encouragement needed to be creative. I want them to be able to display their creative skills to the utmost during any performance no matter the size of the audience." She added, "Teaching choral music is one of the greatest opportunities in the world to express what I genuinely love to do."

Davis received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music Education from Columbia College, and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction: Integrated Teaching through the Arts from Lesley University. Davis will represent Florence School District One in this year's South Carolina Teacher of the Year Program.

Florence One school teachers of the year for 2017-18 include Julie Causey, Briggs Elementary; Carolyn Ford, Carver Elementary; Adrina Davis, L.T. Davis Elementary; Lauren Greenway, Delmae Elementary; Laura Stoughton, Dewey Carter Elementary; Patricia Byrd, Florence Career Center; Stephanie Weatherford, Greenwood Elementary; Vanessa Harkless, Lester Elementary; Brandi McKay, McLaurin Elementary; Beth Davids, Moore Intermediate; Ramona Faison, North Vista Elementary; Ann Anderson, Royall Elementary; Kevin George, Rush Academy; Alexandra Sirbu-Green, Savannah Grove Elementary; Pamela M. Daniels, Sneed Middle; Roslynn Elom, South Florence High; Kelsey McGinty, Southside Middle; Lillian West, Timrod Elementary; Tamika Bacchus, Wallace-Gregg Elementary; Carla Summersett, West Florence High; Tracie Williams-Burns, Williams Middle; and Megerlyn Davis, Wilson High.

Florence School District One

2017-18

Teacher of the Year

Choral Music Instructor

Megerlyn Davis Wilson High School

Florence
Public School District One

319 S. Dargan Street
Florence, SC 29506
(843) 669-4141 Fax (843) 673-1108
www.fsd1.org



Appreciating Our Teachers

FCC 2017-2018 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Patricia Byrd

Byrd joined the faculty at Florence Career Center in 2015 where she teaches cosmetology. She's from Hartsville and is a graduate of Butler High School. She also attended Hartsville High School Vocational School where she received her Cosmetology license in 1980. Byrd has been practicing cosmetology over 38 years. She has worked in various areas of cosmetology such as booth renter, salon manager, platform artist, and a salon owner. Through her experiences, love and knowledge of cosmetology, she wanted to be able to share her gift with others. She enrolled at Betty Stevens Cosmetology Institute and took the methods of teaching a course and received her cosmetology instructor's license. She really loves her job as a cosmetology teacher. "It is very rewarding to see students grow and receive a cosmetology license and become productive citizens," said Byrd. Patricia Byrd is married to Allen Byrd, and they have two children, Quentin Byrd and Jewel Byrd. Her motto is: "Failure is not an option."

STALVEY CONTINUES ON PATH

Submitted by Tina Williams, Secretary to the Superintendent



Amanda Stalvey

JOHNSONVILLE-Teaching was never my intention. Growing up, I wanted to have a thousand different careers: marine biologist, an Olympic swimmer, a Broadway star, a stay-at-home-mom, the list goes on and on. But teaching was never on that list. When I graduated and started Francis Marion University, I had plans to major in pre-nursing and become a pediatric nurse. I quickly realized I loathe science, and

blood makes me queasy, so I began to consider other options.

As fate would have it, my Freshmen Seminar professor was Dr. Linda Jacobs, the university's Shakespeare expert and a local literature fanatic. I'll never forget the first day she arrived in class holding a miniature model of the Globe Theatre made out of Popsicle sticks and a tape recorder. She whispered notes into the hand-held recorder as her wild auburn hair flopped into her face. She was your typical quirky, artsy, passionate literature professor—a complete stereotype. We clicked! I adored her passion for literature, and I'd always had a love for Shakespeare. After watching the movie "Dead Poet's Society" (a drama in which Robin Williams plays an unorthodox, passionate, and inspiring teacher at a well-to-do prep school), Dr. Jacobs and I both decided English was the right path for me.

However, I still wasn't sure about teaching. I thought of other avenues: editor, journalist, fiction writer, etc. But, as many college graduates quickly discover, work is hard to find. My mom and sister were working at Hemingway Elementary School, so the principal knew I'd just graduated with an English degree, and she called me up and offered me a job as a sixth grade English/Language Arts (ELA) teacher. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so I took the job. Little did I know at the time that this "job" would become one of my greatest passions and would change my life.

It took time to settle in and get my bearings, but after 14 years as a middle school ELA teacher, I finally feel like I'm figuring this thing out (maybe). Over the years, I've fallen in love with this job and, more importantly, with my kids! I love teaching them and developing relationships with each of them. I'm the sponsor for our district Drama Club called "The Cast," and it's my favorite thing in the world! We've successfully completed eight productions and traveled to NYC to see Broadway shows! Sharing my love for the Arts has been my greatest reward as a teacher.

Teaching was never my intention. However, one of my favorite quotes of all time by Elizabeth Barret Browning comes to mind: "God's plans put man's best dreams to shame." I'm so thankful that God had a different plan for my life. I'm so grateful that he brought me into this career that I never knew I would be so passionate about, and I'm so fortunate that his path has led me here.

GEORGETOWN TEACHER OF THE YEAR



From left, Pleasant Hill Elementary School Principal Teddy Graham, 2017-2018 Teacher of the year Jennifer Hudson and Dr. Randy Dozier Georgetown County School District superintendent.

GEORGETOWN- Last May marked one night that many area teachers took time off from grading papers, planning lessons and contacting parents. More than 75 education professionals involved in the selection process for the Georgetown County School District's Teacher of the Year program gathered to celebrate the teaching profession and to honor the newly-chosen 2017 Teacher of the Year, Jennifer Hudson.

Holding back tears—but accepting congratulatory handshakes and hugs—the Pleasant Hill Elementary third-grade teacher accepted the award saying, "As a product of Georgetown County Schools, I am humbled, grateful and very honored."

Hudson said she has wanted to be District Teacher of the Year since her days at Rosemary Middle School when she volunteered in the Service Over Self program.

"And here I am," Hudson continued, "five years into the profession and I thank God, my family, my Pleasant Hill family, and my friends for encouraging me along the way." Hudson reflected on those teachers and administrators who touched her life and elaborated, "I pray that I can continue to pass the torch to each and every one of our children and let them know the impossible is possible if you believe in yourself."

The 2006 Andrews High School alumna earned her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership from Coastal Carolina University. The 38th Georgetown County Teacher of the Year is currently pursuing an additional degree as an Educational Specialist in Instructional Technology. "I enjoy children in every aspect of my life," Hudson said in a follow-up interview, "and it really does take a village to raise a child." The next step for her is the South Carolina statewide Teacher of the Year competition, which she will be pursuing this fall.

GCSD Director of Human Resources Doug Jenkins opened the recognition banquet that was held at the Litchfield Beach and Golf Resort in Pawleys Island.

"It is said that a teacher presents the past, reveals the present and creates the future," Jenkins said.

Hudson's supervisor, Pleasant Hill Elementary Principal Teddy Graham said of Hudson's victory, "I'm very proud of her. She is very hard-working and dedicated, probably the most driven person I've met. She's worked hard to achieve this and the whole school is very proud of her."

Appreciating Our Teachers

LEE NAMED MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Deborah D. Wimberly, Office of Public Relations and Special Projects



Shana Lee

MARION-The Marion County School District Teacher of the Year, Shana Lee, was once a student in the Marion County School of Practical Nursing and is now the Coordinator/Instructor of the same program. Lee began her career as an LPN in 1995 and continued working in that capacity until she completed her Bachelors of Science in Nursing received from Francis Marion University in 2007. It was during her time at Francis Marion that she learned the importance of being involved in the educational

process to continue to develop more dedicated professionals. In 2009 Lee was hired by the Academy for Careers and Technology to establish a brand new health science program. Given her overwhelming desire to help students in Marion County pursue careers in the healthcare profession, she welcomed the challenge. At this same time, Lee also lost her oldest child, a high school senior, to a tragic drowning accident. Although devastated by her own loss, Lee embraced the task of starting a new program and in doing so, faced students who were the same age as her son.

Shana Lee established partnerships with area healthcare facilities allowing her students the ability to shadow and gain knowledge about various healthcare careers. She began the Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) Chapter and began providing her students with leadership skills and the opportunity to network with students like themselves, across the nation. She emphasized community service with her students traveling to the Marion County Council on Aging to volunteer for activities such

as Meals-On-Wheels. Her group took the “Grime Scene” to elementary schools teaching younger students the importance of hand washing in stopping the spread of diseases. Her students teamed together to walk in fundraisers such as the March of Dimes and Relay for Life. She also modeled these behaviors for her students as evidenced by the many hours she spent with INSPIRE, a community food and household bank for anyone in the community who is in need and serving a faith-based program as a grief counselor.

Lee credits her father, a minister and retired educator, for her commitment to lifelong learning. She has gone on to earn her Master’s degree in Nursing as she herself built relationships with her students creating a culture of caring and understanding. Having experienced teen pregnancy, early marriage and earning a high school diploma in an adult education program, Lee related to many challenges facing her students. Along with her compassion, Lee strives to utilize a variety of methods to teach her students making an effort to keep her lessons fresh and engaging.

After eight years of successfully implementing and building a strong Health Science program, Lee transitioned to her current position. She would be replacing the retiring coordinator and instructor Mary Pool who back in 1993 encouraged her by telling her that nursing was more than providing shots. It was about caring for individuals and their families with a holistic approach. Shana Lee is living those words today.

CLARENDON SCHOOL DISTRICT TWO TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Jeffrey Gaines

MANNING-Jeffrey Gaines was named the Clarendon School District 2 Teacher of the Year on during the District 2 Board of Trustees’ regular monthly meeting.

“To be selected from such a distinguished panel of educators is a rewarding experience that words cannot adequately described,” Gaines said. “I am so very honored to serve my school district in this capacity as we continue to inspire young people to strive for excellence.”

Gaines was named earlier this year as the Manning High School Teacher of the Year. The Barnwell native has been the band and choral director at Manning High School for the past three years and will step into an administrative role in the coming year.

“I was speechless and humbled that my colleagues elected me to serve in the capacity of Teacher of the Year,” Gaines said. “I am honored that I can represent our school.”

A graduate of Barnwell High School, Gaines received a bachelor of music education, instrumental, from Newberry College in 2008, graduating cum laude. He received a master of education, classroom leadership, from Southern Wesleyan University in 2010 and a master of education, administration and supervision, from the same in 2017. He is currently endorsed for gifted and talented programs and is a certified mentor teacher.

He first taught at Blackville-Hilda public schools in Blackville from 2008-2011 as the band, choral music and gifted and talented enrichment instructor for grades five through 12. He also taught sixth- through eighth-grade band at Southside Middle School in Florence from 2011-2014. He was named the 2011 Teacher of the Year in Blackville and was a runner-up for the same award in 2013 at Southside Middle School. In 2014, he was the Five Star Optimist Teacher of the Year Award recipient in Florence. He was Teacher of the Year in 2014 at Southside Middle and was Clarendon School District 2 Ambassador of the Year in 2016.

SUMTER CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2017-2018 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



James Hemby Smith

SUMTER- James Hemby Smith began his career in emergency medical services as an emergency medical technician in the early 1990s. He became a volunteer firefighter in 2004 with the Sumter County Wedgefield Station 7 where he continues to volunteer. He joined the Sumter Fire Department as a career firefighter April 6, 2006, where he continues to work today. He is in his fifth year with the Sumter Career and Technology Center. He has had students compete in Skills USA with first placement in the state

and fifth in the nation. He has had students compete at SC HOSA and earn first in the state and set to go to nationals.

Smith received an associate in criminal justice from Central Carolina Technical College. He also received an associate and a bachelor’s degree in criminology from Saint Leo University. In addition, he has a master’s in public administration from Troy State University. Smith works as a 911 tele-communicator with the Sumter Police Department. He also works with Lee County Emergency Medical Service as an emergency medical technician.

Smith is certified to teach 22 academy classes through the South Carolina Fire Academy. He is a South Carolina certified school teacher. He is certified to instruct Basic Life Support, CPR, First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogens, Oxygen Administration, DAN O2. He is currently certified as a dive master and assistant dive instructor. He is also certified to teach NCIC systems for law enforcement. Smith is married and has two daughters.

Appreciating Our Teachers

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2017-2018 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Dana Mitchell

SUMTER—Dana Mitchell, a native of Florence, is proud graduate of Wilson High School, Winthrop University and Columbia College. Dana has earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Winthrop University, a master's degree in Divergent Learning from Columbia College, and received the Gifted and Talented endorsement from Coastal Carolina University.

Mitchell is currently a Biology and Anatomy & Physiology teacher at Sumter High School and has dedicated 12 years of service to education. She has taught in Sumter School District for the past seven years at Chestnut Oaks Middle School (three years) and currently Sumter High School.

Her professional memberships include the South Carolina Alliance of Black School Educators, the Palmetto State Teachers Association, the South Carolina Association of Student Councils, Wilson High School Alumni Association, and the Winthrop University Alumni Association. Mitchell's contribution to the Sumter High family include being the class sponsor for the sophomore and junior classes, coordinating the Junior-Senior prom, being a member of the Sumter High AVID Site Team, and creating writing modules within the Literary Design Collaborative. Working with the Junior Class Officers and Representatives, G. C. Style Clothing Closet was established to collect gently used formal wear and casual clothing for students in need at Sumter High.

Mitchell's philosophy of education is that if we as teachers can INSPIRE the hundreds of students that pass our way, then they will hopefully ASPIRE to be a part of something greater than themselves!

TONIA WILSON NAMED FLORENCE THREE'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Tonia Wilson

LAKE CITY— A high school teacher who spent 15 years in the U.S. Navy has been named Florence County School District Three's Teacher of the Year. Tonia Wilson worked as an instructional assistant while earning her college degree and teacher certification. Wilson, a career and technology education teacher at Lake City High School, was named Teacher of the Year during the district's annual opening ceremony on Aug. 10 welcoming back teachers for the new school year. She will represent Florence County School District Three in the State Teacher of the Year competition.

Wilson was among the three finalists. The others were Paige Parrott, a first-grade English/language arts and social studies teacher at Scranton Elementary, and Keyanna Hampton, a fourth-grade math teacher at Main Street Elementary.

"I have always been beyond impressed with Ms. Wilson's relationships and commitment to students," Lake City High Principal Ned Blake said. "I am so proud of her recent accomplishment and wish her the best as she represents our district in the state competition. She is a most deserving winner, and Lake City high is a better place because of Ms. Wilson."

Wilson said her love of teaching others came as a child when she taught her younger siblings and cousins how to write their names, the alphabet and numbers.

"Although I was a child and this was fun and games, I realized quickly that not everyone learned the same, and I had to teach them in a manner in which they would experience success," she said. "If they didn't feel a sense of success and accomplishment, then they would no longer play with me. In later years, when I was in my own classroom, I realized what I'd started doing as a child was differentiated instruction."

Wilson said teaching wasn't her first career choice, though.

"Initially, I wanted to go into the military to serve my country and travel the world," she said. "I attended college for two years to satisfy my mom and then took a break to do what I was determined to do, which was join the military. I enlisted in the Navy in August 1989 and served my country for 15 years. When I returned home, I became an instructional assistant. Being in the classroom felt natural; I was helping students develop their academic skills while also teaching them to be good human beings."

Wilson said she has been fortunate to have been surrounded by positive role models, such as her mother, who was a no-nonsense single

parent with high expectations. "She taught me the value of striving past your current situation and using mistakes as lessons to grow to a better life," Wilson said. "For me, teaching goes beyond the classroom," Wilson said. "It is not being afraid to do what is right even if it means stepping out of my comfort zone and experiencing some growing pains."

Wilson said her teaching philosophy is based on two concepts. The first, she said, is instruction must be student-centered. "This means that the main focus of a classroom is never about what the teacher wants to teach or enjoys teaching," she said. "Just like the name implies, student-centered teaching focuses on the needs of the students."

The second concept is that every student deserves a learning environment that is safe and supportive. "I refer to my classroom as our home, and the members of the class are our family," Wilson said. "After the first couple of weeks, students begin to feel comfortable and look forward to coming to class. They enjoy the structure and the lessons that they may immediately use in their real lives. However, our classroom discussions are not limited to the lessons to be completed; they extend to the world around us."

A 15-year veteran teacher, Wilson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Coker College and a Master of Education degree in Technology from Grand Canyon University. Among the various courses she has taught at Lake City High School are integrated business application, web design and digital multimedia. She also has taught dual enrollment classes for high school students at Florence-Darlington Technical College. She also serves as an adviser for the school's yearbook, prom committee and Skills USA program.

Wilson is active in her church and is active in the Young Adult Ministry. She also funds a scholarship of \$500 per semester for a student to attend college for four years.

Each school's staff selected a teacher of the year to represent their respective schools. A panel of four judges with backgrounds in education selected the finalists based on written responses to questions that focused on teaching philosophy, influences that led to a teaching career and the importance of education on society as well as a videotaped classroom lesson.



ABB ANNOUNCES ADDITIONS AND PROMOTIONS

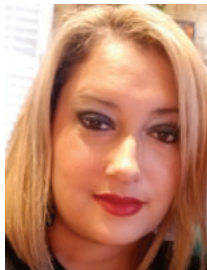
Article submitted by Susan Grant, V.P. Marketing Director/CRA Officer



Jo Horne

Anderson Brothers Bank announces promotion and additions at different locations. Jo Horne will be branch operations coordinator of the Florence Region. Horne joined Anderson Brothers Bank in March of 1989, where she serves our Florence customers at the 2nd Loop Office. In addition to branch operations coordinator at 2nd Loop, Horne will assist customers with a full array of financial products and services including commercial and consumer deposits in our Cashua Office. She will provide administrative and supervisory support within both locations.

“Jo is a talented, hands-on banker, and her strengths and experience have proved to be invaluable as we continue to grow in The Pee Dee Region,” said Randy Altman, Florence County executive with Anderson Brothers Bank. “She has an enthusiastic desire to contribute to the continued growth of the bank and has consistently demonstrated outstanding customer service. Jo is focused on strengthening our customer relationships and committed to community involvement while representing our bank and working closely with our customers.”



Mitsy Lewis

Mitsy Lewis as consumer loan officer in Dillon. Lewis will be based in the bank’s office at 1006 Highway 301 North, which is scheduled to open early spring. In her role, Lewis will assist customers with the various financial services offered by the bank. She will be involved in customer relations and market development. Lewis brings over 22 years financial experience to Anderson Brothers Bank, including her most recent service with One Main Financial.

“Mitsy will be a valuable asset to our bank and to our customers, and we are confident in her abilities to further enhance our continued growth in Dillon,” said Johnny Floyd, VP Marion-Dillon County Executive with Anderson Brothers Bank. “She has a proven ability to assist clients in financing arrangements and will make a significant impact in our continued growth in the Pee Dee area.”



Cindy Gleason

Cindy Gleason joins as teller and secondary customer service representative, to the bank’s Dillon County staff office at 1006 Highway 301 North, which is scheduled to open early spring.

In her role, Gleason will assist customers with all their account needs from opening accounts to educating customers of all the services offered by Anderson Brothers Bank. Gleason brings over 26 years financial experience.

“We are excited that Cindy has joined our bank family,” said Johnny Floyd, VP Marion-Dillon County Regional Executive of Anderson Brothers Bank. “Her knowledge of customer service will be an immeasurable asset to our customers as well as our organization as we continue to grow in Dillon County and the Pee Dee Region.”



Robert Woodbury

Robert Woodbury joins in Mullins as programmer/analyst. Woodbury is based in the bank’s IT department in Mullins. Robert serves as senior pastor of the House of God Church in Mullins, as well as on the City Council for the City of Mullins, District # 1. Woodbury is founder and chairman of the Mullins Community Dream Center. He and his wife, Shiquata, have

three young daughters. Woodbury brings over 12 years of experience in information technology.

“We are very excited that Robert has joined our team. His knowledge in programming is key to the growth of Anderson Brothers Bank,” said Stephanie Byrd, chief technology officer of Anderson Brothers Bank.



Jeff Williamson

Jeff Williamson has joined as loan officer in our Conway Main Street office. Williamson’s responsibilities include working with local residents to develop new banking relationships for Anderson Brothers Bank. Williamson is a graduate of the University of Michigan and has previously worked with One Main Financial over the last 18 years in Canada along with three other states besides South Carolina. He has received professional certifications from the University of North Carolina and Harvard

University. Williamson resides in Conway with his wife, Kendra and two children.

“We are very excited that Jeff has joined our bank family,” said Richard Carroll, VP Conway City Executive of Anderson Brothers Bank. “Jeff will be instrumental in bringing a fresh aspect to our Consumer Loan program. His abundance of consumer finance experience and knowledge of the consumer lending needs will be an immeasurable asset to our customers as well as our organization.”

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FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PERSONAL SAVINGS



Personal Savings

1. “Why should I save for retirement?”

Many Americans look forward to their retirement years, which can be a time for traveling, spending time with family, or enjoying a vacation home. In order to enjoy your retirement to the fullest, you’ll need to have an appropriate level of savings to get you through many years without a steady stream of income.

Previous generations relied on Social Security and company pensions for their retirement income; however, those income streams have decreased over the last few decades. Now, most Americans save for their retirement in a 401(k) plan, named for the section of the tax code that allows employees to save money on a tax-free basis.

2. “What is an emergency fund and why do I need one?”

An emergency fund is a savings cushion available to you in the case of a financial emergency. There are many situations in which you may need to rely on your emergency fund, including job loss or other reduction of income, health emergencies, automobile repair and home repairs. If any of these financial emergencies happen to you, an emergency fund can save you from falling into debt.

3. “How should I review my personal savings plan to make sure I’m on track?”

First review your savings versus your goals. This is especially important for long-term savings, such as college savings and retirement savings. In addition to the account balances, you should also review your investment strategies. As your goals become more short-term, make sure you that your investments reflect this. If you aren’t sure how much you should be saving, you may want to work with a professional financial planner.

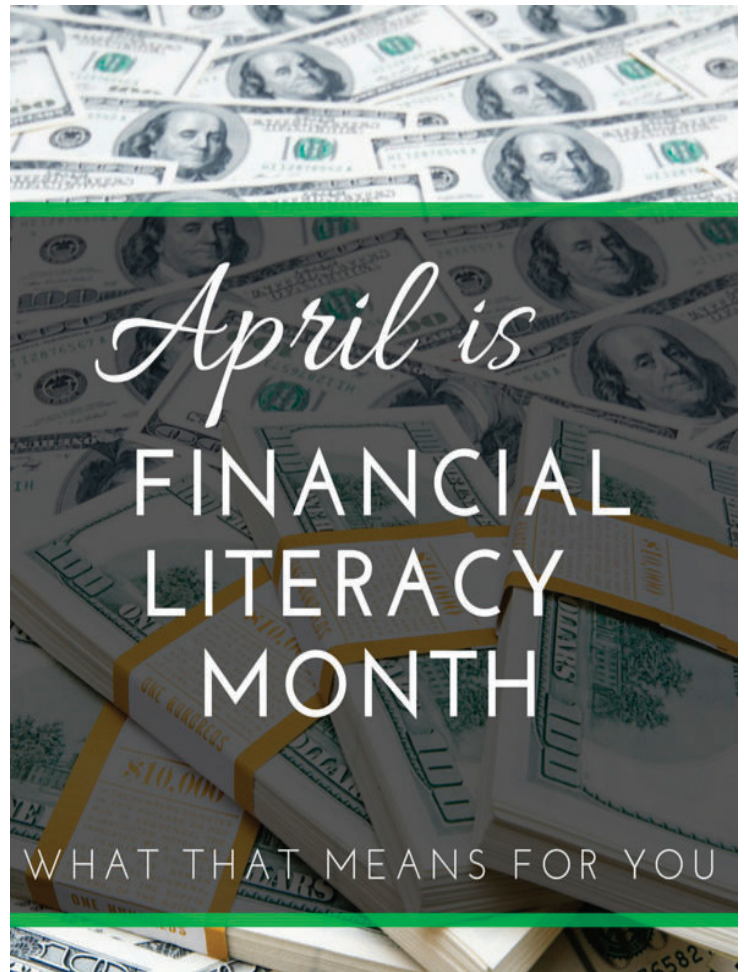
Next, request free copies of your credit reports, and make sure that your credit accurately reflects your situation. Now is the time to correct any errors that may exist. In addition, if you have any negative accurate information on your credit report, take the time to figure out how to repair your credit.

4. “What personal legal documents should I have in case of emergency?”

Having the appropriate and necessary legal documents prepared, just in case of emergency, is important. While having these legal documents completed can sometimes be time consuming and expensive, these documents are essential for you and your family. They include a will, living will, power of attorney and health care proxy.

5. “Can I borrow from my 401(k)?”

If you are like most people, your 401k account represents your largest savings account. When you need to access funds in a personal financial crisis, it’s understandable why you would consider borrowing from your 401(k) account or withdrawing from your 401(k) or IRA. After all, it’s your own money. Plus, in the case of a loan, the interest paid goes into your retirement account. Before you tap into your 401(k), you should understand how borrowing works and know your options. Borrowing or withdrawing from your retirement account prematurely should only be done when you have no other choice.



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DOES YOUR EMPLOYER OFFER ADEQUATE LIFE INSURANCE?

1 in 3 WOMEN believe they don't have enough life insurance.

If your workplace offers life insurance at a low cost (or no cost) to you, you may assume it provides sufficient coverage for your family — and not bother to give the subject a second thought. But you owe it to yourself, and your family, to make a more careful assessment. You may find that the coverage

offered by your employer, welcome as it is, won't actually cover your family's future needs.

Here's how to figure out whether your employer offers adequate coverage for you:

Find out how much coverage is offered.

Your workplace's group life insurance may be included in your benefits package, and you may be automatically enrolled, which makes it very convenient. However, it's worthwhile to do a careful review of the coverage.

The amount your employer offers may start at \$25,000 and range up to your annual salary. But a 2015 study by the Life Insurance and Market Research Association (LIMRA) reveals that 65 percent of employees with employer-sponsored group life insurance feel they need more insurance than what their employer provides.

Assess your family's long-term needs.

Once you get married—or if you have dependents—you will probably want to increase your coverage. So that \$25,000 policy may not seem like much once you sit down to do the math and figure out your needs five, ten or 20 years down the line. You'll probably want to make sure there's enough coverage to pay off a mortgage, send your kids to college, or help your spouse comfortably retire. (It is often recommended that insurance coverage be five to ten times your annual salary.)

Even if you're single, the group policy through your workplace may not be enough after you consider the potential total of your final expenses. Furthermore, if you have a co-signer for a mortgage, car loan, or student loans, remember that the burden will probably rest with your co-signer should something happen to you.

What happens if you change jobs?

Long gone are the days when people were expected to stay at the same job for 30 years. A recent survey by LinkedIn found that younger workers change jobs, on average, four times in their first 10 years out of college.

If you job hop, you'll lose your workplace insurance when you leave the company. And while you may be able to convert the group life insurance policy from your old employer into an individual policy, the cost of that coverage could go up significantly.

Look into options to supplement your coverage.

If you find your employer's group life to be insufficient, you may want to add supplemental coverage.

Concerned that you can't afford it? According to LIMRA, people estimate that life insurance will cost three times as much as it actually does. You'll need to balance your family's needs with the cost of insurance. But if you look into your options for a supplemental policy, you may find that life insurance is more affordable than you think.

This educational, third-party article is provided as a courtesy by Julie A. Cord, agent, New York Life Insurance Company. To learn more about the information or topics discussed, please contact Julie A. Cord at 317-289-3010 or jacord@ft.newyorklife.com.

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NEW PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY OFFICE OPENS

by Angela Crosland



Left to right: Dr. Conner, Kathy Bourgoyne (Office Manager), Cierra Pierceall and Tatyana Polite Lee

Very few people like to go to the dentist, but one office in Florence is changing all that. Residents are flocking to Prime Pediatric Dentistry in West Florence. With many of his patient's heights measuring at less than three feet, Dr. Charlton Conner raises the bar when it comes to pediatric dentistry. From ceiling to floor, the office is a scene straight from the futuristic animated sitcom, "The Jetsons." The vibrant orange, retro, winding, backless chairs in the waiting area are the starting point of the maze that is located in Suites A and B of 2420 Hoffmeyer Road. Dr. Conner's practice caters its services to children ages 18 and younger.

In the Florence community, the name "Conner" is somewhat synonymous with excellence in dentistry because Dr. Charlton Conner's father has practiced in the area for more than 30 years himself. Leading the way in implantology, Dr. Charles Conner (father) sees patients from various countries. Other states and locals have also become longtime patrons.

Dr. Charles Conner's practice took the family to various parts of the country when Charlton Conner was a child. Those travels and various other educational experiences led him to the field of dentistry. In turn, Dr. Charlton Conner came back to Florence to establish a presence and undergird his father's legacy of providing quality dental services. "He is getting older, and I wanted to be around," says Dr. Charlton Conner.

Dr. Charlton Conner okayed the idea of returning to Florence, but not before gathering as much experience as he could. Upon completing his one-year general practice residency, he decided to hone in on his adeptness with children by completing two more years of advanced training in pediatric dentistry at Harlem Hospital Center through Columbia University in New York City. Of the decision to pursue additional training, Dr. Charles Conner says, [It was] "one of the best decisions I made in my life."

After that, he decided to return to his home state of South Carolina. He first took an associate position at a large pediatric dental office in Columbia. "Columbia was close enough and still had a bit of a city feel," says Dr. Conner.

Then, only a few months ago, the doors of his Florence affiliate swung open. Dr. Conner divides his time between the Florence and Columbia locations. He had assisted his father for a year and a half on weekends before opening his Florence location and could see a need for dental care in the area.

"People were waiting in their cars to be seen," says Dr. Conner. "Florence had more of a supply issue than even Columbia."

He decided to research the market where he was born and raised. The results of his research solidified his decision to open an office in

Florence. Not just any office either. There is a waiting area for parents with a view of Hoffmeyer Road and one for his valued patients with flat screened televisions and benches made with them in mind. Having lived in Atlanta, Nashville, and New York City, Dr. Conner had seen and made note of the most interesting architectural designs for office spaces.

"I wanted to bring that experience to Florence. The design philosophy, color, lighting, textures...even the music is controlled to give you a feel," Dr. Conner says. "The client will pay attention to that, and it becomes an expectation—something they didn't even know they wanted."

The soothing accents of water integrated throughout the theme are yet another touch of magic in the approximately 2,800 square-foot office. The design is not merely aesthetic in nature. Every modernistic detail is designed to improve productivity and increase patient engagement, while enhancing their overall experience, says Dr. Conner.

If a client was watching a movie in the waiting area, he or she could continue while being served. Lodged in the ceiling of the examination room are flat screen televisions that are synced with those in the waiting room. There is surround-sound throughout and other amenities for patients to enjoy. The culmination of a visit with Dr. Conner is the prize wall where the patient chooses a toy for having made it through the process. All are components of a behavioral management technique utilized by Dr. Conner and his staff intended to condition patients to coming to the dentist.

The team, which is composed of Dr. Conner; Kathy Bourgoyne, office manager; Cierra Pierceall, dental assistant; and Tatyana Polite, dental assistant, works to acclimatize the patients. No amount of technology or strategy can replace the touch of charm who greets parents and children alike that enter the office, says Dr. Conner. Bourgoyne worked in the Columbia office, and Conner brought her to Florence to fulfill the same mission—cultivate a welcoming environment for all who enter.

The practice is an amalgamation of what Dr. Conner learned from his father and the various educational experiences he picked up along the way. He earned a Bachelor of Science in biology with honors from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga. and a Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn. Conner received the Colgate-Palmolive Scholarship while in dental school and was elected president of his graduating class. He completed his residency for general dentistry at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in New York City before undertaking advanced training at Harlem Hospital Center.

Dr. Conner is a Diplomat of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry.



CHS WELCOMES DR. GREGORY R. PALUTSIS, ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

Articles submitted by Carolinas Hospital System



Dr. Gregory R. Palutis

Dr. Gregory Palutis provides a range of diagnostic, surgical and rehabilitative services for injuries and disorders of the skeletal system and associated bones, joints, tendons, muscles, ligaments and nerves. From sports injuries to sprains, strains and fractures. He specializes in total joint replacement for both the knee and shoulder, including partial knee replacement and reverse shoulder replacement. Palutis also specializes in arthroscopic shoulder and knee surgery, including rotator cuff repair, instability surgery, ACL and meniscus repair and cartilage growth surgery. Non-operatively, Palutis treats ankle, shoulder, knee, elbow and other sports injuries. He is certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons and is fellowship-trained in orthopaedic sports medicine. At Carolinas Medical Alliance (CMA) Orthopaedics, Dr. Palutis is dedicated to helping you return to your active lifestyle.

CMA Orthopaedics is located at 1580 Freedom Boulevard at the Physician's Surgery Center, Suite 100 in Florence, on the main campus of Carolinas Hospital System. For more information go to: CarolinasMedicalAlliance.com or call 843-413-6836.

CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM CELEBRATES CERTIFIED NURSES DAY



Certified Nurses Group

Carolinas Hospital System celebrated Certified Nurses Day on Mar. 19 by honoring its board-certified registered nurses. Thirty-nine nurses were recognized for their professionalism, leadership and commitment to excellence in patient care.

Board Certification plays an increasingly important role in assuring a high standard of care for patients and their loved ones. Nursing, like health care in general, has become increasingly complex. While a registered nurse (RN) license provides entry to general nursing practice, the knowledge-intensive requirements of modern nursing require extensive education as well as a strong personal commitment to excellence by the nurse.

“We thank our nurses who have demonstrated professionalism and dedication to quality patient care by earning their national board certification. Their credentials and commitment to excellence are recognized, trusted and appreciated,” said Costa Cockfield, chief nursing officer of Carolinas Hospital System.

Registered nurses at Carolinas Hospital System hold specialty certifications in areas including medical-surgical, pediatrics, oncology, orthopedics, emergency nursing, critical care, operating room, addictions, wound care and rehabilitation nursing.

Please join Carolinas Hospital System as it honors these hardworking, dedicated nurses for their professionalism and a job well done.

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TRANSFORMING TO LIVE FOR EVERYTHING AND NOT JUST DIE OF ANYTHING

by Anna Bowman



Michele Legette, before and after

LAKE VIEW - “I have to die of something!” Those were the words Michele Legette said to herself after being told how her over 300 pounds weight-gain would eventually end her life prematurely. “It was a cop out,” said Legette, recalling her response to the

devastating news about her health. I was diagnosed with diabetes, hypercholesterolemia and hypertension and threatened to be placed on a sleep apnea machine,” she said. Even though she didn’t want to admit that her weight was a serious issue at times, she soon realized her excessive weight was shortening her life.

Her life had spiraled out of control. Her 5 feet 9 inches tall body frame was struggling to carry 306 pounds, and she was prescribed medication just to sustain her life. People who knew her began to treat her differently as well. “When people I knew saw me after gaining weight, they would simply say, ‘God, you got fat,’ without even acknowledging my name,” she explained. But what hurt her most was the fact that she couldn’t play with her beloved grandchildren. She knew she had to lose weight, but she didn’t want to become dependent on pills for temporary results. Therefore, she opted for a lifestyle change that would yield permanent results.

For 17 grueling months, she transformed her body by consuming healthy meals and a steadfast exercise regimen. “I woke up on May 12, 2012 with the help of the Lord and my mind made up to succeed,”

said Legette. “I was going to get help with losing the weight regardless of how much it cost because I knew the real question wasn’t “could I afford a personal trainer,” but in reality, I couldn’t afford not to get a personal trainer because my life was at stake, and I wanted to live longer to play with my grandchildren and to simply live my life while being healthier,” she explained.

Triumphantly, she lost an amazing 120 pounds on her own terms. Away went the pounds, the medications, the stares, and the “fat” comments, but an unexpected side effect was revealed: depression. “Depression set in after my weight loss,” she said. “People don’t always associate depression with weight loss because, after all, the goal was to lose weight.” However, Legette explains that losing weight is both mental and physical. People on a quest to lose weight are, in essence, losing their “old” self while trying to embrace their “new” self.

Today, Michele Legette is a health activist who goes out into the community to speak on the importance of becoming healthier and that preventative care is the best care. After successfully losing 120 pounds, Legette admits that she still has good days as well as bad days. “I also went through a process of being chemically unbalanced, and I wasn’t getting the proper amount of rest. Insufficient sleep can lead to weight gain. There are days when I want to sometimes give up, but I know that I can’t because this is a part of my ministry, and I want people to understand that “Your Health is Your Wealth! I’m a certified personal trainer and group fitness trainer in Marion as well as Lake View, South Carolina. My goal is to leave my clients with hope for tomorrow and feeling great about themselves from the inside out. She strongly believes in the biblical verse: 3 John 2: ‘I believe that we can have it all just like it states.’”

Michele Legette and her husband, T.C., are parents to Leslie Wheeler, Jeffery Caesar, Christopher Caesar, and Terence Legette, and the grandparents of Jonathan Carter and Cameron Wheeler. She’s an instructor at Florence-Darlington Technical College, where she teaches medical records and law. She volunteers with the Lake View Rescue Squad, and she is a minister at Miracle Temple Family Fellowship in Lake View. Legette is also the owner of Motivating Lifestyle Change Fitness. She can be reached via Facebook at Michele Legette or on Instagram at @legette2, or you can call her at 843-845-4274.

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CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM NURSES RECEIVE PALMETTO GOLD AWARD

Submitted by Carolinas Hospital System



Picture caption – (from left, clockwise) Diana Collins, FNP, Carolinas Medical Alliance, Lake City Primary Care; Wendy Davis, RN, Joint Care Coordinator/Stroke Coordinator; Priscilla Russell, BSN, RNC-OB, Assistant Director of Women’s Services; Marcella Crosby, RN, South Tower; Misty Martin, RN, BSN Cardiac Cath Lab (in front)

A coalition of South Carolina nursing organizations has named five Carolinas Hospital System nurses among the state’s top 100. The announcement from the South Carolina Nurses Federation distinguishes them as Palmetto Gold winners.

The five nurses recognized are Wendy Davis, RN, Joint Care Coordinator/Stroke Coordinator; Misty Martin, RN, BSN, Cardiac Cath Lab; Priscilla Russell, RNC-OB, BSN, Assistant Director of Women’s Services; Marcella Crosby, RN, South Tower; and Diana Collins, FNP, Carolinas Medical Alliance-Lake City Primary Care.

Palmetto Gold is the premier statewide nurse recognition program that salutes registered nurses for exceptional nursing practice and commitment to the profession. Nominations are received from nursing employers and peers from a variety of nursing education and health care facilities across the state. One hundred nurses are selected from the nominations and will be honored during a formal gala with a specially-designed Palmetto Gold pin and certificate.

“We are proud to honor these five exemplary nurses who symbolize the true spirit of nursing. Admired among their colleagues, these honorees embody the essential qualities of a nurse. Their commitment to providing high quality and compassionate care consistently exceeds our patients’ expectations, bringing honor to Carolinas Hospital System and to the healthcare profession,” said Costa Cockfield, Carolinas Hospital System chief nursing officer.

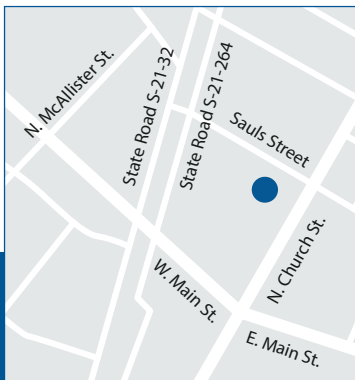
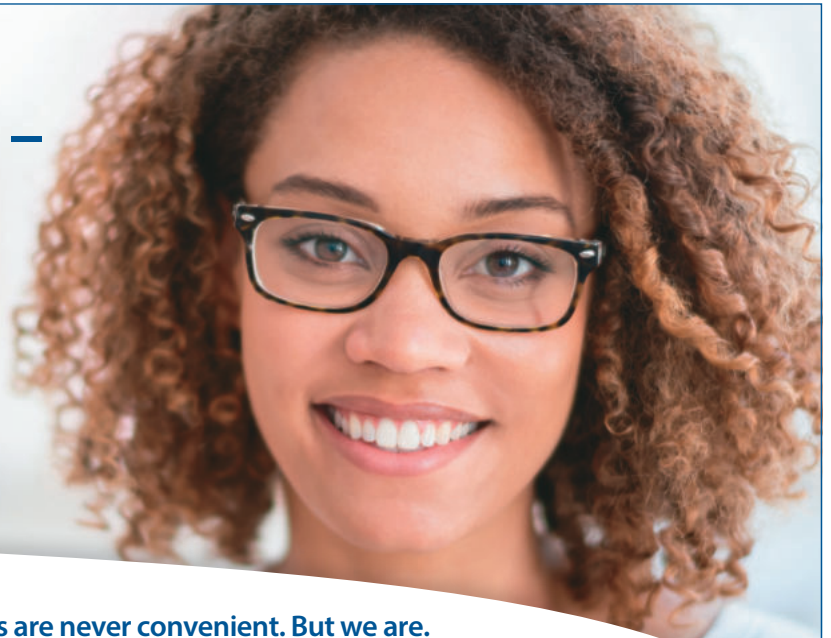
Proceeds from the gala are used to provide scholarships for students in state-approved registered nursing programs in South Carolina and continue the legacy of excellence in nursing for South Carolina citizens. The Palmetto Gold Scholarships will be managed by the South Carolina Nurses Foundation, a 501(C)(3) organization, whose mission is to promote high standards of health care by insuring the advancement of the nursing profession through awards, grants and scholarships.

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CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM

INTRODUCING CUTTING-EDGE HEART PUMP

Submitted by Abdallah Kamouh, M.D.



Abdallah Kamouh, M.D.

The American Heart Association reports the number of people diagnosed with heart failure is projected to rise 46 percent by 2030, resulting in more than 8 million adults with heart failure. Heart failure happens when a person's heart is no longer strong enough to pump the blood necessary to meet the needs of the body. Although this is usually a chronic debilitating condition, it can be the result of a sudden cardiac event such as a massive heart attack.

Acute heart failure, or cardiogenic shock, is a life-threatening situation occurring when the heart is unable to function, causing organs to start to fail. Signs of acute heart failure can be a drop in blood pressure signifying the heart can't pump enough blood in order to provide much-needed oxygen to vital organs. Cardiogenic shock is the leading cause of death after an acute heart attack. Mortality rates can vary but may be as high as 50 percent. Medical treatment success is usually limited in such conditions. In patients with acute heart attack, fixing narrowed or blocked arteries plays a big role.

Because of the high risk of death in acute heart failure, new devices have emerged to help support the heart and improve the quality of life and decrease illness and death of these patients in the short and long run. These devices are called left ventricular assist devices.

A cutting-edge heart pump is used at Carolinas Hospital System to specifically treat patients with advanced heart failure in the short term or acute setting. This device is a small pump attached to the end of a thin flexible tube (catheter). It is usually implanted through an artery in the patient's leg known as the femoral artery. Once implanted,

the device pumps blood from the left side of the heart to the organs via the main blood vessel called the aorta. This heart pump is typically used less than six days, when the left portion of your heart called the left ventricle fails and doesn't respond to optimal medical management and conventional treatment measures. The purpose of this device is to reduce strain on your heart and provide the circulatory support to allow heart recovery and early assessment of residual heart function.

The device is not just used to treat severe heart failure and acute cardiogenic shock. It is widely used in patients with lowered heart function undergoing high risk procedures to fix severe blockages or narrowed heart vessels. These patients are usually not candidates for bypass surgery. This device helps reduce the amount of work the heart has to do during these complex procedures by maintaining blood flow and blood pressure. Typically, the device is only used for six hours or less after the procedure.

This cutting-edge heart pump represents an ongoing effort to provide the best in all types of medical care for our patients. Carolinas Hospital System is recognized as an accredited Chest Pain Center and is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network.

Dr. Abdallah Kamouh is the Director of Cardiology at Carolinas Hospital System. He is a board certified interventional cardiologist associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance Cardiology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. For more information go to CarolinasMedicalAlliance.com or call (843) 674-4787.



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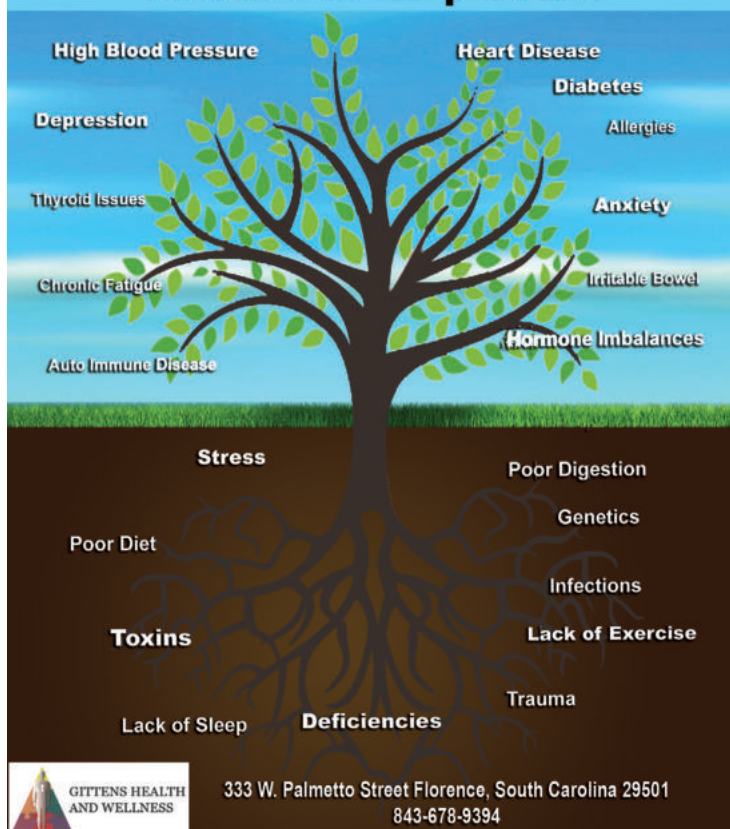


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HELLO, SPRING! METEOROLOGISTS PREDICT EARLY SPRING, WORSENING ALLERGIES

Submitted by Dr. Roberto Miranda



Dr. Roberto Miranda

Spring brings sunshine, emerging greenery and longer days, but many people dread this season for the sinus pressure, headaches, itchy eyes and respiratory problems it brings. Experts predict that the early taste of warm weather across much of the country in February and March means that pollen counts are increasing earlier, and impacts may be felt for a longer time this season.

“There is no single allergy season,” said Dr. Roberto Miranda, of Carolinas Medical Alliance Primary Care-Florence. “Allergy symptoms may vary throughout the year, depending on where you live and the types of substances you’re allergic to. Still, many people experience a worsening of their allergies around springtime, when pollen counts are highest.”

Spring allergies can start as early as February and last until summer. Meteorologists predict that much of the Southeast and the East Coast will have increased pollen levels this year, due to the mild end of winter and early start to the growing season. According to the National Allergy Bureau, high concentrations of tree pollen have already been reported in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. In parts of the Ohio Valley that typically have snow on the ground in late February and early March, allergies are already beginning to increase. And thanks to only short bursts of cold air, the trend is expected to continue into the Northern Plains and Northeast.

If you or a family member suffers from hay fever or allergic rhinitis, here are some helpful tips to keep symptoms in check:

- **Leave the pollen outside.** Take your shoes off at the door as much as possible to keep from spreading pollen through your house.
- **Close your windows and dust your fans.** Despite the nice weather, true sufferers should keep the windows shut to prevent allergens from entering. If you use a ceiling fan, give it a good spring cleaning. Replace air filters in your home and car.
- **Be thorough in your spring cleaning.** Wash down your walls, get rid of clutter, launder all sheets and comforters, dust and clean blinds, baseboards and everywhere else you can reach.
- **Keep your immune system strong.** Eat fresh, clean, nutrient-rich foods and stay active. The healthier your immune system, the more equipped your body is to battle histamines.
- **Be aware of the pollen count.** It changes daily – look up the count for the day by zip code at www.pollen.com
- **Sip warm beverages.** Herbal teas can help ease congestion and keep you hydrated.

Wherever you live this year, allergies are likely to affect someone in your home. In addition to tips for avoiding allergy triggers, there are many effective treatments to minimize symptoms. Enjoy all the wonderful experiences spring has to offer by talking with your doctor about the best allergy prevention or treatment path for you.

Roberto Miranda, M.D. is a board-certified primary care physician at Carolinas Medical Alliance Primary Care – Florence, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. For more information go to CarolinasMedicalAlliance.com.



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CIRCLE PARK INTRODUCES MEDICATION ASSISTED THERAPY

Submitted by Circle Park Behavioral Health Services



Pam Williams and Matthew Jeffords

The Florence community, as well as many communities across the nation, has experienced a rapid rise in the misuse of prescription drugs and its negative consequences. Most alarming is the resulting heroin epidemic and the introduction of the even more deadly associated substances such as fentanyl.

Circle Park Behavioral Health Services, Florence County's designated authority on alcohol

and other drug abuse services, has also witnessed an increase in admissions to services related to prescription drug and opiate use disorders. In order to aggressively and effectively meet this challenge, Circle Park has recently introduced Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) to its cadre of services.

"The opiate and heroin epidemic has certainly ingrained itself in parts of Florence County over the past several years," Circle Park CEO Randy Cole shared. "Substance abuse is a community wide issue that requires a community wide response. The addition of MAT will provide a valuable tool in lessening the impact of alcohol and other drugs on our community and its residents."

Medication Assisted Therapy is the use of medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a holistic approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. It is considered a best practice treatment approach, but only a small percentage of individuals in need of the resource actually have it available to them. Circle Park's inclusion of this service dramatically increases its availability to the Florence community.

Pam Williams, LPC, CACII, MAC, SAP, Circle Park's MAT coordinator, views this new service as an essential resource to not only combat the recent surge in opiate misuse but other substance abuse also. "Many patients delay getting help because of their fears related to withdrawal. MAT offers relief from withdrawal symptoms and cravings and increases your chances of successfully navigating through the early stages of recovery." Williams also shared that there are multiple benefits to MAT including increased treatment retention, decreased criminal activities, increased employment and improved recovery rates. It also has great benefits for pregnant and postpartum women as it improves birth outcomes and provides relief of withdrawal symptoms in babies born to addicted mothers. "MAT is not only effective in our outpatient services but also with those receiving services at our women's residential center, the Chrysalis Center. One of the saddest issues we deal with are pregnant women suffering from addiction and their babies born to addiction. MAT offers a great tool to lessen the presence and impact of substance abuse disorders with this most critical population."

MAT is not to be used over a prolonged period, nor to be a standalone approach. MAT is intended to be part of a comprehensive treatment plan to include behavioral therapy and support services. As part of the MAT program, Circle Park has contracted with a physician's group to provide onsite medical exams, assessments and prescriptions for therapy medications. This enables patients to receive their medical, behavioral counseling and support services in one location.

Matthew Jeffords, PSS, serves as Circle Park's MAT Peer Support Specialist and offers direct support services to patients to lessen their life skills challenges in order to focus on their recovery. "The fears associated with addiction and recovery often inhibit the patient's desire to enter treatment services. By lessening the withdrawal symptoms and cravings through MAT and supporting their efforts on a daily basis, we can now give patients their best opportunity to obtain a successful recovery and improved quality of life. This is an exciting opportunity to positively impact individuals, their families and the community as a whole."

For more information about Medication Assisted Therapy and the services at Circle Park, call 843-665-9349 or visit www.circlepark.com.

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THE 411 ON INFERTILITY

Submitted by Heather Draeger OB/GYN



Heather Draeger OB/GYN

Take charge of your reproductive health and boost your pregnancy odds by learning more about infertility. An estimated 12.1 percent of American couples are affected by infertility, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines as failure to conceive within one year of trying. While age often takes the blame for infertility, your lifestyle may also contribute.

Examining the Risks

Many of the same lifestyle factors—including obesity, eating a poor diet and drinking large amounts of alcohol—that influence your likelihood of developing illnesses impact your infertility risk. To improve your odds of conceiving, watch your weight. If you are overweight, losing as little as 5 percent of your body weight can make a difference. Exercise for 30 minutes most days of the week, and limit your caffeine consumption to no more than one cup of coffee per day. Avoid smoking, which can cause both male and female infertility, and stop drinking alcohol, especially if you're actively trying to conceive. Babies are more likely to develop birth defects if moms-to-be drink during early pregnancy.

If these lifestyle measures fail to make a difference in your results, you may be a candidate for infertility treatments, which range from medication to advanced reproductive technologies. If you are younger than age 35 and have been trying to get pregnant for one year or are older than age 35 and have been trying for at least six months, see your doctor.

Sidebar:

When Illness Is to Blame

While lifestyle factors can cause infertility, certain medical conditions also play a role. Take a look at a few of the contributing disorders:

- **Polycystic ovary syndrome**—A hormonal disorder estimated to affect as many as 5 million women, polycystic ovary syndrome can hinder ovulation. Women with polycystic ovary syndrome typically have high levels of the male reproductive hormone androgen and, as a result, experience weight

gain, ovarian cysts, acne and difficulty getting pregnant. Treatment for polycystic ovary syndrome is multimodal. Many women with the disorder are able to conceive by taking fertility medication.

- **Endometriosis**—Most common in women in their 30s and 40s, endometriosis occurs when endometrial tissue—the tissue that lines a woman's uterus—grows in the ovaries, fallopian tubes and other areas of the body. Symptoms of endometriosis include infertility, extremely painful periods and spotting. Medication and surgery to remove the excess endometrial tissue can boost the chances of pregnancy.

- **Thyroid disorders**—When the body produces too many or too few thyroid hormones, women may have trouble getting pregnant. Thyroid disorders cause a variety of symptoms, including weight changes, and are diagnosed with a simple blood test. Surgical removal of the thyroid gland and /or medication may be used to treat thyroid disorders and their related symptoms.

Tidbits:

- When you think of infertility treatment, advanced reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization probably come to mind. According to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 85 to 90 percent of infertile couples are able to conceive with more conventional treatments, such as medication.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 7.4 million U.S. women between the ages of 15 and 44 have had an infertility treatment.

- Infertility is not just a woman's problem. According to the National Fertility Association, 30 percent of infertility cases are due to male reproductive health issues. Women's reproductive health concerns also account for 30 percent of cases, while the remaining 40 percent come from a combination of factors.

Heather Draeger, M.D. is board certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Phillips & Coker OB-GYN, an affiliate with Carolinas Medical Alliance. She is also on the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System. For more information go to: CarolinasMedicalAlliance.com

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SENIOR HEALTH

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator HopeHealth



Family Nurse Practitioner Nicholas Licari examines a senior patient

Today, more and more people are choosing to stay in the workforce as they enter their senior years. A U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2017 report indicated about 40 percent of seniors—those age 55 and older—were working or actively looking for work in 2014. In 2015, 33 million seniors still collected paychecks, and by 2019, the BLS estimates that seniors will comprise 25 percent of the workforce.

Why are seniors working longer? For some, it's financial security or independence, but for others, it's to stay active and engaged in their communities. Whatever the reason for staying in the workforce, seniors' ability to continue working is dependent on a common factor—maintaining their health.

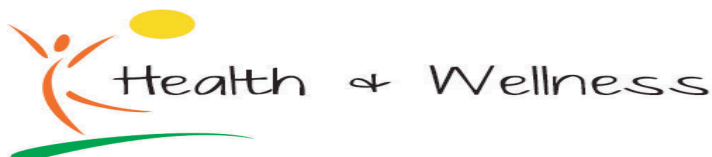
Nicholas Licari, a board-certified family nurse practitioner at HopeHealth Medical Plaza, said the best way to maintain and improve senior health is to stay up-to-date with annual wellness visits and complete recommended screenings. Additionally, addressing chronic health concerns, nutrition and fitness and other assessments are key for seniors to maintain their health and ability to work.

Assessments specifically for seniors take a closer look at factors such as fall risks, physical activity levels and functional abilities. Screenings for all seniors include tests for colorectal cancer, hepatitis C, hypertension, hearing, vision and mental health. For women, health screenings also include mammograms, cervical cancer and osteoporosis.

At HopeHealth, seniors have access to a variety of programs:

- **Hope Gold**— A free concierge program for HopeHealth patients specifically designed to help seniors with chronic diseases navigate their health needs
- **Thursdays at Hope**—A free program open to the community and held on the second Thursday of the month. Each 90-minute session provides an opportunity to hear from area experts on two topics— one medical and one life-style— that are important to healthy senior living
- **Educational Classes** – HopeHealth offers classes covering topics including chronic disease management, health education, exercise, and cooking and nutrition. Some are open only to HopeHealth patients with specific needs; others are free and open to the community. Examples include:
 - **“HeartWise” Hypertension Self-Management:** A six-week course for patients diagnosed with hypertension and their family members to learn about controlling high blood pressure and covering topics such as hypertension education, home blood-pressure monitoring, stress reduction and relaxation techniques
 - **Walk with Ease** – A program designed to promote a healthy heart and to reduce arthritic pain through walking, as well as discussions on arthritis, managing symptoms, foods that reduce inflammation, and other topics. Each class in the six-week program also includes stretching, warm-up and cool-down sessions, and walking
 - **Cooking Matters** – A six-week course teaching techniques for preparing delicious, new recipes and getting your family excited about healthy eating while staying within a budget

More information on Hope Gold is available by calling 843-662-8469. To become a HopeHealth patient or to learn more about classes offered, visit hope-health.org or call 843-667-9414.



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DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF HEALTHY GOALS

Submitted by Rachel Baggett, Director of Marketing and Initiatives



Florence's Biggest Loser contestants go through a warmup with the FMU Women's Soccer team before participating in a soccer-themed fitness challenge.

Surveys conducted on New Year's resolutions this year showed that getting healthy was once again one of the top resolutions with over 45 percent of Americans selecting improving their nutrition and/or fitness as one of their 2018 goals.

Each year in January, the United Way of Florence County hosts the Florence's Biggest Loser program to help individuals such as these who are looking to reach their healthy living goals in the New Year. Thanks to partnerships with the McLeod Health and Fitness Center and the Morning News and sponsorships from Health Facilities Federal Credit Union, PGBA LLC, Community Broadcasters, and The Vitamin Shoppe, we are able to provide participants with the tools they need to lose weight and create life-long healthy habits. These tools include a gym membership, weekly fitness training sessions, nutrition guidance, accountability through weekly weigh-ins, and grand prizes to help them stay motivated until the end.



To help them with their nutrition, contestants in the Florence's Biggest Loser program were able to taste test several healthy dishes (such as the refreshing kale salad pictured) prepared by registered dietitian, Lindsay Fraser.

Through the program and through their own will and determination, this year's 54 contestants had already lost an incredible 800.4 pounds and 226 inches at the time this article was written with two weeks of competition still to go.

If you haven't been as successful with your healthy goals, don't worry! There is no time like the present to re-evaluate where you are and start again. If you need some help getting started or staying

on track, check out our nutrition and fitness tips below.

Nutrition Tips:

1. Create habits that you can follow for the long-term. One reason diets fail so often is because people follow plans that are way too strict. Skipping dessert may seem like a good idea now, but can you really skip dessert for the rest of your life? Instead of completely cutting out the foods you enjoy, try to eat them less often or in smaller portions.
2. Try to make half your plate a non-starchy vegetable such as broccoli, carrots, green beans, zucchini, and asparagus.
3. Keep your house, work desk, and car well-stocked with healthy snacks so you always have a nutritious option when hunger strikes. An example of a snack could be a mix of vegetables with hummus for dipping or an apple and low-fat string cheese.
4. Avoid food ruts by preparing meals you already like differently; such as grilling meat instead of baking it or adding chopped fruit to your salads.
5. Eating enough protein and fiber cannot only help your body function properly, but it can also help you stay fuller for longer which prevents over-eating.

6. Always read the nutrition label and ingredient list of each product you buy. Most people tend to consume over the recommended daily amount of sugar and sodium because they do not read a product's label.

Fitness Tips:

1. Be realistic with your fitness goals. Just like people will fail at a certain diet because they are too restrictive, you can also become easily discouraged if you set unachievable fitness goals. For example, instead of telling yourself you're going to go from not going to the gym at all to going five times a week, try being more realistic by starting with just going two times a week. Five times a week is a great goal to have, but it is going to be a hard goal to hit week after week and it may even be too much activity for your body. By starting at two times a week, you give yourself some leeway and the chance to work your way up to five times a week without giving up because you keep missing your goal.
2. If this is your first time starting a fitness regime, or if you have any

**SET GOAL.
MAKE PLAN.
GET TO WORK.
STICK TO IT.
REACH GOAL.**

past or present injuries, always consult with your doctor first before starting to work out. Then, it may be beneficial to schedule a training session with a certified personal trainer who can create a workout for you with any modifications you may need.

3. One of the best ways to stay consistent with fitness is to find a workout that you enjoy doing. This can be anything from lifting weights to swimming to a fitness class like Zumba. The more you like what you're doing, the easier it will be to convince yourself to stick with it.
4. Keep a change of workout clothes and shoes in your car at all times. That way, you are always prepared to squeeze in a workout when you find yourself with some extra free time. This can also help prevent you from missing or skipping a workout because you forgot to pack a gym bag.
5. It is important to give your body time to recover in-between workouts by taking rest days. If your muscles are sore, do not be afraid to take an entire day away from the gym or try a low impact workout like gentle yoga or walking.
6. Increasing your fitness is not limited to just working out in the gym. Hiking, kayaking, or playing different sports are also great physical activity options. Try finding something the whole family can enjoy so everyone can become more active together.

For even more information about how you can live healthier, visit the Florence's Biggest Loser website at www.burnandlearnflorence.com or go to the Biggest Loser Florence Facebook page. Be sure to also check out the "2018 Losers" page on burnandlearnflorence.com to see the finishers, grand prize winners, and the amount of donations raised for the United Way agencies from the 2018 competition.



~~stroke~~

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Speech difficulty
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Know the symptoms of a stroke and think **F.A.S.T.**

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Register Online

April 8th–27th at

www.tinyurl.com/2018WTH

Enter Affiliation Code: **GEN**



The Pee Dee Medical Professionals Association, Inc. is a non-profit 501c3 organization incorporated in 2012. Its membership includes minority healthcare providers serving the Pee Dee region of South Carolina with a mission to decrease health disparities in the surrounding underserved communities. Their vision is to educate and enrich communities regarding health and healthcare related issues through education, service activities, outreach projects and regular giving.

PDMPA's signature event, "Walk to Health!" is held annually in downtown Florence each Spring in collaboration with its long-time partnering site, Mt. Zion AME Church. Free to the public, medical providers offer health education sessions, conduct screenings and render workshops/demonstrations. This year, PDMPA has also partnered with the National Kidney Foundation to deliver kidney screenings to the public. "Walk to Health!" 2018 will take place on Saturday, May 5, 2018. Early online registration will take place from April 8th through 27th at www.tinyurl.com/2018WTH (use Affiliation Code: **GEN**). Late registration is at 7:00AM on the morning of the event, followed by a community warm-up at 7:45AM prior to the walk

The annual event is a reminder to the community that better health is attainable through small, simple, everyday life habits such as walking. "Walk to Health!" focuses on preventative measures related to diabetes, hypertension, stroke and heart disease. The event also stresses the importance of good nutrition, regular exercise, healthy living and access to community resources.

Attendees will enjoy a light, healthy breakfast, participate in a community "warm-up", experience a two-mile downtown walking journey with their local providers and receive access to a multi-dimensional health fair, inclusive of, but not limited to: screenings, cooking demonstrations/tasting and community resources.

Funds received in support of this event serve to defray associated costs, as well as, provide future scholarship opportunities for students residing in the Pee Dee region. For more information, to become a vendor/sponsor or to have PDMPA attend one of your health related events, please contact PDMPA via email at pdmpa2012@gmail.com. General donations to support the cause can be mailed to: PDMPA, P.O. Box 7536, Florence, SC 29502.

CAROLINA PINES REGIONAL MEDICAL

Submitted by Jana E. Pye, Director of Marketing & Public Relations



HARTSVILLE - Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center (CPRMC) and adjoining medical office, The Medical Group, in the All-America City of Hartsville continues to be the healthcare facility of choice for discerning

citizens across the Pee Dee – a smaller facility with providers that take the time to know its patients and treat them like family.

CPRMC just completed its tri-annual Joint Commission review March 12-14 and received an excellent rating of ZERO conditional findings. This puts CPRMC in the top rankings of all hospitals across the nation. The hospital is also accredited by The Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP), making it the only dual-accredited hospital in the Pee Dee.

Also in March, the hospital earned the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Chest Pain Center Base Accreditation.

Two CPRMC nurses were awarded the 2018 Palmetto Gold Award: Autumn Collins, BSN, RN, CCRN and Kelly Beasley, RN. The Palmetto Gold Nurse Recognition and Scholarship Program is a statewide recognition program for nurses from all practice settings in hospitals across South Carolina. Each year the program selects 100 nurses from those nominated across the state to be honored at the annual Palmetto Gold Gala event.

The affiliation with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) has afforded CPRMC tele-health services that have further enhanced what the hospital can offer patients, including tele-stroke, tele-neurology and e-ICU services.

Economic impact for 2017:

- \$3.2 million in City of Hartsville and Darlington County taxes
 - \$40.7 million of uncompensated care
 - 614 jobs to local community members, resulting in \$44,091,638 in combined salary and benefits paid to employees – most of which is spent here in the Pee Dee area
 - \$2.8 million invested in capital equipment
 - \$222,430 in contributions to local charities, civic groups and schools
- In October of 2017, CPRMC was awarded the following South Carolina **Certified Zero Harm Awards from SCMA/SCHA:**
- Zero Surgical Site Infections – Hip Replacement 45+ Months
 - Zero Surgical Site Infections – Knee Replacement 45+ Months
 - Zero Surgical Site Infections – Abdominal Hysterectomy 24+ Months
 - Zero Surgical Site Infections – Zero CLASBI ICU 18+

Of the awards, 40 hospitals were honored for the entire state of South Carolina, and of those healthcare facilities, just 17 were honored with the 45+ month awards.

In November of 2017, CPRMC was awarded The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Advanced Certification for Total Hip Replacement and total Knee Replacement.

CPRMC opened a new, larger Sleep Lab in January of 2018, moving from the medical office building to a larger space in the main hospital.

Since January 2017, six new physicians have joined CPRMC:

- Wallace Vaught, MD – Urology Specialist
- Siddarth Badve, MD – Orthopedic Spine Surgery
- Anna Jane Dudley Senseney, MD – Internal Medicine
- David Horger, MD – Urology Specialist
- William "Bill" Martin, MD – Family Practice
- Brian Sponseller, MD – Family Practice

Moving forward, CPRMC will be the official sponsor for the American Heart Association of the Pee Dee's 2019 Heart Ball of the Pee Dee. The hospital plans to share heart-healthy living with the community leading up to the Heart Ball. Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center is located at 1304 W. Bobo Newsom Hwy., Hartsville, SC. To learn more about the hospital and its adjoining medical office, visit www.cprmc.com and www.themedicalgroup.com.



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3RD ANNUAL SERVEFLO

Submitted by HFF

Helping
Florence
Flourish

Helping Florence Flourish (HFF) is pleased to announce the third annual ServeFLO initiative, which will take place June 16-24. This special season of service will kick off with churches aligning to coordinate their service in the community as they seek to create a moment where churches visibly unify to bless Florence.

The idea for this initiative was born from a realization that many churches were doing great acts of service in the community already but could have larger impact by simultaneously working to bless Florence.

"ServeFLO is the epitome of what Helping Florence Flourish is intended to be," said team leader Rev. Chris Handley, associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Florence. "It's the most single moment of living into the Helping Florence Flourish vision, where we all work together and build relationships, and we're excited to see it grow."

The scriptures that inspire ServeFLO come from Jesus's prayer in John 17:21, where he prays "that believers would be one like he and his heavenly Father are one," and Jeremiah 29:7, where the Lord says to the Jews in exiles, "pray for the peace and prosperity of the city." These passages and others give the church the motivation to spread out across Florence together to bless this community.

Last summer, ServeFLO blessed shelters, schools and homes in need; held a prayer walk; and created prayer garden. Among the schools helped by ServeFLO volunteers was Briggs Elementary School.

"This summer Briggs was chosen to be blessed by the ServeFLO organization. A group of hard-working men, women, and children worked all day at our school. Benches and picnic tables were built. Raised beds were created and a beautiful mural was painted. Our learning cottages and awnings were pressured washed. One cottage received new underpinning! In one day this group of individuals accomplished what would've taken us weeks to complete. This gift of giving was amazing for our school. We truly were #blessedatbriggs by ServeFLO," said Tara Newton, principal of Briggs Elementary School.

Currently, the Helping Florence Flourish team is working to build a planning committee that will help take ServeFLO to the next level in blessing the people of Florence. Committee members are needed to help with fundraising, project development, and church relations. New this year, ServeFLO will be seeking sponsorships as a way to enhance the projects that take place during the week of service.

Another way to become involved in Helping Florence Flourish is to become engaged in monthly "movement gatherings." This is the best way to become aware of the different HFF initiatives. The first movement gathering will be at noon April 19 at First Presbyterian, 700 Park Ave. This gathering will be dedicated to hearing about ServeFLO 2018. RSVP by emailing helpingflorenceflourish@florencefirst.org

So far, projects in the works for this year's ServeFLO include a blood drive with the American Red Cross; a Sunday morning worship service and breakfast for the homeless; and WinShape Camp, an all-day weeklong camp for Florence area youth that includes fun, faith, fitness, and family.

Helping Florence Flourish is a Christian organization that seeks to improve Florence in critical areas such as in education, homelessness, deterioration of the family and racial division. The areas of focus were determined after surveying nearly 70 community leaders over an eight-month period. All respondents expressed a great deal of passion for the community, and cover the gamut of all seven areas of cultural influence: commerce, education, arts and entertainment, media, government, church, and family.



DCB ADDRESSES SOCIAL DILEMMAS

by Anna Bowman



Carla Angus

LAKE CITY--Carla Angus, in essence, is the truest definition of living your best life! Carla has never been someone who could be described as shy but did struggle with low self-esteem and hid behind her jokes and laughter. Today she is the founder of Dramatic Coffee Beans, Inc. (DCB), prestigious, non-profit organizations in the state of South Carolina designed to identify and combat issues faced by today's teenagers.

"I was fortunate," Angus said. "I participated in youth groups like Teen Institute, Job Training Partnership Act and Girl Scouts. I was also fortunate to have wonderful mentors and parents. I learned so much about myself and felt each experience gave me the ability to be a leader and change maker. I felt if I could create something that offered young people the same learning opportunities, plus a little more, I could help other young people feel good about themselves, recognize the importance of an education, and strive for success."

In 2012, the Winthrop University graduate created the non-profit youth organization Dramatic Coffee Beans, Inc. with the support of good friends and volunteers. The organization, which is comprised of students from schools in the Pee Dee, uses performance arts to address social dilemmas such as teen pregnancy, bullying (physical, mental, and cyber), drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide, at the same time focusing on leadership skills to strengthen the students' outlook on life. DCB is open to any student that can meet the organization's criteria and attend meetings. "Students must complete an application with a minimum of two references, interview, and remain in good standing with the school and in the community," said Angus.

One of the strongest resources utilized by the organization is improvisational parodies. It is their goal that these scenarios will bring forth strong visual and impactful messages for their peers to utilize before making decisions that are irreversible. "It is amazing to see the kids on stage and working with young people during workshops – to actually see what young people can do when given the opportunity to lead." The organization also allows students to gain work experience in such areas as public relations, marketing, and staging (set up/break down) for their traveling productions across the state.



DCB Group

With her distinguished background in education as a teacher, coach, elementary and middle school assistant principal and elementary principal, Angus knows just how important it is to intervene early in a young person's life in order to develop self-esteem and leadership skills for the future. "I remember at their age some 'crazy' things I thought about--love and life--and was very thankful for those adults in my life that served as a mentor, and I'm excited about the wonderful volunteers that serve as mentors with the youth. It's especially rewarding to see alumni return to become mentors," she added.

Carla Angus is married to Dr. Josh Angus, and they are the parents to sons, Noah, 11, and Nylan, 8. Carla Angus is a graduate of Winthrop University with a bachelor's and master's degree in education. She is the owner of Transforming Minds, LLC, a consulting firm designed to make businesses or nonprofit businesses succeed. It also provides key strategies for youth-based programs to increase participation, build youth leaders and design specialty events and workshops.

To learn more about Dramatic Coffee Bean, Inc., visit their website at www.dcbinc.org, Facebook or Instagram. To learn about how the organization got its very unique name, watch the parable of the "Egg, Carrot, and Coffee Bean," on YouTube, and see the positivity of the unique message.

REDUCE CONFUSION IN OLDER PATIENTS



The longer you live the more likely you will develop a medical condition that requires surgery or a procedure. In fact, half of all people 65 and older will have at least one surgical procedure in their lifetime. And along with common potential side effects from anesthesia during surgery such as nausea,

chills or muscle aches and itching, older patients are at risk for confusion or short-term memory loss. But, rest assured, there are steps seniors can take to minimize these side effects. The aging brain is more vulnerable to anesthesia and surgery, but there is research that provides guidance to decrease these risks. The American Society of Anesthesiologists offers six tips for seniors to help limit confusion after surgery:

1. Ask your physician to conduct a pre-surgery assessment of your mental function. They can use the results as a baseline for comparison after surgery.
2. Have a caregiver, family member or friend visit with you as you recover, carefully observing your physical and mental activity after surgery and reporting anything troubling to your physician.
3. Ask your physician before taking medications after surgery that can affect your nervous system.
4. If you wear hearing aids or glasses, ask that they be available as soon as possible after the procedure.
5. Request a hospital room with a window, so you can tell whether it's day or night.
6. If you will be staying overnight in the hospital, pack a family photo, a clock and a calendar, or other familiar objects, to help you readjust.



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NAVIGATING MEDICARE: 5 ALLIES WHO CAN HELP



Enrolling in Medicare for the first time or starting coverage under a new plan? It might bring you back to that first day starting a new job. You knew some of the basics, but you also knew there was a lot more to learn. More than likely, you got help from colleagues who have been around for a while and helped show you the ropes.

Don't worry. With Medicare, you have the same kind of knowledgeable support. You've

got a team on your side that can help make navigating the health care system easier. Goodbye hassles, hello helpers.

Here are five allies in your corner:

1. **Your Primary Care Physician.** This physician is the "go-to" doctor who provides guidance on your health care needs, taking the time to really get to know you, your medical history and your health goals. Think of your Primary Care Physician as the "quarterback" of your medical team - someone who can take charge of knowing the ins and outs of your health status and help drive decisions to get you on the right track and keep you there.

2. **A caregiver.** Perhaps the "unsung hero" of your health care team, caregivers are the ones you know you can count on - the ones you know are there to offer support and care for you, whenever you need it. Whether a family member, neighbor, friend or professional assistant these are the people in your life who help you along the way. Their assistance can span everything from bringing you to appointments

or getting prescriptions filled to making meals or offering emotional support.

3. **Your pharmacist.** This team member keeps an eye on the medications you take - prescription and over-the-counter - to make sure they work safely together. Your pharmacist is a great person to talk with about how medications are making you feel and answer any questions you have on topics including what side effects to expect, what to do if you miss a dose, or how to store your meds.

4. **An insurance agent.** Original Medicare, Medicare Supplement, Part D. Medicare Advantage. There are many options and decisions to make when it comes to your Medicare coverage, and a licensed insurance agent can help you find the right plan, or plans, for you. Once you've selected a plan, you can also always call your agent to ask questions if your health or coverage needs change or if your plan changes from year to year.

5. **Your insurance company.** Within your insurance company, there are more people than you likely realize who are working hard on your behalf to ensure you get the medical care and support you need. Insurers can offer tools; resources and support that can help you live a healthier life.

For more information to help you navigate Medicare, visit MedicareMadeClear.com.



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CHRISTIAN-BASED ORGANIZATION ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN

by Anna Bowman



Donna Lollis, Interim Executive Director

COLUMBIA --As of Jan. 29, Donna Lollis, a native of Darlington, has been tapped as the newest interim executive director for the Killingsworth Home. The Killingsworth Home, the vision of Corrie Killingsworth, is a non-profit organization with two chapters. It was first founded in September of 1947 as a Christian home for women. Then in 1972 it became a transition home to assist women in crises.

The Killingsworth Home, a Christian-based organization located in Columbia, has been a safe haven for women who are committed to changing their lives. The mission of the organization is "To Support, Empower, and

Advocate for Women recovering from various life crises within a safe, nurturing Christian environment." Since 1972, it has allowed women to be defined by their present efforts and not by their past mistakes.

With its rich heritage, it's no wonder why Lollis was named executive director. Her previous experience as donor relations manager for Harvest Hope Food Bank of the Pee Dee has given her great insight into working with corporations and with people from diverse backgrounds. Her extensive experience in fundraising and developing resources will be great assets in her current position.

Lollis is extremely excited by her new position. Throughout her entire life, she has always been an advocate for women and the opportunity to have a pivotal role in helping the women of Killingsworth Home change their life is a privilege. As a minister, Lollis understands how important patience is to people who are in crisis to work towards normalcy in their life. "We help the women who come through the doors of Killingsworth Home regain their lives," she said. "We offer support, empowerment and advocacy for them. We offer residents a

safe place to manage their crises while helping them grow in their quest for wholeness. We hope that when they leave us that they will live long purpose-filled lives, be good citizens in their communities, and repair relationships where possible."

The women are held responsible for their recovery and making progress towards becoming self-sufficient. They are required to pay rent; seek employment or attend school; meet with sponsors; and attend classes as deemed necessary. "We have outside groups that help us teach life skills, such as understanding relationships, professional dress, resume skills and money management. The longest anyone has ever stayed a Killingsworth Home has been three years."

As the executive director, Lollis' major goal by 2020 is to become more of an advocate for the ladies. "One of my biggest challenges is helping people understand that our residents come from all over the state of South Carolina and return all over the state. Funding doesn't just need to come from Columbia, SC. I am in a position to help people understand what we do, why we do it and how we do it. Our ladies are transitioning from addiction, incarceration, mental health, abuse and other crises."

My husband and I both are from South Carolina and are in ministry. While he serves in the local church, my role has been in the non-profit world. We have a 12-year-old daughter who pushes me to want to make the world a better place for her.

We have many faithful donors and people can donate by giving at our website www.killingsworth.org or by mailing a check to Killingsworth Home, 1831 Pendleton Street, Columbia, SC 29201.





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THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND TO PERFORM

Submitted by FMU



The Marshall Tucker Band

There'll be "lightning in the air" on May 4 when the iconic Marshall Tucker Band brings its legendary brand of Southern rock to Francis Marion University's Performing Arts Center (PAC) at 7:30 p.m.

The Marshall Tucker Band has had a devoted and passionate following almost since the day the group was formed in Spartanburg in the early '70s. That's grown through the years as the band churned out seven gold records, three platinum records and a long list of memorable singles including, "Can't You See," "Heard It In a Love Song," "Fire On The Mountain," and more. Through it all, the Marshall Tucker Band became synonymous with pioneering the genre of Southern rock.

Tickets for the show, the band's only Pee Dee-area performance this year, went on sale in February. Ticket prices start at just \$22, and they can be purchased online at www.fmupac.org, by phone at 843-661-4444 or in person at the PAC ticket office in downtown Florence, Monday-Friday, noon to 5 p.m.

The Marshall Tucker Band got its start when lead vocalist Doug Gray teamed up with Tommy Caldwell, Toy Caldwell, Paul T. Riddle, George McCorkle and Jerry Eubanks. The band's composition has changed repeatedly through the years. As long-time fans know, there is no actual "Marshall Tucker" in the band. The band "borrowed" that name from a piano tuner whose name was found on a key ring in their original rehearsal space.

After pulling a name out of thin air, creating a new sound was no big deal for the Marshall Tucker Band. Founding member Gray says, "We were a bunch of young guys who didn't know any boundaries." In 1972, the band signed its first major label record deal, and in 1973, the Marshall Tucker Band opened shows for The Allman Brothers. The following year, as their own star began to grow and their debut album went platinum, they began to headline their own shows across America.

They toured constantly over the next decade, honing their signature sound by blending rock, rhythm and blues, jazz, country and gospel. "The buying public never really cared whether we were country or rock and roll," says Gray. "They called us a Southern rock band, but we have always played everything from country, jazz, blues, rock & roll and all things in-between. As we've become older, our Southern heritage seems to come out even more, but no matter how old we get, we can still rock your socks off."

The Marshall Tucker Band continues to tour on a regular basis, playing more than 130 live dates each year. Today, the band records on its own Ramblin' Records Label (distributed by Sony/RED) and continues to produce a steady stream of new material.

The band is still led by Gray, but current members include some notable names with long pedigrees in other groups. Highly respected drummer B.B. Borden is a former member of both Mother's Finest and The Outlaws; multi-instrumentalist Marcus Henderson plays flute, saxophone and keyboards in addition to lead and background vocals; Pat Elwood is on bass guitar; and Rick Willis is on lead guitar and vocals. Acclaimed lead guitarist and vocalist Chris Hicks recently rejoined the band after a two-year absence.

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NEW THIS YEAR

Submitted by Bridget Elvington, City of Dillon Special Events Coordinator



DILLON—“Celebrate Main Street”: Saturday, April 28 “Celebrate Main Street” is an annual festival held in the heart of historic downtown Dillon. It starts at 10 a.m. and lasts until 10 p.m. There will be vendors, food concessions, senior BINGO, pony rides, inflatables, trackless train rides and a car show. Live entertainment will perform on the Duke Energy Stage with James Stephens III, The Man of a Thousand Voices from 3-4 p.m. Silk Groove will start at 4:30 p.m. and play until 6:30 p.m., and following will be The Tim Clark Band from 7-9:30 p.m.

Special for children will be an appearance of a Poppy the Troll and SpongeBob from 2-3 p.m. This will be held in Lockemy Courtyard next to the Dillon County Theatre located on North MacArthur Ave. Also for children is a production of “Chicken Little” by the Porkchop Players.

There is a walk/ride for the benefit of Huntington’s Disorder. Registration is at 7:30 a.m. at the Historic Train Station at the town clock on Main Street. The event will start at 8 a.m. and return to the station for a participant’s breakfast. For more information, please call Kathy Rowell at 843-245-8544, or reach her via e-mail at kathyh16th@aol.com.

This year’s entertainment sponsors are Anderson Brothers Bank, Badcock Home Furniture & More, First Bank, First Citizens Bank, Kintyre House and IHeart Media-Florence on the Duke Energy Stage.

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Silk Groove 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm



James Stephens III 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm



The Tim Clark Band 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

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CRAZY FOR SCRAPBOOKS

by *Tory White*



Leslie Corey and Stacy Smith

In June of 2017 Leslie Corey lost her husband. After going through the grieving process, Corey decided that she just couldn't sit at home alone and do nothing. She remembered the work she did as a customer of Linn's store and called on Stacy Smith. Smith is the daughter of Corey's friend Linn who once owned a scrapbooking store.

Corey made Smith a life-altering proposal that she could not refuse. She wanted to become business partners.

Corey and Smith set up a Tuesday night dinner meeting with Smith's parents to discuss the possibilities. Over tacos they formulated a plan, and Crazy 4 Scrapbooking was born. They used the resources from previous businesses and social media to connect with vendors and suppliers. The new entrepreneurs found that acquiring the proper licensing proved to be the most difficult part of their new venture.

Smith started at an early age stamping and Scrapbooking. Her mother's store was an ample playground for her. She initially did cards with rubber stamps. Corey and Smith have been Crazy 4 Scrapbooking all their lives. December 2017 their obsession became their way of life.

Before opening the location they hosted two annual beach


getaways. Approximately 20 crafters of all genres come together for four days of fun doing what they love to do. This is something the two of them look forward to and plan to continue for a long time. They just returned from their spring getaway and are already planning for the fall.

Crazy 4 Scrapbooking offers an array of classes for all levels of enthusiasts. Each class comes with a full two-page layout complete with supplies. They have cricut classes for the serious scrapbookers and how to classes for the beginners. They will soon be offering a Bible journaling class complete with a special Bible with large margins for Scrapbooking. This summer they will be offering children's classes. They also create party favors and decorations.

Crazy 4 Scrapbooking is a family business and is happy to provide an alternative service to the community. They enjoy what they do and love to share with the public. Leslie says scrapbooking is like party planning, and these ladies make everyday a party. Crazy 4 Scrapbooking is located at 1261 Celebration Blvd., Florence, SC and for more information you can contact Leslie or Stacy by phone at 843-250-0892 or 843-687-0440 or via email: crazy4scrapbooks@gmail.com. Also, please visit their website: www.crazy4scrapbooks.com.



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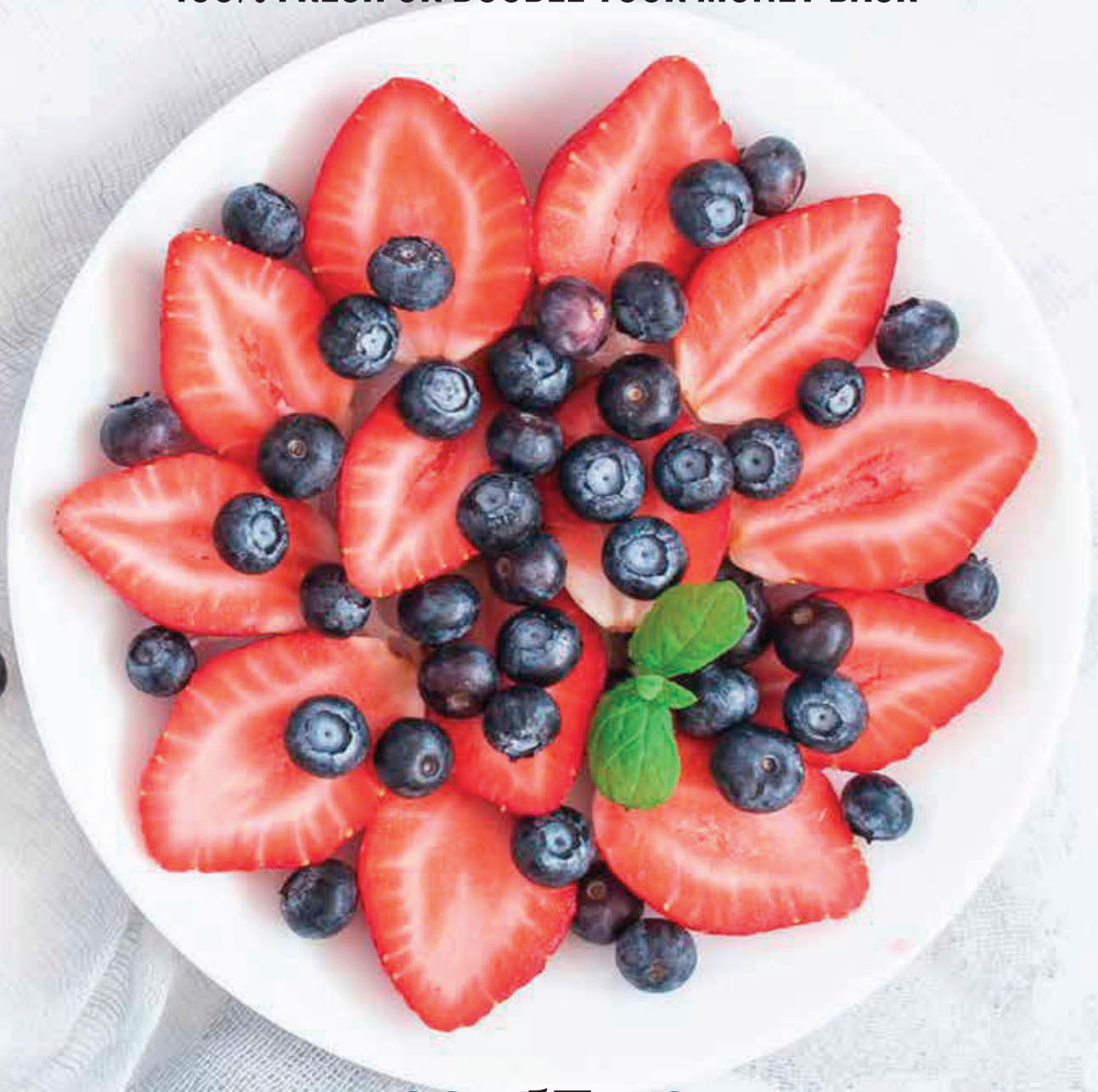


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