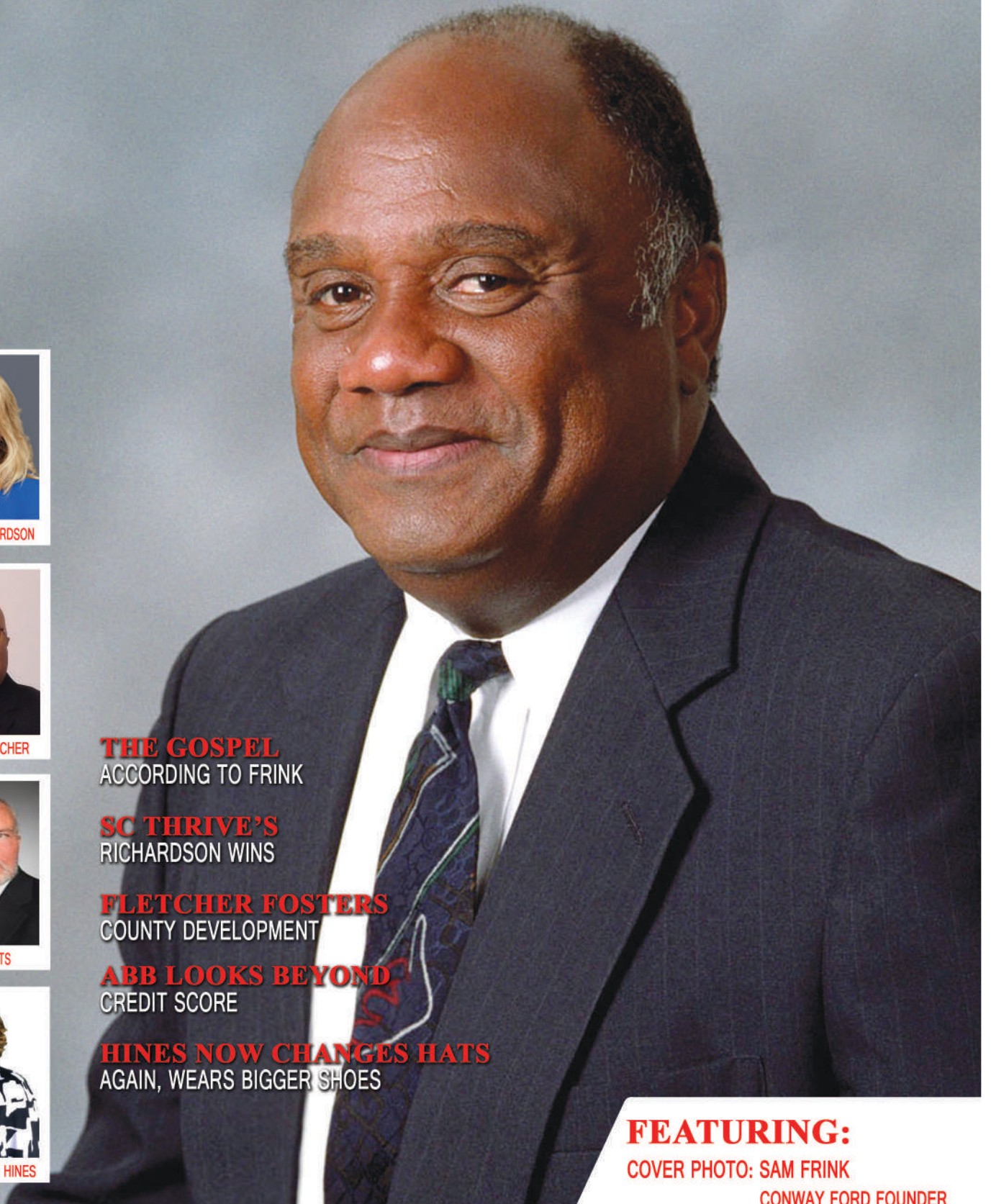


# DIVERSITYWORKS

APRIL 2016 VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2

*"For All of Us"*



TRICIA C. RICHARDSON



PATRICK FLETCHER



MICKY WATTS



MAYOR GLORIA HINES

**THE GOSPEL**  
ACCORDING TO FRINK

**SC THRIVE'S**  
RICHARDSON WINS

**FLETCHER FOSTERS**  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

**ABB LOOKS BEYOND**  
CREDIT SCORE

**HINES NOW CHANGES HATS**  
AGAIN, WEARS BIGGER SHOES

**FEATURING:**

COVER PHOTO: SAM FRINK

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## FEATURED ARTICLES

29



FMU  
Dr. Will Wattles

15



Owners of AccuStaff  
Doris B. Lockhart & husband

70



Author  
Dawn "D.A." Goodwin

61



HopeHealth  
Dr. Michael K. Foxworth II

32



Melanie Watford  
HHS Student

47



Founder/Owner of Major's Cleaners  
Mr. Major Bethea

## 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 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: Yadiria 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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**BUSINESS**

3	THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIVERSITY AND AFFIRMATION ACTION
4	NEW DIRECTOR ON FAST TRACK WITH KEEN VISION OF GROWTH DESIGNS
5	COUNTY TEAM PULLING TOGETHER, REALIZING POSITIVE IMPACTS
6	GREAT LEADERS RECOGNIZE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY
7	VIRTUAL OFFICE SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE
8	SC THRIVE'S RICHARDSON WINS
9	HINES NOW CHANGES HATS AGAIN, WEARS BIGGER SHOES
10	FLETCHER FOSTERS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT
11	JUPITER AWARDED HONORARY DOCTORATE
12	RENEWED HOPE AND VIEW FOR ALL FLORENCE CITIZENS
13	OUTLOOK EVENT SHOWCASES CURRENT, FUTURE PLANS AND WINNERS
15	LOCKHART NOTED FOR EXEMPLARY ENTREPRENEURSHIP
16	HARTSVILLE CHAMBER CELEBRATES COMMUNITY LEADERS AT ANNUAL BANQUET
17	BUILDING BRIDGES COMES IN NEW FORMAT
18	CHELSEY PACKER - FINDING SUCCESS THROUGH PAXEN AND THE WIOA
19	ARTFIELDS 2016 TO DRAW TENS OF THOUSANDS

**DIVERSITY IN SPIRITUALITY**

20	STUMBLING ALONG IN FINDING GOD'S WILL
----	---------------------------------------

**EDUCATION**

21	TONYA BRACY NAMED CHESTERFIELD COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR
21	JAMIE HORTON NAMED DCSD TEACHER OF THE YEAR
21	DILLON SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR
22	ROYALL ELEMENTARY'S DR. LEAH BARLEY
23	FLORENCE CAREER CENTER TEACHER OF THE YEAR
23	SPEARMAN ANNOUNCES MILKEN AWARD WINNER OF FLORENCE
24	LEE TOY LISTS TOP PERSONAL QUALITIES
24	MARION COUNTY'S 2016-16 TEACHER OF THE YEAR
26	DCIS, COMMUNITY AGENCIES FORM PRE-JUDICIAL TRUANCY COUNCIL
27	RITTER PROPELS STUDENTS AND STAFF TO ELEVATE PROGRAM
28	TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON
29	WATTLES RECEIVES FMU DIVERSITY AWARD
29	FMU PRESENTS ALUMNI AWARDS
31	GET A JUMP-START ON SUMMER
32	HARTSVILLE HIGH'S MELANIE WATFORD RAISES FUNDS
33	DCSD & FDTC LAUNCH DUAL-CREDIT COURSES
34	LAMAR ELEMENTARY KICKS OFF READ AND FEED
34	STUDENT HEADED TO NATIONAL SPELLING BEE
35	TRINITY-BYRNES MARKS NATIONAL DIVERSITY DAY
35	FMU HONORS LUNDY
36	FDTC AWARDS FIRST-EVER COLLEGE DEGREES TO DARLINGTON HIGH STUDENTS
36	NEW OPTION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

**SPECIAL**

37	THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO FRINK
38	VALUING LIFE'S EBBS AND FLOWS
39	A VOLATILE CONVERSATION ON WHAT TO DO WHEN SHE IS THE ABUSER
40	SAAM OBSERVANCE BRINGS MORE TO LIGHT
40	SAD PREMISES YIELD GLAD OUTCOMES
41	COME AND KNOCK ON OUR DOOR
42	BROWDER AND TEAMMATES MOVING THE NEEDLE ON AUTISM IN THE PEE DEE
42	CREATIVE HELP ABOUNDS FOR AUTISM
43	A LIFE OF LONG SERVICE SHOULD BE FOR ALL
44	OH, HOW HELPFUL THESE HANDS AND HEARTS ARE
44	HEEDING THE CALL TO SERVE
45	THE HEALING POWER OF VOLUNTEERING
46	THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF LIBRARIES
47	WORLD CLASS LEADER TAKES CENTER STAGE
48	FOR THESE VETERANS: HELP COMES CLOSER TO HOME
49	HER CHOICE SPARKED A FAMILY TRADITION
49	HE IS HAILED PROUDLY ALSO
50	LED TO SERVE
51	JOIN OTHER WOMEN VETERANS AT THE TABLE

**FINANCIAL**

52	5 REASONS WHY YOUNG FAMILIES NEED FINANCIAL PROTECTION NOW
53	ABB LOOKS BEYOND CREDIT SCORE

**HEALTH**

54	IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START
55	HERE'S A BRIEFING IN THE LIFE OF 'GOT ALLERGIES?'
56	CONTROL IS THE KEY WORD HERE
58	DR. IRIS D. IGNACIO JOINS PEE DEE FAMILY PHYSICIANS
58	HER CAREER PATH MOVES HER FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM
60	BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS
61	TIPS FOR PARENTS: SMOOTH SAILING FROM SPRING TO SUMMER
62	CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM NURSES RECEIVE PALMETTO GOLD AWARD

**LIFESTYLES**

63	BEST LONG TERM CARE OPTION
64	HOW TO CHOOSE HOSPICE CARE
65	LUNCHEON HONORS FLORENCE COUNTY MAYORS
65	MORE SENIORS FINDING PEACE OF MIND
69	NOVICE OR VETERAN, RALDEX ASSOCIATES STAY
69	ALLEN SPEARHEADS FOREVER YOUNG INITIATIVE
70	THIS WRITER SOWING SEEDS GLOBALLY FROM HOME
72	CITY GRILL A ONE STOP ENTERTAINMENT HOT SPOT
74	LEADING LADY WOMEN'S EXPO SET
75	ALONG THE RIVER

# From the Editor's Heart

## POTPOURRI

We all know it as some type of mixture of dried petals and living spices designed to perfume clothing or a room. So in likening our lives to such functions to lend pleasant odors and vibes to the world we inhabit -- whether consciously or not -- every subject in this edition does or has done just that.

Reaching deeper into the nuts and bolts of diversity practices origins, we disclose some valuable facts and applicable suggestions for readers to adopt, whether at the huge, middle or entry levels of leadership and management whether corporate, civic or otherwise. Preferring to brag on matters close to home, I draw your attention to the pieces on Florence City and County development, the Timmonsville/Honda collaboration on social responsibility, Darlington's new mayor, homegirl Josephine Jupiter's award by her alma mater (which could have gone the other way) as well as the numerous kudos bestowed by the Florence and Hartsville chambers, SiMT, WIOA, plus the empowerment programmings offered by countless help organizations and the enjoyment provided by so many others.

It may have never occurred to many Christians to stumble upon God's Will for our lives, but contributor Robin Lewis shows how it happens and our Education section is bursting at the seams with Teachers of the Year from all around Eastern South Carolina. Then there are the eye-opening articles on the role reversal in abusive relationships and the various places to go for help if in one-- whether child or adult. It is good to bring news of other helps and services like the types rendered by the CATCH Foundation, CARE House, Passageway of Hope, All 4 Autism, The Lord Cares, firefighters, New Deliverance Outreach, libraries, Hope Health, GittensChiropratic, Carolinas Hospital, SC Thrive, Anderson Brothers Bank, United Way, ScienceSouth, Active Day Care and Agape Hospice and the seniors they serve, the Florence Regional Arts Alliance, hospitality sites, our financial columnists and featured authors and event planners of the Leading Lady Women's Expo. Then... wait for it... OUR BELOVED AND UNDERAPPRECIATED VETERANS WHO HAVE OUR BACKS AND WITHOUT WHOM WE COULD NOT DO A LOT OF WHAT WE DO OR KEEP THE FREEDOMS WE ENJOY. And these blessings are just among those found close to home.

Our community and magazine has also been gifted with input from Greenville Chamber's Director of Marketing and Membership Relations Nika White, who visited Florence recently and will become a staple in this very publication.

Our cover feature pulls a lot of weight and swells our hearts as Sam Frink does every where he goes; however, just behind his centerfold is a goodbye piece on and to fallen warrior Ed Robinson, a longterm Florence City Councilman who went on to a greater glory in March, and that tribute tugs at our heart the other way.

In fact, just overiewing our lives, it is clear that any and everything could have been the other way. And that fact simply drives me to invite our readers to join me in being thankful that we have the opportunity to be the potpourri of our time and space, leaving the world fresher because we were here. Share this special edition and Semper Fi to Betterfy!!!

In that spirit then let us all get in a hurry to continue to improve our world with the gifts we've been given before they {or we} drift, are blown away or gone too soon.



Rennie Lunn-McAllister  
Executive Editor

Bottoms Up,  
Rennie



## THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIVERSITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION



Diversity management is frequently confused with affirmative action and valuing diversity. Opponents of both concepts use the terms interchangeably, often throwing in the word “preferences” as yet another synonym. It is important to understand the history of each and to use the terms accurately. Affirmative action, valuing diversity and managing diversity are separate points on the continuum of interventions designed to stimulate the inclusion of people from different backgrounds in an organization.

**Affirmative Action:** Affirmative Action is grounded in moral and social responsibility to amend wrongs done in the past to those Americans who were not of the majority population. These legal obligations are based on numerical measures and were designed to increase the representation of minorities and women in areas of employment where they were previously underrepresented. This effort was a direct result of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Because of a long history of discriminatory practices, federal contractors have been expected to make a positive effort to recruit, hire, train, and promote qualified employees of previously excluded groups. Again, the focus was and has been on increasing the representation of minorities and females in the workforce to reflect their availability in the labor market. It was surmised that creating such a initiative would rectify the social injustices experienced by the nation’s minority population.

**Valuing Diversity:** According to R. Roosevelt Thomas, the next evolution of diversity is best referred to as valuing diversity. The main objectives of valuing diversity include awareness, education, and positive recognition of the differences among people in the workforce. Valuing diversity extends beyond affirmative action in that it is not solely based on changing the representation of various types of people in the workplace. Valuing diversity builds upon the critical foundation laid by workplace equity initiatives. The focus of this intervention is on recognizing the uniqueness in everyone, valuing the contribution that each can make and creating an inclusive work environment where awareness of, and respect for, those of different cultures is promoted. It is the quality of the work experience, rather

than simply the participation rate of minority employees or women at a particular employer, that is paramount.

**Diversity Management:** Managing diversity is different from both Affirmative Action and valuing diversity because it focuses on the business case for diversity. Under this scenario, capitalizing on diversity is seen as a strategic approach to business that contributes to organizational goals such as profits and productivity. It also does not involve any legal



requirements and is not implemented just to avoid lawsuits. Managing diversity moves beyond valuing diversity in that it is a way in which to do business and should be aligned with other organizational strategic plans.

Affirmative action is based on an assimilationist model that focuses on getting people into an organization rather than changing organizational culture (valuing diversity). Subsequently, managing diversity, while based on cultural change, is a pragmatic business strategy that focuses on maximizing the productivity, creativity and commitment of the

workforce while meeting the needs of diverse consumer groups.

While these three interventions build upon one another, when affirmative action is tied together with valuing and/or managing diversity, diversity often becomes tainted by negative perceptions of affirmative action and is therefore frequently misunderstood. Backlash, resistance and polarization often ensue when these concepts are combined.

### Desired Results

Affirmative action is numbers oriented, aimed at changing the demographics within the organization. Managing diversity is behavioral, aimed at changing the organizational culture, and developing skills and policies that get the best from everyone. Affirmative action opens doors in the organization while managing diversity opens the culture and the system. Managing diversity does not replace affirmative action; rather, it builds on the critical foundation laid by workplace equity programs. Affirmative action and managing diversity go hand-in-hand, each reinforcing the gains of the other. Without affirmative action’s commitment to hiring and promoting diverse employees, organizations would rarely have the diversity of staff to reach a stage where differences are valued and diversity is effectively managed. Once diverse staff are on board, the Organization can focus on creating an inclusive environment where everyone’s needs and values are taken into account, where no one is disadvantaged because of his or her differentness, and where organizational policies and management practices work for everyone.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	DIVERSITY
<i>The law to promote equal employment opportunity and to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and policies to ensure fair treatment in the workforce.</i>	<i>A commitment to understanding and accepting that each individual is unique, recognizing, respecting, and learning from individual similarities and differences.</i>
<p><b>Examples of affirmative action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote equal employment opportunity and to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and policies (29 CFR 1614.102).</li> <li>• Select, promote, and reward qualified employees, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, mental or physical disabilities, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.</li> <li>• Eliminate barriers that impede open competition in the workplace, preventing individuals from realizing their full potential.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples to show diversity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and educate yourself regarding the differences of individuals, whether it be:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Cultural:</b> race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, political beliefs, mental or physical disabilities, sexual orientation, marital or family status, military/veteran status, lifestyle, or language.</li> <li>- <b>Functional:</b> how an individual thinks, learns, processes information, and relates to diverse groups.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do not stereotype individuals.</li> <li>• Respect and learn from each other’s differences.</li> </ul>

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## NEW DIRECTOR ON FAST TRACK WITH KEEN VISION OF GROWTH DESIGNS

by Mallory Brayboy



Norm Steadman

DARLINGTON - Norm Steadman, Executive Director of the Darlington Chamber of Commerce, has only been in South Carolina for four years but is fervently working to create a sense of community within the state. Steadman spent the majority of his youth in

North Dakota and his family relocated to Pennsylvania when he was 16. He lived briefly in the Pittsburgh area before making the move to the Palmetto State in 2012. Steadman received his Bachelors in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting from the University of Phoenix. Post-graduation, he worked as an administrative assistant at the Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, where within a year he became the Communications Specialist. Always seeking growth, Steadman recently became the Executive Director for Darlington Chamber of Commerce this February.

One of the Steadman's main objectives from the chamber helm is supporting local businesses, which they do in a number of ways. "We provide networking opportunities like Business after Hours and Lunch and Learn so

that businesses can meet and form those viable connections and relationships", says Steadman. The chamber also provides direct promotion. "If our members have events going on such as discounts, sales, and ribbon cuttings, we like to blast the event – get it in the newspaper and magazines such as Diversity Works – just to get the word out", says Steadman. This support is most beneficial to the city's small businesses and nonprofits who do not have a dedicated advertising budget.

The chamber has partnered with the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce to celebrate Administrative Professionals Day on April 27th this year. The event, held at the SIMT Building, will give recognition to administrative professionals and allow for them a chance to network. Bob Juback, local broadcast journalist, is the featured speaker for the event.

Steadman says their biggest event is Freedom Fest, a massive fireworks festival held on Darlington's race track. This event is scheduled for July 4th and will have entertainment for the whole family. "We are going to have bands, food vendors, a car show, and kid-friendly activities. It's free to get in and free to park. It's the coolest and biggest event in all the Pee Dee", says Steadman. Darlington's racetrack is one of the biggest supporters of businesses in their area. "It's great to get people

out there to see the race track, walk the race track and be a part of that". Steadman believes Freedom Festival competes with events held in Columbia, Greenville, and Charleston and encourages everyone from South Carolina to attend.

The City of Darlington is growing at a great rate, but their challenge is competing with larger neighboring towns. Coming from Hartsville, a city with a slightly larger population, Steadman had not yet faced this obstacle. He says with Darlington being so close to Florence, many of the city's residents have the mindset of going to Florence to get the things they need. He works hard to defeat that mentality and remind residents of the potential within their own community. "We have to convince people to shop locally and support their neighbors. I walk around Darlington and I see tremendous potential. The same can be said about Lamar and Society Hill. These are cities with a ton of really interesting, talented people who are willing to work hard to make these towns work and make these towns prosperous", says Steadman.





# COUNTY TEAM PULLING TOGETHER, REALIZING POSITIVE IMPACTS

by Les Echols



K.G. "Rusty" Smith

As Florence County Administrator, K.G. "Rusty" Smith is responsible for making sure that Florence County operates efficiently and effectively in every aspect. Always energetic, Smith vibrantly spoke about the role of his office in supporting the community. "It's been said that the scariest words in the English language are: I'm from the Government and I'm here to help; but the fact of the matter is that's what we do in Florence County. It is the basic function of county government to

protect the lives and property of the citizens that we represent", concluded Smith. A lifelong resident of Lake City, Smith is a graduate of Lake City High School. He received his degree in Government & International Studies from the University of South Carolina and is a veteran of the United States Navy.

Florence County has been extremely busy with a number of ongoing projects. "We have approximately 500 major projects simultaneously underway through Capital Penny Sales Tax I and Capital Penny Sales Tax II", continued Smith. Additionally, Florence County is implementing Firefighter Training Schools through cooperation, communication, and collaboration with school districts and fire departments. They have opened a new Lake City Manned convenience center, and have excavated a six acre lake in Lake City. Completed projects include Kingsburg and Cartersville Fire Stations, along with five fire stations that

are currently under construction; Johnsonville Main, Windy Hill, Howe Springs, West Florence, and Flemington. Florence County has also paved more than 198 roads, is building a new Judicial Center, consolidating fire districts, and upgrading radio systems county-wide. Florence County has also launched the 'getting bitter on litter' campaign, an initiative to clean up neighborhoods in Florence County. The County has a new highly touted health clinic inside the County Complex in an effort to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible prices.



Alphonso "Al" Bradley

According to Florence County Councilman Al Bradley, the second phase of sidewalk development is scheduled to begin on the north side of Florence. The County looks to partner with Florence School District One on this 2.5 million dollar project with the goal of providing safe walking routes to schools. Bradley also stressed that the widening of TV Road in Florence, funded by the penny sales tax, will have a strong impact.

Under the leadership of Smith and Bradley, along with County Council and a diverse staff, Florence County has been consistently evolving to create as much positive impact as possible. But Smith believes that team effort is what really makes things function smoothly. "There is no I in team", says Smith. "We take that saying very personally".



## 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.

### Council Members

Roger M. Poston, Chairman, District 2

Jason M. Springs, District 1

Alphonso Bradley, District 3

Mitchell Kirby, Secretary/Chaplain, District 4

Kent C. Caudle, Vice-Chairman, District 5

H. Steven DeBerry, IV, District 6

Reverend Waymon Mumford, District 7

James T. Schofield, District 8

Willard Dorriety, Jr. District 9

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# GREAT LEADERS RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY

Submitted by Nika White, Vice President, Greenville Chamber Diversity & Inclusion



Nika White

Powell, Director, UC Berkeley's Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. Minority and multicultural professionals and business owners, as well as mid-senior business and organization leaders (particularly those that mentor and manage multicultural professionals) are encouraged to attend.

The key mission of the ACE Leadership Symposium is to share with the community that in order to advance leadership and corporate board service for under-represented professionals, there must be a concerted effort to advocate and collaborate for the success of such individuals. The event intends to empower leaders to create a road map for succeeding in leadership, and also empower influencers who can sponsor and help minority and multicultural leaders to achieve corporate board service and higher levels of organizational leadership. This event has been well supported in the past with a diverse audience of approximately 500 minority professionals and majority leaders from an array of public and private sectors.

## Here's the line-up.

9:15 am to 10:15 am & 10:20 am to 11:20 am Workshop Sessions (both sessions offered twice)

### "Setting a Forward Trajectory for Multicultural Professionals"

**FACILITATOR:** Dr. Kinneil Coltman, Chief Diversity Officer, Greenville Health System

**DESCRIPTION:** Workforce diversity will become increasingly important as competitiveness of our economy continues to grow. Both external and internal barriers can be equally detrimental to the advancement of diverse groups. Drawing on expertise participants will be given pragmatic advice on maximizing their opportunities in the corporate and professional world. Mentoring, cultivating feedback about your work, developing an adaptable strategic plan for success, recognizing opportunities, setting a forward trajectory for your personal and civic life, and more are key topics that will be explored.

### "Creating Inclusive Work Environments"

**FACILITATOR:** Tan Kirby Davis, Founder and Lead Consultant for Tan Davis Consulting & Facilitation, a consulting and training organization specializing in Organizational Development, Talent Management, Diversity & Inclusion and Workforce Engagement.

**DESCRIPTION:** Recognizing the importance of treating diversity and inclusion as an opportunity rather than an obligation is the first step to successfully create an inclusive work environment. Inclusive work environments require inclusive-minded leaders, an accepting and welcoming culture, diverse

workforce and intentional practices and policies in support of inclusion. Learn ways to help create this culture for your organization as well as the benefits. Despite the best intentions, many organizations still fail and struggle to achieve racial balance within the company and on their executive teams. Some companies have revolving doors of talented minorities, seeing them leave frustrated by the barriers they encounter. This session will help mid to senior level leaders become well versed in how to mentor, coach, manage and sponsor minorities as well as create an inclusive work culture.

11:30 am to 1:00 pm – Culmination Luncheon

### "Advancing Multicultural Leadership: Everyone's Responsibility"

**KEYNOTE:** Dr. John Powell, Director, UC Berkeley's Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society

**DESCRIPTION:** In keeping with the theme of ACE, there must be a concerted effort to advocate for multicultural leadership and collaborate to ensure that multicultural professionals are successful so they can excel personally and in their endeavors to contribute effectively to their organizations. Collaborative relationships in business can be valuable and can boost you and the organization beyond your expectations. The main goal is to join alliances to give your organization a more competitive advantage. Collaboration can greatly enhance an individual and organization's chances of success.

The Greenville Chamber actively supports talented women and minorities in the community in achieving leadership positions in greater numbers. The ACE Leadership Symposium is one of two initiatives the Chamber executes annually to advance leadership diversity within underrepresented populations. In the fall, the Chamber hosts the ATHENA Leadership Symposium designed to advance women's leadership and corporate board service.



Greenville Chamber  
**ACE LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM**  
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**Advancing Multicultural Leadership**

**Date:** April 21, 2016  
**Time:** 9:00 am to 1:00 pm  
**Location:** TD Convention Center,  
Greenville SC



# VIRTUAL OFFICE SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE

Submitted by *Berlinda E.J. Durant, Owner BJD Executive Office Services, LLC*



*Berlinda E.J. Durant*

Currently, there is a consortium of entrepreneurs, small businesses, and independent professionals as well as some established specialists who are constantly on-the-move. They are craving to expand their visibility and accessibility in order to provide a most favorable product while trying to save time and money. However, I realize they do not have the patience or desire to sit behind a desk or even be in the office setting for 4-to-6 hours a day waiting on their clientele to walk through the door. Neither do they have the time to answer or screen telephone calls, respond to emails, type

an important document or even handle/distribute their own mail. Thus, I saw the need for a virtual office.

While a student at PS 113 in Harlem, NY – some 45 years ago – I was given many opportunities to work in the principal’s office assisting her secretary. From the first time I entered the office up to the day I graduated from that school, I envisioned being somebody’s secretary for it was that person who made sure everything was running properly from beginning to end, from the top to the bottom, and from the inside out. With hindsight being 20/20, I now understand that I was born with the innate capacity for organization. From event planning to assisting pastors with establishing their churches, from clerical services to being a director of administrative services to a clinic administrator, I have done it all.

I understand that many people have the notion that a secretary is simply an office peon. But if the truth were told, “bosses” – no matter the level or the industry – could not run a business effectively without

the assistance of that one position that handles all things for all staff. It is that person – male or female – who makes him or herself readily available to take action: type and edit documents, answer and screen calls, schedule appointments, make travel arrangements, and even handle personal business all on behalf of the “boss”. And much of this is done before the 12 o’clock lunch hour.

The mission of BJD is to provide affordable, customized virtual secretarial, receptionist and bookkeeping services that will impact the day-to-day operations of the mainstream, modern-age business in such a way that will allow those entities to grow without the hassles or stress of operating a full-staffed establishment.

Additional services include resumé building, email filtering, meeting and travel arranging, as well as creating spreadsheets, and (certain aspects of) event planning in addition to typing or editing documents and taking minutes at meetings - for personal or professional usage.

The privilege of hiring the BJD virtual office staff is that the business will enjoy the benefits of an in-house assistant without all the expenses needed to run an office – no supplies or equipment to purchase or lease and, more importantly, there are no salaries or benefits. In addition, meeting spaces can be provided to mobile professionals.

While the virtual office does not work for every business — many businesses need people together in one location to get work accomplished — in today’s environment where technology truly allows us all to work from anywhere, this concept offers a strong alternative to a traditional office atmosphere. Located at 150 N. Dargan Street Florence, SC 29506, BJD is reachable at 843-647-6269





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## SC THRIVE'S RICHARDSON WINS

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Tricia C. Richardson

Tricia C. Richardson, executive director of SC Thrive, is the recipient of the 2015 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership. The award is co-sponsored by Francis Marion University's Non-Profit Leadership Institute (NPLI) and the South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Organizations (SCANPO).

The award recognizes a past NPLI graduate or a member of SCANPO, who has excelled in the management of a South Carolina nonprofit or its resource development activities. The award includes a cash prize.

Richardson, who has been executive director of SC Thrive since 2014, is a 2012-2013 NPLI graduate.

SC Thrive is a statewide nonprofit organization that offers solutions to South Carolinians in need of accessing governmental and nonprofit resources but who face significant barriers in doing so. SC Thrive seeks to simplify resource access processes through online services, training programs and strategic partnerships. SC Thrive Director of Grants and Contracts Karen Waataja, who submitted Richardson's nomination, says, "We at SC Thrive have the greatest respect and admiration for Tricia, and we all benefit from her desire to share all she learns with us. We believe she is an outstanding example of nonprofit leadership."

SCANPO is a long-time state resource and advocate for nonprofits. FMU's Nonprofit Leadership Institute has helped train the leaders of nonprofits in the state since 2002. NPLI classes are held monthly and take a year to complete. New classes begin their work each fall.

For more information on the NPLI at FMU, contact Cheri Richardson at crichardson@fmarion.edu, 843-661-1199 or visit the website at www.fmunonprofit.org.

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# HINES NOW CHANGES HATS AGAIN, WEARS BIGGER SHOES

by Anna Bowman



Mayor Gloria Hines

DARLINGTON – Mayor Gloria Hines, with her historic win as the newly elected mayor of the City of Darlington, broke through two barriers at once – The first female and first black mayor.

After tying, then defeating her opponent – the popular and well-respected former Fire Chief Jim Stone – Hines’ dramatic victory showcased her years of political experience, which attested to the people of Darlington the type of leadership her administration will bring fore to the city.

Hines, a former Darlington City Councilwoman, who took the oath of office for mayor on January 5, 2016 to a packed audience, started her political career in 2000. But prior to being elected to city council, she meticulously and strategically attended city council meetings for six-and-a-half-years. After 11 years as a council members she decided the time was right to “throw her hat into the ring,” as a mayoral candidate. She lost, but tried again after 14 years on city council, and won.

A native of Darlington, Hines wants to be a voice for the people. “Over the years, I’ve seen injustice in the community that I grew up in and became familiar with unfairness,” she said. She wants her administration to be one that listens and helps people with issues that are important to them, regardless of their race and/or the issue. During her inaugural speech, she made her vision for her city clear; “Our main business is not to see what

lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.” And under her leadership what lies clearly at hand is a more unified Darlington for its residents.

Even though she is the first politician in her family, she believes the “seed,” of helping others is in her blood because of the way in which she was raised by her beloved mother, Mrs. Cropsy Lee Cheeseboro. “My mother always helped people in and around Darlington,” said her proud daughter, “I’m just taking it to another level!” she added.

A 1968 graduate of Mayo High School, Hines is ready and eager to work with the members of city council to accomplish her three major goals for Darlington: Jobs, Industrial Growth, and a City Park. “We need more annexation and with annexation we can attract businesses that will bring more jobs for the people of Darlington.” She wants Darlington to live up to its full potential as the “Pearl of the Pee Dee.”

She is a 1973 alumni of South Carolina State University, and a 1979 graduate of Bethune-Jones School of Cosmetology. She is a member of Round O Missionary Baptist Church, the League of Women Voters, SC State Alumni Association, Mayo High School Alumni Association (treasurer), and vice-president of the Pine Center Federated Organization of Darlington.

The newly-appointed mayor is the daughter of the late Early and Cropsy Lee Cheeseboro of Darlington, her brother, Early Cheeseboro, Jr., is also deceased. She is the mother of two adult children, Spencer and Brandy, and the grandmother of Ashtian and Aubrie Sims, and mother-in-law to Da-Quan Sims.



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# FLETCHER FOSTERS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

by Les Echols



Patrick Fletcher

As growth and development become more prevalent in Florence County, Patrick Fletcher has become a fixture who helps to move the process forward. He plays the pivoting role of supervising the operations of the Florence County's

Procurement Department. As the County's Chief Procurement Officer, he is responsible for the procurement and contracting of all supplies, services, construction, and equipment required for the operation of the County which constitutes the expenditures of funds in excess of \$54 million per year. He is also responsible for surplus disposal of County equipment and/or supplies.

"My duties in this regard consist of preparing, compiling, and evaluating all solicitations for the County which includes all invitation to bids, request for proposals, request for qualifications, and request for quotes. I also award all contract agreements as approved by the County Administrator and County Council" said Patrick.

Patrick is responsible for the procurement of a number of projects. The New Veterans Affairs

Building is a 5,000 square-foot building located on the lot at the corner of Gaillard Street and East National Cemetery Road that will provide dedicated office space for the Veteran Affairs administration as well as multi-purpose space for meetings, events and dedicated exhibit space. Florence County is also working along with The Florence Civic Center on the Civic Center Renovations and Expansion that is in the process of developing.

A number of fire station and public safety projects are underway as well, including Johnsonville and West Florence/Windy Hill, along with a New Emergency Medical Station (EMS) on Sumter Street. A new Emergency Operations/911 Call Center is now out for bids as well.

Other projects that the county is currently engaged in are the Lake City Park Excavation Project on Church Street and Various CPST II Dirt Road Paving and Resurfacing Projects.

One of the most highly touted projects is the Florence County Judicial Center Project on North Irby Street across from the County Complex. The project will minimize safety issues for law enforcement and will be funded through a millage increase. Patrick stresses that all of these projects will have a strong impact on the entire Florence County region.

Patrick is also responsible for securing diverse suppliers for Florence County procurement

projects. "I maintain a master, local, and minority vendor list", explains Patrick. "We encourage local minority and women owned business to register in our system so they can be added to our database". Patrick speaks at a number of local venues, including the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, where he facilitates a "Doing Business with Local Government" program. This information workshop, done in partnership with the City of Florence, focuses on providing small business owners information and resources for taking advantage of opportunities to do business with Local Government. The seminar will offer learning opportunities for existing small business owners to become familiar with the procurement process.

Patrick has been serving as the Procurement Director for Florence County, South Carolina since 2012, but has extensive experience with government and procurement, having served as the Procurement Officer for the City of Florence from 2002 to 2012. Patrick obtained the national Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) designation in October of 2009.

Prior to that, Patrick worked in the Federal Government under various assignments in Washington, DC from 1989 until 1998 when he moved to South Carolina. He attended Strayer University and the University of DC.



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# JUPITER AWARDED HONORARY DOCTORATE

by Anna Bowman



Dr. Josephine Jupiter

During the Civil Rights Movement, being Black and disobedient could easily cost a person their life. Nevertheless, in 1960, a group of Wilson High School students took part in an organized “sit-in” protest at the local

Kress lunch counter in Florence. One of those brave souls was a student named Josephine Jupiter.

“I was a 17-year-old student at Wilson High School when I, along with my classmates, participated in the “sit-in” at Kress Lunch Counter,” said Jupiter. “There was a grassroots movements spreading across the South and the nation fighting against the Jim Crow Laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States. I was scared to participate at first, but the graphic images of Blacks being mistreated was more worrisome to me,” she said. “We stayed in jail a couple of hours before our bail was paid by the local chapter of the NAACP. My parents learned about my involvement after

the arrest, and were angry, upset and afraid for my safety, after calming down they expressed pride in me.” The result of their demonstration that day, along with other demonstrations across the country, forced the chain of lunch counters for both, Kress and Woolworth, to shut down due to the volume of protests. “We were all scared, but committed to taking a stand and making a difference for not only our generation but future generations.”

Growing up in Florence, Jupiter recalled how race relations were during her teen years. “Segregated movies were a part of the southern way of life. In many places, there were “white only” and “colored” cinemas. In other places, whites sat on the ground floor, while Blacks were restricted to the Jim Crow balcony. In Florence I remember that the Carolina Theater on South Dargan and the Colonial Theater on West Evans were both like then in the sixties.”

While attending Morgan State University in Baltimore, Jupiter joined a group called the Civic Interest Group (CIG). “On February 16, 1963, after a second attempt to purchase theater tickets at a ‘whites only’ theater, we were arrested. Instead of being bailed out of jail, the students decided to remain in jail as a strategic

move to bring more attention to the fight for civil rights for Blacks. Three hundred students packed in small, overcrowded jail cells, caught the attention of then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.” Everything changed, when, on February 20th, students from the neighboring, predominantly white colleges were not only supporting us but some were in jail with us,” said Jupiter. On February 22nd, the theater owner capitulated, the protestors were all released, and later all charges were dismissed.”

The courageous efforts of all the people protesting and fighting against the Jim Crow laws, led to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Her dedication to the fight for civil rights, during her time on campus at her alma mater, Morgan Status University, didn’t go unnoticed. On December 18, 2015, Dr. David Wilson, president of Morgan State University, invited the Civil Rights Pioneers back to campus for a special ceremony to present them with Honorary Doctorate Degrees in Law.

Dr. Josephine Jupiter is the mother of three sons, Michael, Stephan, and Joseph Pendarvis. She has 9 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.



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# RENEWED HOPE FOR ALL FLORENCE CITIZENS

Submitted by Amanda Pope, CMO Administrator for the City of Florence



For decades, citizens of Florence endured the blighting effect of nearly seventeen acres of property, covering approximately two blocks at the northern gateway to the historic district of downtown Florence which contained a functioning junkyard with pervasive soil contamination. The City undertook the six-year long, laborious task of removing that blight and contamination with goals of creating sustainable development, enhanced quality of life, opportunity, and community wellness.

The blighted property was a deterrent to economic development and downtown revitalization. From a broader perspective, the junkyard also fostered and symbolized the geographic and social division between the predominately white and prosperous population to its south, and the predominantly African-American and largely disadvantaged neighborhoods to its north. The junkyard was effectively a tangible symbol of racial and socioeconomic separation that had existed for years within the community. That geographic separation was also expressed demographically with higher rates of chronic disease and lack of health insurance among disadvantaged residents to the north of the junkyard as compared to the rest of Florence.

Using EPA Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Grants, the City commenced the cleanup project after analyzing alternatives and developing a final work plan, which was approved by EPA and SCDHEC. The City relocated the junkyard and removed 27,000 tons of contaminated soil, 1,500 tons of debris, and several underground storage tanks. The area was then backfilled with clean soil.

From the onset, the City engaged business, community, and government leaders, neighborhood groups, property owners, and other stakeholders in establishing project priorities and gathering input for redevelopment planning. The City conducted outreach activities, strategic planning sessions, and public meetings to gain consensus on the site's future use. From this process, it was determined that the redeveloped site should provide a public function which addresses the needs of those in surrounding neighborhoods while also promoting and fostering downtown development.



Following this comprehensive site remediation effort, City leaders approached Hope Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center located in Florence that was planning a significant expansion, and offered the property as a

potential site location. After initial engineering and design were completed, the entities agreed that the City would convey the property to HopeHealth to construct a community health center. The City then helped HopeHealth facilitate the development of a 50,000 square-foot Federally Qualified Health Center on that site to provide quality healthcare to disadvantaged residents who live in the surrounding neighborhoods.

HopeHealth has since completed construction of a 50,000 square-foot health center that will facilitate over 100,000 visits annually serving over 30,000 patients, of whom approximately 40% are uninsured, and approximately 50% have poverty-level incomes. Meanwhile, development in the City's downtown has increased dramatically with over \$100 million dollars of public and private investment.

The total project cost is in excess of \$14.5 million dollars. The City expended over \$3.1 million to acquire and clean the junkyard property using EPA Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Grants (\$508,000), a Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation Grant (\$750,000), a Brownfields Cleanup

Revolving Fund loan (\$1,004,000), and City monies (\$873,000). With these funds, the City converted the brownfield into a viable development site. This property was conveyed to HopeHealth to construct an \$11.6 million center which was funded with HHS grants (\$5.5 million) and debt financing (\$6.1 million).

The success of this project resulted from the efforts of diverse partners including governmental entities, community stakeholders, non-profit organizations, and private enterprise. Florence formed an initial partnership with the Bush Recycling owners to plan for junkyard relocation and site



content removal. Other local partners included City leaders, neighborhood groups, and surrounding property owners who provided input and direction. Partnerships were formed with SCDHEC and EPA for assessment, cleanup, redevelopment planning, and financial assistance. Additional funding partnerships were formed with the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation, Catawba Regional COG, and HHS. Non-profit partners included Concurrent Technologies, the project consultant, and HopeHealth, the development partner.

This project is unique in its scope, complexity, and diversity of stakeholders, and has proven to be a "win-win" for all parties involved. The City increased access to a community health center for the underserved and vulnerable with an emphasis on disease management. Health services delivery was improved by consolidating operations into a single campus environment, improving accessibility and affordability. Finally, the project parallels HopeHealth's mandate to meet State and Federal community health requirements and accomplishes the City's goals of advancing community health and wellness and fostering sustainable development.

In February 2016, HopeHealth opened the first 50,000 square-foot phase of its new health center. This center provides essential medical services to the uninsured, and those with Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance. The private-pay and insured population continues to grow as City residents choose HopeHealth for its excellent health care and service. Because of growing demand and plans for added services including dentistry, behavioral health, and chiropractic, HopeHealth plans two more construction phases with a 20,000 square-foot second phase expected to begin this year followed by a third-phase, 30,000 square-foot expansion, for a combined 100,000 square-foot facility when fully completed.

The driving force of this project was the concept that a community could, and should, identify those elements that symbolically and physically divide it, remove those divisions, and replace them with elements that unify and benefit the community. Good governance stabilizes and unifies a community and builds a strong economic base. The City's objective was to find a comprehensive use consistent with the identified goals. The HopeHealth project transformed the property to an attractive, sustainable development with new job creation. These benefits conform to the City's comprehensive plan, the Downtown master plan, and the City's overall mission, "We will utilize proactive means to provide timely, effective and fiscally responsible municipal services to elevate the quality of life in our city and region. We will accomplish this endeavor by adhering to the core values listed below":

- Collaboration – Pursuing the best solution or outcome – thinking "we, not me."
- Professionalism – Demonstrating competence, proficiency, and skill, as well as honesty, integrity, and respect.
- Ownership – Taking personal responsibility to be engaged, innovative, accountable, and receptive in the completion of tasks and assignments.



## OUTLOOK EVENT SHOWCASES CURRENT, FUTURE PLANS AND 2016 WINNERS

Submitted by Patricia Burkett, Director of Marketing & Membership Relations



*Jim Ivey of Dedicated Community Bank Congratulates Regi Armstrong of Wealth Management, Small Business Person of the Year.*

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's 2016 Spring Outlook Luncheon drew a crowd of more than 450 on Wednesday, March 16th at the Florence Civic Center.

The event featured keynote speakers Florence County Council Chairman Roger Poston and Florence Mayor Stephen Wukela and also featured the recognition of the 2016 Small Business Person of the Year. During the luncheon, both Poston and Wukela touched on several recent and current projects under construction in Florence's downtown and all across Florence County. In addition, they also spoke about collaborations between the city and county and how the area as a

whole needs to work together to find solutions that help enable diversity.

During the event, Regi Armstrong of Armstrong Wealth Management was honored as this year's Small Business Person of the Year. That award was presented by Dedicated Community Bank's Jim Ivey and is given to a business owner who exemplifies the hard work it takes to give back to the community and run a successful company. Florence Chamber President Mike Miller said of the recognition for Armstrong: "It's always a pleasure to see the Small Business Person of the Year accept the award. These folks are exceptional in what they do as business people and how they show commitment to our community. Regi fits that description perfectly."

## BUSINESS OF THE QUARTER



*Pictured L to R: Stephanie Navarro, Robin L. Lewis, Robby Hill, Diana M. Murphy, Les Echols, Dewana Cooper, Chinel Boateng and Richard Outler, Jr.*

Congratulations to the Chamber and City of Florence's Business of the Quarter, Diversity Works Magazine©, led by Diana M. Murphy! "We are very honored to recognize Diana and her staff during a meeting of Florence City Council and look forward to her and her staff's continued efforts to help make Florence an even better place to do business," said Patricia Burkett.



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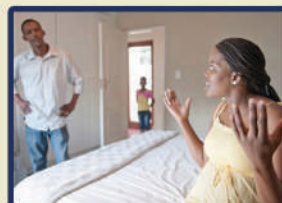




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# LOCKHART NOTED FOR EXEMPLARY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Submitted by Doris B. Lockhart



Doris and Nathaniel Lockhart

Doris B. Lockhart, co-owner of AccuStaff, was recently honored during the 2016 Entrepreneurial Forum at Florence-Darlington Technical College. She was among nine other business owners that were recognized for their service to the community, outstanding entrepreneurial success and longevity in business.

As co-owner of AccuStaff, Mrs. Lockhart and her staff help individuals find employment on a temporary basis that often leads to permanent hire. AccuStaff is known for helping companies by assisting them in finding the workforce to meet their ever changing production demands.

AccuStaff owners Nathaniel and Doris Lockhart have a willingness to serve the Pee Dee and Coastal areas in one way above their many ways: they are giving back to the community. Their support of non-profits is a passion they share. With a new office in the Conway area, Nathaniel and Doris are eager to continue the great work and many years of experience in serving Horry County communities.

Their values of helping others has quickly had a positive effect channeled through their internal team at AccuStaff, as they inspire their staff to pass on this love of helping businesses and talents

alike through development of professional relationships. Their selfless love for the community serves as a catalyst in both their business and personal growth. They are an example to those around them and continue to receive and share the rewards of their hard work and many years of devoted entrepreneurship success.

Their philosophy of giving back to the community which has given so much to them has sustained AccuStaff for more than 30 years. The joys of helping others reach their goals gives them satisfaction as professionals in the staffing industry that is respected throughout Randstad USA.

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# HARTSVILLE CHAMBER CELEBRATES COMMUNITY LEADERS AT ANNUAL BANQUET

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President



*Dr. Susan Reynolds accepts the Pilot Club's Caregiver of the Year award from Janie Campbell.*

The banquet is a night dedicated to sharing the successes of the past year and the plan of action for the coming year. The event also features awards, presented by different organizations that sponsor the awards. Recipients at this year's banquet were surprised and humbled by their honors.

The Pilot Club of Hartsville bestows the Caregiver of the Year award to a professional or volunteer who provides tender, loving care and makes life more pleasant for a patient or loved-one. Pilot Club representative Janie Campbell shared that the club's recipient was nominated by her brother and recognized as a caregiver by families all over Hartsville. Dr. Susan Reynolds was speechless, as she accepted the 2015 honor.

Three years ago, Duke Energy began giving the Duke Energy Citizenship and Service Award to individuals or organizations who make a difference in their communities or places of work by using their time, talents, and compassion to positively impact the lives of others. Though the award is fairly new to Hartsville, Duke Energy has been honoring individuals and organizations with this award since 2004, in recognition of the company's centennial celebration. Duke Energy's Mindy Taylor recognized the Butler Heritage Foundation with this year's award because of their tenacity and dedication to preserve the Butler school campus, one that has been integral part of the Hartsville community for many years. Dr. Alvin Heatley accepted the award on behalf of the foundation and remarked that the campus is a reminder of the community's past and the work of the Butler Heritage Foundation would ensure its history would live forever.



*Dr. Alvin Heatley accepts the Duke Energy Citizenship and Service award from Mindy Taylor.*

For the first time, the Hartsville United Way gave the Volunteer of the Year award at the banquet. Through her work with the Hartsville United Way, executive director Joann DeLong quickly came to realize that the people of Hartsville are generous with their time and talents and her board of directors wanted to recognize that spirit with this award. Mr. Clayton Richardson was the very first recipient of the Volunteer of the Year award for his volunteer efforts that have spanned over four decades in Hartsville. Richardson created the grassroots movement "People to People," to organize public forums to deal with the school drop-out rate, violence, finance and general law such as wills and probate. He also was instrumental in bringing the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Community in Schools, and the Palmetto Project to Hartsville, helping to shape Hartsville as we know it today. While accepting his award, Richardson asked everyone in the crowd to find someone they don't know and get to know that person. He expressed the need for our community to continue listening and talking to each other.



*Mr. Clayton Richardson accepts the United Way of Hartsville's Volunteer of the Year award from Joann DeLong.*

HARTSVILLE – The Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce's 95th Annual Membership Banquet, held recently, was a special night for many community leaders. The banquet is a night dedicated to sharing the successes of the past year and the plan of action for the coming year. The event also features awards, presented by different organizations that sponsor the awards. Recipients at this year's banquet were surprised and humbled by their honors.

live, work, and play and was nominated for his community engagement, professional achievements, and passion for growing Hartsville's young professional network. Hancock has been attributed to being one of the founders of HYP and served as one of its first presidents. Randall remarked, "He gave much of his personal time and resources to make HYP a networking



*Casey Hancock accepts the Hartsville Young Professional of the Year award from Rachel Randall.*

engine that has engaged and retained many of the young professionals in Hartsville today." The Will Woodham Business Person of the Year Award recognizes an accomplished leader in the Hartsville business community. Dr. Robert Wyatt, president of Coker College, nominated Eldon Henderson, owner of Henderson Ace Hardware. Dr. Wyatt said, "His work ethic sets the standard for everybody around him, and each of us that has worked with him has been elevated by that drive. As a small business owner in a big-box industry, this individual understands that what makes his business special is how he fits into the community, and how he can make that community stronger. His relentless support of local athletics, commitment to nonprofits like the Hartsville Chamber, and dedication to community events has made this man a friend to many in Hartsville. The continued growth and expansion of his business in Hartsville has made him a mainstay of the business community." Henderson accepted his award with utmost gratitude, saying that the award was special to him, not only for what it means to his family's business, but because he had known and worked with Will Woodham, the award's namesake.



*Eldon Henderson accepts the Will Woodham Business Person of the Year award from Dr. Robert Wyatt.*

Finally, the night ended with the Hartsville Rotary Club's Citizen of the Year award. The Citizen of the Year award has been given at the banquet since 1940 and is highly revered and respected in the community. Club president Jon Zeigler announced that Jamie Morphis was this year's recipient for his embodiment of the Rotary mantra "service above self." Over his lifetime, Morphis has served the Hartsville community as a businessman, school board member, and a fundraiser for projects that have improved education and quality of life for Hartsville. Zeigler shared that Morphis has been instrumental in several projects but always worked behind the scenes, never taking credit for the success—a selfless act of a true leader.



*Jamie Morphis accepts the Hartsville Rotary Club's Citizen of the Year award from Jon Zeigler.*

Hartsville is growing; one might even say exploding. With new shops, restaurants, and businesses popping up weekly, it seems. As citizens of our great city, we often lose sight of what it takes to make Hartsville: the caring, diverse people and organizations who work to make it so unique. The Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce is proud to serve the businesses of Hartsville and even more proud to annually recognize the contributions of those who make our community special.

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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## BUILDING BRIDGES COMES IN NEW FORMAT

*Submitted by Patricia Burkett, Director of Marketing & Membership Relations*



The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce had a standing room only crowd for the 2016 Diversity & Leadership Summit at the Floyd Conference Center on the campus of Carolinas Hospital.

Building Bridges brought out a crowd of nearly 100 people and took place in March and featured an all new format which took the summit down from the previous five-week course to one, day-long event.

The day was filled with various speakers who all addressed racial diversity, inclusion efforts and corporate culture. The keynote speaker was Nika White, the Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion at the Greenville Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to White, the program also featured a roundtable discussion with Rev. Mary M. Finklea of Cross and Crown Lutheran

Church, Rev. Merritt Graves of Mt. Zion AME Church and Pastor Henry Bodie of Pentecostal Temple Church of God in Christ.

Other speakers included Vernita Thomas of AccuStaff, Wendy Dembowski of the American Red Cross, Dr. Erica James of Francis Marion University, Allene Glapion-Tellis of the City of Florence, Toyinda L. Smith of Coker College, Tyron Jones of Florence-Darlington Technical College, Teresa Johnson Ramey of FMU and Les Echols of the Florence Chamber.

Echols said of the program: "The Building Bridges sessions are informative and impactful. The new format is successful, well-received and innovative. The Chamber will continue to foster diversity and inclusion through programs and events such as this one."

"The Building Bridges Diversity Summit is about bringing open discussion to help change attitudes," said Florence Chamber President Mike Miller. It is about education and increasing awareness to the diversity and inclusion issues that we, as a community, face every day. Our effort here today is meant to help bring people together in an open dialogue

and to help share real life experiences so we all can find a path to inclusion."

Sponsors of the events included AccuStaff, Freeman's Bakery, Carolinas Hospital, Roche, CleanWorldUSA and the Florence Chamber.



## CHELSEY PACKER- FINDING SUCCESS THROUGH PAXEN AND THE WIOA

Submitted by Terri Durdaller, via the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board



Chelsey Packer

Living with her mother and a single mother herself, Chelsey Packer was eighteen years old when she became a participant in Paxen's WIOA Youth program. She lacked funds to enroll in Central Carolina Technical College for her Nursing degree.

During Chelsey's initial meeting to enter

the program, her mother was by her side. The two were close and counted on each other through life's ups and downs. Chelsey was working at a local restaurant and was the only person in her household employed. She knew what it was like to struggle and wanted to make a better life for herself and her young daughter. Paxen staff provided Chelsey with an overview of the program and career assessments which helped her realize her interest in the medical field. Mrs. Jackie Causey (Paxen Site Manager) showed her how to enroll in Central Carolina and coordinated her attendance in Paxen's parenting workshops. Chelsey finally had a direction, but she still needed transportation, tuition and books for school. Paxen was able to provide those supportive needs so she could continue on this new path.

During her participation in the WIOA Youth program, Chelsey's mother passed away. This was a true setback for her, because her mother supported her and was her biggest fan. Though Chelsey was suffering from a broken heart, she continued her studies because she wanted to make her mama proud.

Chelsey faced difficult times after she was accepted into the Nursing program at Central Carolina in April 2011. She did well in one of her first nursing classes, but failed the other and was at risk of being dropped from the nursing program. Mrs. Dana Marsh, her Career Specialist, sent a letter to the school to request that they allow her to take the class again. This was very discouraging for her, but with the encouragement and support of Mrs. Marsh and her own determination, Chelsey was able to retake the class and passed with a "B".

Although losing the closest person to her and failing a nursing class were painful, Chelsey did not allow them to keep her from moving forward. Mrs. Marsh would always talk with Chelsey and provide support and encouragement, so that when Chelsey left the office she was reminded that by completing her education she was doing all that she could do for her daughter, and she was making her mother proud at the same time.

Chelsey graduated from Central Carolina Technical College with an Associate's degree in Nursing in August 2013 with a final GPA of 2.5. She was hired as a Registered Nurse and began her career at McLeod Health, where she continues her thriving nursing career today.

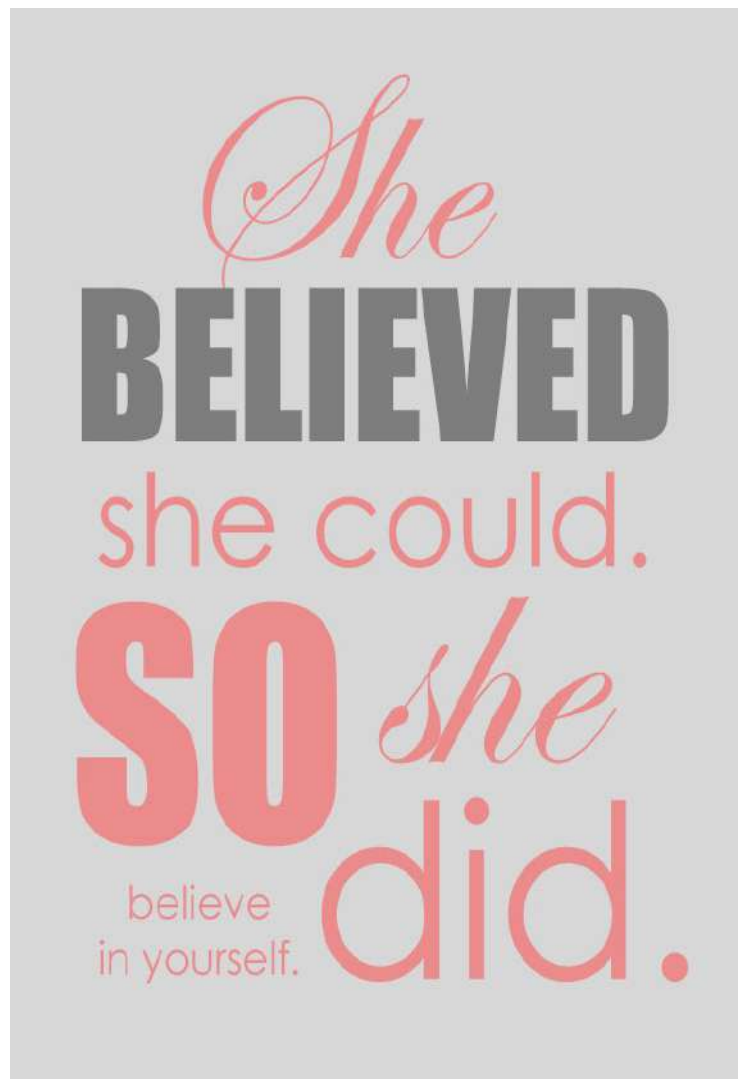
Chelsey's dream of becoming a Registered Nurse has come true and she is now able to provide for her family. Chelsey

stated that she is very thankful to Paxen for the encouragement, support and financial assistance which helped her complete her education. Her family now lives in a four bedroom home and she is able to pay her bills without stress.

Chelsey was also nominated by The Pee Dee Workforce Development Board (WDB) [www.scworkspeedee.org](http://www.scworkspeedee.org) and Paxen for the State of South Carolina's WIA Youth Achievement Award and won! She received this award at the South Carolina Workforce Development Partnership Symposium last February.

Most recently Chelsey took her first plane trip along with her sister to Clearwater FL where she presented her story to Eckerd Kids' Board of Directors. Paxen was acquired by Eckerd Kids last year and this was the first workforce development story shared in their quarterly Board of Directors meetings. Chelsey enjoyed a beautiful hotel room on Clearwater Beach and celebrated her success with a fresh fish dinner at a local restaurant. Eckerd's Chief of Programs for the Eastern Division generously gave Chelsey a \$100 gift card.

Chelsey believes her greatest accomplishment is providing for her five year old daughter, as well as her new baby girl! She knows her mother is proud as well. Chelsey made the most of her second chance! For more information about the WIOA youth program, contact Shelia Suggs at Paxen Learning, at 843-799-6104 or [ssuggs@paxen.com](mailto:ssuggs@paxen.com) or Joette Dukes, at 843-669-3138 or [j-dukes@peedeecog.org](mailto:j-dukes@peedeecog.org).





## ARTFIELDS 2016 TO DRAW TENS OF THOUSANDS

Submitted by Hannah L. Davis, ArtFields Director



LAKE CITY--More than 20,000 art enthusiasts, artists and visitors from across the Southeast are expected to attend ArtFields 2016, the South's largest and most engaging art competition and festival April 22-30 downtown for a nine-day celebration of contemporary Southern art, culture and community.

Designed to cultivate artists and offer arts-based programs for the public, ArtFields will transform Lake City businesses, venues and restaurants into living art galleries, exhibiting nearly 400 works of art and representing the talent across the 12 Southeastern states – Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

“Our goal for ArtFields is simple: Provide a creative springboard for emerging and established artists across the Southeast, and celebrate and enhance the culture of a historic Southern town,” said ArtFields director Hannah L. Davis. “With the promise of more than \$100,000 in cash prizes awarded to artists, based on visitor input and a panel of acclaimed jurors, the program has added energy, vibrancy and culture to our area and the region since 2013.”

In 2014, CNN’s “50 States, 50 Spots” named ArtFields “South Carolina’s Top Spot to See.” An economic engine for Lake City, ArtFields 2016 will feature world-class southern art, nationally-acclaimed entertainers, award-winning chefs and family fun. Event highlights include:

**Public Art, Saturday, April 23, through Saturday, April 30, during competition viewing hours**

**Color Me ArtFields 5K: Be the Canvas, Saturday, April 23, from 7:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.**

**Makers Market, Saturday, April 23, from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Music on the Green, Saturday, April 23, from 6:30 – 10 p.m.**

**Family Fun & Art on the Green, Sunday, April 24, from 1 – 6 p.m.**

**Dandelion Gala – A Culinary & Musical Experience in White, Thursday, April 28, from 6 – 10 p.m.**

**Foodies, Film and Music, Friday, April 29, from 6 – 9:30 p.m.**

**Portrait Contest, Saturday, April 30, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**Finale, Saturday, April 30, from 6:30 – 11 p.m.**

Celebrate the competition artists of 2016 and the selected winners. There will be excellent food, “Air Art” and the soulful sounds of The Heather Hayes Experience, featuring daughter of famed singer-songwriter Isaac Hayes.

To learn more about ArtFields 2016 events and to plan a trip, visit [www.artfieldssc.org](http://www.artfieldssc.org). Join the conversation by following the festival on Twitter (@ArtFieldsSC) and using and searching the hashtag (#ArtFields2016). For even more ArtFields 2016 updates, like ArtFields on Facebook and follow the competition on Instagram.



**Lake City, South Carolina lives art:** Whether it's our annual ArtFields® festival or the simple art of putting Southern craftsmanship into everything we do, Lake City is a place for artists of the everyday. With unique dining experiences, galleries, and expertly curated boutique shops, Lake City isn't just a historic district, it's a **masterpiece**.

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## STUMBLING ALONG IN FINDING GOD'S WILL

by Robin L. Lewis, Sozo Life & Leadership



**Are you having some trouble finding God's will right now?** And could you use some top notch Godly guidance? In my life coaching and speaking, I am finding that many of you are feeling an uncomfortable shift in your life this year. I want you to know it's OK because God is getting your course corrected. One of my favorite Bible teachers, Dutch Sheets, said, "I find that I stumble into the will of God more times than I find it on purpose." That is reassuring to me for when I have trouble knowing God's will, I can be confident that He will get me where I need to be.

So if you are waking up most mornings wondering if you're still in your right mind or just feeling out of sorts, practice the basics of learning to lean into God. Learning to lean into God involves 4 simple things:

1. Practice becoming aware of His presence with you. Get still and quiet.
2. Pray the most honest prayers you can manage.
3. Read your Bible, using the Book or an App in your phone.
4. Keep a journal of what you sense the Lord is saying to your heart.

This isn't a formula, but a deepening of relationship with Him. As you practice the basics, listen for His subtle leading as He speaks in many ways.



The challenges of life you face are far too great to handle alone. To walk with God in humble dependence is the most blessed and protected place you can be!

**How long will it last?** That is between you and God. You may be in a physical shift from one job to another, a mental shift as your thinking is changed in an area, or a heart shift of renewal.

**How do you handle this shifting season?** If your life feels like it is shaking a bit, let yourself be keenly aware of how much we as humans need God's help and

direction. But this is definitely a spiritual shift! Everything is spiritual because you are first spiritual. Like putting on new glasses, this helps us see more clearly. The Father wants you to be in a stronger, purer place of spiritual maturity and freedom in



order to live your life effectively with joy and peace. Your shift and season may be similar to another, but will be uniquely different from anyone else's journey. This is

about you and God, so let it be about you and God.

**Why is it so hard to submit and follow?** Because we think we know best! We think we know what our life should look like and be like, but without God our life will never have the meaning and outcome that He desires for us. We want God's best, but we usually don't want the struggles, trials, changes, and personal growth that He requires to attain it. To live the life He has designed for you requires surrender of self and submission to Him.

**Comparing yourself to others is a dead end.** We all know someone who seems to have an easy life and we want it. We don't like the trials we have to endure or the parts of life's road that feel terribly rocky and steep. We will do well if we seek to live our own life well and not focus on others. Jesus faced this with Peter who boldly questioned Him about John's future, "Lord, what about that man? What will happen to him?" Jesus replied, "What is that to you? You follow Me." (John 21:21-22) Your life's journey is your own. Your Father will be faithful to lead you through preparation, shifts, and changes that are tailored just for you. While some experiences are down right hard, hang on for He's not finished yet and neither your past nor your present gets the last word!

**Listen, I understand.** In my own life I've experienced many shifts and actual moves that

seemed crazy to me at the time, but looking in life's wonderful rearview mirror it's easy to see how the Lord was faithful to me in every step along the way.

**For today, can we pray something honest like this?** "Lord, help me, I'm an unblended, out-and-out mess. This is hard, but I am willing to be made willing to take the next step with You. Give me a desire for what pleases Your heart and help me to know Your will for my life. Protect me and strengthen me for what is to come and make my life effective for You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Surround yourself with positive, faith-filled friends.** Les Brown writes, "Make it a point to build new relationships that are positive, encouraging and supportive. Take it upon yourself to develop a sense of purpose, optimism and discipline. Realize that no one can take away your most valuable assets - your mind and your self-esteem...without your permission." You always choose your response so hang on; this part of your journey of finding God's path will train you in walking closely with Him for the future.

In your journey through life with Jesus, you will be tested in order for your weak places to become strong. Every test is designed to bring out your best so refuse to give up! You're going to do well for you are held in very strong hands. Practice the basics, rest your mind, will, and



emotions, and let Him "train you in trust" while you humbly, expectantly wait. Philippians 1:6 says, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

**When this shift is done, you will stand in a new place.** It may be a place that maybe you weren't expecting, but where you know with more certainty than ever that the Father's eyes are upon you and His hand is guiding you. Your love relationship with Him will be deeper and stronger. You are living a journey to remember.

Lots of love & grace,  
Robin

To find out more about Spiritual Life Coaching or to book Robin to speak, email her at [robinlewiswords@gmail.com](mailto:robinlewiswords@gmail.com) and visit her website at [www.sozolifeleaders.com](http://www.sozolifeleaders.com).



**LONG MIDDLE SCHOOL'S MRS. TONYA BRACY NAMED CHESTERFIELD COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

by Miesha Shaver Thomas



Tonya Bracy

CHESTERFIELD- Mrs. Tonya Bracy has been selected as the 2015-2016 Chesterfield County Teacher of the Year. The sixth grade science teacher at Long Middle School was selected from 16 applicants in the district. Mrs. Bracy was also the 2015-2016 Long Middle

School Teacher of the Year. Chesterfield County School District Superintendent Dr. Harrison Goodwin presented Mrs. Bracy with her title at the district's annual banquet. Dr. Goodwin stated that 2015-2016 Chesterfield County Teach of the Year "is indicative of the kind of teachers we have in the county".

"I believe that teaching is one of the most important and fulfilling professions. I feel teaching needs to be a personal experience," said Mrs. Bracy. "I believe all students can learn; you just have to find a way to teach them. I realize all students do not learn in the same way,

but you have to work to find a way to get them to understand the material." Mrs. Tonya Bracy started her teaching career at Long Middle School and has been there since 2007. In eight short years of teaching and her Teacher of the Year awards, she has also been voted as teacher of the month and recognized multiple times for perfect attendance. Mrs. Bracy's professional duties extend beyond the classroom to include grade level chair person in which she organizes events, trips and ceremonies for students. She also serves as an active sponsor for her school's Beta Club chapter. "Beta gives me the opportunity to help students understand the club motto (Let Us Lead by Serving Others)...through my actions," said Mrs. Bracy. Among her professional development and leadership activities in the 2015-2016 year were monthly literacy training and STEAM training. She currently serves as the co-chair of the Teacher Forum Committee. Former Long Middle School principal, Matt Brantley stated, "She is the type of teacher that all parents hope their children have. She is a professional, passionate, team-first worker who knows how to see the big

picture. Quite simply, no one deserves this award more than her." Mrs. Bracy holds an Associate in Arts from Northeastern Technical College and a Bachelor in Elementary Education from Francis Marion University. While Mrs. Bracy is a proud mother of two young sons, her students remain a priority in her life, and she is a consistent role model on whom they all can count! As a parent and an educator, she believes the key issue in public education today is parental involvement. "It takes a village to raise a child, but the first responsibility of the village is to support the parents, building a partnership between parents and schools can have a major influence on student achievement," said Mrs. Bracy.

What makes her stand out as a sixth grade science teacher and Chesterfield County Teacher of the Year is the relatable and caring individual she has proven to be in lives of her diverse students. In her words: "I went into teaching with the expectation of changing lives. I was not expecting to be the one that changed. For me, it's not about what influenced me to teach; it's about what influences me to continue to teach."

**JAMIE HORTON NAMED DARLINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCS D Communications Specialist



Jamie Horton

DARLINGTON - Jamie Horton, a history teacher from Hartsville High School, was named the Darlington County School District's 2015-16 District Teacher of the Year at the district's annual Teacher of the Year banquet. Horton beat out five other finalists for the top honor.

A five-year teaching veteran, Horton began her teaching career as a long-term substitute before joining Darlington Middle School's staff. She moved to Hartsville High where she not only teaches but also serves as the school's head softball coach. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in History/Secondary Education from Coker

College, her middle school certification from the University of South Carolina, and she is currently pursuing her Masters in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University. She is a member of the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society.

A dedicated teacher, Horton wrote in her application, "For me, teaching is not a job but a passion with a purpose. Every day as a teacher is a challenge! No two days are ever the same. Rewards in teaching are not tangible items; instead they are looks of gratitude, a thank you, and a message written in the corner of the white board or even a hug. Those rewards often come from building relationships with my students and watching their growth socially, emotionally and academically. ... And the greatest reward is when you can inspire your students to be greater than they ever imagined."

As the District Teacher of the Year, Horton will serve as the District's Teacher Forum chair-elect, work closely with the Superintendent and administrative staff on teacher-related issues, represent Darlington County teachers on local and state committees, and represent the district at State Teacher Forum functions throughout the year.

To become the district's Teacher of the Year, Horton had to participate in a rigorous selection process. Each of the district's 23 schools selected a Teacher of the Year. A team of judges narrowed the candidates down to six finalists. The finalists then participated in an intensive interview session that included a video review of their classroom skills. Based on the interviews, the judges selected the district Teacher of the Year.

**DILLON SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR**



Kylie Lane

DILLON - Kylie Lane has been named Dillon School District Four Teacher of the Year 2015-2016. She is a 4th grade teacher at Lake View Elementary.



## ROYALL ELEMENTARY'S DR. LEAH BARLEY NAMED FLORENCE ONE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Pamela Little-McDaniel, Florence School District One Director of Public Information



*Dr. Leah Barley*

Dr. Leah Barley of Royall Elementary School has been selected as Florence School District One's 2015-16 Teacher of the Year. She was selected from more than 20 applicants in

Florence One schools. Florence One Superintendent Dr. Randy Bridges surprised Dr. Barley with the announcement of her title and accompanied by an entourage of school personnel and media to the school, he visited Dr. Barley's classroom and presented her with a bouquet of flowers and balloons as her students watched.

"I cannot allude to one single accomplishment that stands out more than others because that would require me to tell of each student I have ever met," said Dr. Barley. "My joy is found in supporting students who don't think they can, and then

celebrating with them when they do! My humble hope is that my students know that they are loved, that I believe in their ability to succeed and that they have acquired the desire for knowledge." Dr. Barley, who has 15 years of teaching experience, has served in her present position at Royall for the past twelve years. She is also a National Board Certified Teacher. Among her professional leadership activities are services as a school coach for Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Evaluation; ADEPT Certified Evaluator and SAFE-T Evaluator, published author in ProQuest, and Master Teacher Accelerated Reader Certifications. Royall Elementary School Principal Julie Smith said, "Dr. Leah Barley is truly deserving of this honor. She is an innovative and energetic leader in our school. Beyond her stellar achievements as our school's writing lab instructor, Dr. Barley is a creative problem solver who willingly gives her time, energy and enthusiasm to make Royall Elementary School the best it can be!" Dr. Barley holds an Educational Doctoral Degree in Organizational Leadership from Grand Canyon University; a Master's Degree plus

30 hours in Instructional Technology as well as a Master of Education in Special Education/Learning Disabilities from Francis Marion University; and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Pittsburgh. She has previously served in Horry County and in Florence School District Three. While earning her doctoral degree Dr. Barley was offered an online teaching position to work with student teachers nationwide. "During this process, I guide, coach, and require students to reflect on their own practices," she said. In addition to her online students, she partners with Francis Marion University and Coker College to mentor student teachers within her own community. "These positions allow me to share my passion for education, guide new teachers, and build professional relationships within the teaching community. This contribution is most rewarding as it allows me in some ways to repay those who have given me guidance during my own journey." Dr. Barley will represent Florence School District One in this year's South Carolina Teacher of the Year Program.

A large blue banner with a background of educational items like a globe, books, a pen holder, and an alarm clock. The text is in red and white. A smaller version of Dr. Leah Barley's portrait is in the bottom left corner.

**Florence School District One**  
**2015-16**  
**Teacher of the Year**

**Dr. Leah Barley**  
**Royall Elementary School**

**Honor Roll Teacher (One of Five Finalists for SC Teacher of the Year)**



## FLORENCE CAREER CENTER TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND FSD1 HONOR ROLL TEACHER

Submitted by Melissa Fulmore



Melissa Fulmore

Mrs. Melissa Fulmore is a native resident of Florence and the daughter of the late Odell Cooper Myers and Willie E. Brooks. She is married to the Rev. Samuel Fulmore, Jr. and they have four children and two granddaughters.

Mrs. Fulmore is employed as a teacher with Florence Public School District One at the Florence Career Center teaching Dual Credit Courses where students receive high school and college credit. This makes her an Adjunct Professor for Florence Darlington Technical College. She is a 1982 graduate of West Florence High School and has earned an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Florence-Darlington Technical College, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from Limestone College, a Master's in Education

from Lesley University and a second Masters in Educational Leadership from Concordia University. She has received credit hours above her degrees from Francis Marion University.

Mrs. Fulmore was named Creek Bridge High School (Marion County) 2013-14 Teacher of the year, Florence Career Center 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year and a Florence School District One 2015-2016 Honor Roll Teacher. She has accomplished other trainings to enhance her teaching career such as; Teacher Cadet Curriculum Training, 2012 South Carolina FBLA District Leadership Conference Student Winners, Business Department Chairperson, PBS Teacherline Online Facilitator, Palmetto State Teachers Association Member, South Carolina Business Education Association Member,

Her Philosophy of Teaching is, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" – Martin Luther King Jr. A personal question is, "How can you do better today than you did yesterday?" She feels that the greatest career decision she has ever made

was when she decided to become a teacher.

Mrs. Fulmore believes that education is a value. I learn with and from my students. That is what makes teaching exciting for me. It is an ongoing process of learning. I teach my students how to use information as a means and not an end. They learn to solve both social and personal problems with facts. I enjoy teaching because every day my students and I have the advantage of using technology something they will be able to utilize in years to come. I teach and encourage my students to participate and share their ideas with their peers. Individually, they can help change society by first building and demonstrating character. I respect my students and try to model my beliefs. I value learning and am always excited about teaching because teaching is an opportunity to do something for someone else. "It is a privilege to be able to contribute my understanding in the use of technology in the classroom as a tool for students and my fellow teachers to help ensure that students are prepared for success, and are college and/or career ready."

## SPEARMAN ANNOUNCES MILKEN AWARD WINNER IN FLORENCE

Submitted by Pamela Little-McDaniel, Florence School District One Director of Public Information



Lindsey Bibler

State Superintendent of Education Molly M. Spearman announced that a Florence educator won an "Oscars of Teaching" award from the Milken Family Foundation, which included a \$25,000 cash prize.

"I am so proud of Lindsey Bibler and the devotion she exhibits every day to the students and community in Florence," said Spearman. "She is truly deserving of this great honor and will stand as a shining example for educators across our state. I want to thank the Milken Family Foundation for their hard work recognizing educators like Lindsey across the country. I am appreciative of our strong partnership and look forward to future collaboration to honor other outstanding South Carolina educators," concluded Spearman.

"Lindsey Bibler's love of math is infectious," said Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards. "She has a gift of reaching students at all levels, making herself available morning, noon and night to coach them to mastery. We're thrilled to honor her work with a Milken Educator Award and look forward to following her bright future in education," concluded Foley.

Bibler teaches Mathematics at South Florence

High School to students in grades 10-12.

She is the high school math department chair and goes the extra mile to ensure that her students excel. As an alumna of South Florence High School, Bibler graduated as valedictorian and came back to the school as a student teacher, then as a permanent staff member. She is now known as a leader and trusted mentor to students and teachers alike.

Bibler teaches Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus, Pre-Calculus and Differential Calculus, adjusting her teaching methods to meet the needs of students at all levels, from gifted to low-performers. Bibler leads discussions as a cognitive coach, encouraging students to dig deeper and aim higher. Students ask questions, collaborate with their peers and continually reflect on their learning. She is available outside class hours to provide additional help, tutoring before school, after school, during planning periods and on weekends. Her class website also features videos, notes, and other resources.

The passion Bibler ignites in her students is reflected in their learning gains. They attained a 100 percent passage rate on the AP Calculus AB exam in 2014. After a decade of the school not offering Calculus BC, Bibler not only generated enough interest to bring the class back in 2014, but also achieved a 79 percent passage rate from her students that first year.

Bibler has seen other increases in student achievement throughout her career at South

Florence High. When she taught algebra in 2009, for example, students received a passage rate of 86 percent, which was significantly above school, district, and state averages. The passage rate grew into the nineties in subsequent years. The same trend held true for her Calculus AB class; 67 percent of students passed the AP exam during Bibler's first year of teaching, then achieved 100 percent passage rates in the second and third years.

Bibler has also helped students with learning disabilities pass end-of-course exams as well as the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), when the requirement was in effect.

Beyond the classroom, Bibler mentors other teachers and helps drive curriculum and instruction for the school. A strong proponent of technology in the classroom, she has trained colleagues and collaborated on a successful \$20,000 grant for TI-Nspire calculators. She has presented at the South Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics, participated in a parent session on state standards, and brings knowledge back from professional workshops.

First in her family to graduate college, Bibler earned a Bachelor of Science in math and a teaching certification from Francis Marion University in 2008 and a Master of Education in educational technology from Lesley University in 2010.

## LEE TOY LISTS TOP PERSONAL QUALITIES



Lee County School District 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year James Price

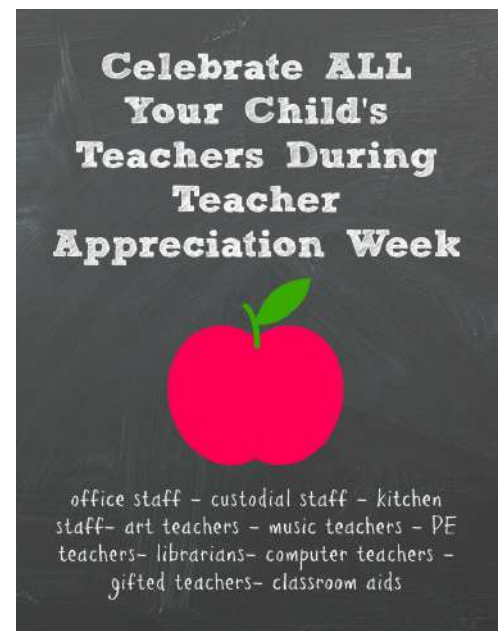
BISHOPVILLE -- When asked, "What do you feel are the attributes that make you a good teacher?" Lee County School District 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year replied, "Teachers possess certain attributes that cause them to have positive effects on students and student achievement. Those characteristics vary from teacher to teacher. There are several attributes I believe I have that contribute to my success with students and student achievement. Those attributes are my passion for teaching, compassion for my students, and my organization. Since becoming a teacher 17 years ago, I have always had a passion and drive for helping students succeed. That drive fuels my determination to find ways to support student learning and meet the needs of all learners in my classroom. I work constantly to find resources and innovative ideas and strategies that will target the diverse needs of the learners in my classroom. A priority in finding resources and strategies is

finding those that are relevant to my students. I believe that when we make the curriculum relevant and meaningful for the students, they take ownership and have an innate desire to learn. I am passionate about making sure the teaching that goes on in my classroom is relevant and meaningful."

In addition to his passion for teaching, his personality makes him relatable to students. "I am compassionate and empathetic. These characteristics help me to establish trusting relationships with my students. I believe when students know that you care about them, they are more willing to trust you. With trusting relationships, students are more willing to perform and put forth an effort. As students put forth their best efforts to meet the high expectations I have of them, I am able to support their learning and success. To me, these trusting relationships are also important for character development. I believe my personality and relationships also make me a role model for students in my class as well as other students at my school. When students trust you, they are willing to talk to you about the perils as well as successes that come with being a middle school student. In my conversations, I am able to offer guidance and influence positive character development. So, my personality and relationships with my students impact student academic achievement as well as their personal growth and success," he continued.

These relationships also play a role in the climate and culture of his classroom. "Though my practices are not always traditional, I create an organized, structured learning environment. By having a structured environment, students feel safe. I believe a safe environment is important to student learning. When students feel safe, they are willing to try and know that I am there to help them succeed. This kind of risk taking for students requires a safe environment like the one I create through organization and structure.

These three qualities of passion, personality, and organization are just a few of the attributes that he believes make him an outstanding teacher.



## MARION COUNTY'S 2015 - 2016 TEACHER OF THE YEAR LAKSHMI S. VISHNUBHOTLA



Lakshmi S. Vishnubhotla

MARION--Lakshmi S. Vishnubhotla or more commonly known as Mr. Vish, is a 24 year veteran in education with the last nine years here in Marion County. He is currently teaching math at Mullins High

School. He and his wife Naga, a teacher at Palmetto Middle School, have two children, a daughter in 6th grade and a son in 4th. He is a graduate of Banaras Hindu University in India.

As a teacher, Mr. Vish is most excited about integrating technology into everyday teaching. He enjoys providing challenging questions and requiring students to think

critically.

Vish sees education not just as a vehicle fostering individual advancement and secular progress, but also to promote civic virtue, social stability, and regional and national unity. He feels "education should prepare our students for the future, as our country has a strong voice on the global platforms. Education should be practical and applicable to life today. School is an integral part of the community in which it exists. School should be a place where teachers work across departments, where teachers create an integrated curriculum that serves the needs of diverse learners at the school, and teachers focus on student achievement, student outcomes, and they work together as a family striving for continued success," he said.

Vish believes the role of a teacher is shifting from that of an archived knowledge dispenser to instant manager of the learning environment. The different learning styles, interests, and diversities of students motivate their peers to a great extent. A teacher has to push forward students with low self-esteem so that the students can focus on the task at hand. Teachers need to acquire new skills, and they must continue to evolve as role models, building positive relationships with their students. Educators should shift from content-driven and teacher-driven learning to student-centered and process-driven learning.

"Education is not simply filling a pail but the lighting of the fire" (William Butler Yeats).



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# DCIS, COMMUNITY AGENCIES FORM PRE-JUDICIAL TRUANCY COUNCIL

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist



*DCIS Pre-Judicial Truancy Council – Members of the Darlington County Intervention School Pre-Judicial Truancy Council gather for a photo in the city of Darlington’s municipal courtroom. Pictured are (front row from left) Courtney Phillips, S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice; Lt. Kimberly Nelson, Darlington Police Department; Cyndie Gerles, DCIS volunteer; William B Rogers Jr., Fourth Circuit solicitor; (back row from left) Denise Kelly, Rubicon Counseling Services; Dr. Bill Boyd, associate superintendent of Darlington County School District; Fondtrice McCormick, DCIS social worker; Julia Peterson, DCSD attendance supervisor; Dr. Zenobia Edwards, director of DCIS.*

DARLINGTON – In collaboration with several community agencies and organizations, Darlington County Intervention School (DCIS) is working on a new initiative to keep students out of the courtroom and get them back in the classroom.

The Pre-Judicial Truancy Council is comprised of representatives from DCIS, Darlington County School District (DCSD), the Fourth Circuit Solicitor’s Office, Darlington Police Department, Rubicon Counseling Services, S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and other volunteers. The council’s goal is to intervene in cases involving students who are not attending school, develop a comprehensive plan of action to get the student back in school, and avoid situations where students face judicial action.

“With this program, we are being proactive,” said DCSD Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram. “The bottom line is we’re trying to keep kids in schools. Never before has there been a venue where we all can get in the same place to make it happen. In the past, issues get bounced around from organization to organization. This is more effective and more impactful.”

South Carolina state law, with a few exceptions, requires all children to attend school, or their parents and guardians as well as the children can be subjected to legal consequences for truancy. Also, according to the state’s Proviso 117.36 Alternative Commitment to Truancy, a public school district with an alternative school must have a plan in place that attempts to help truant students avoid the legal system.

DCIS Director Dr. Zenobia Edwards thinks the Pre-Judicial Truancy Council will

help students, parents, guardians and the school to do just that. The program is being tested at DCIS given the school serves the entire district.

“I am very glad that we now have an attendance initiative in place that preempts judicial action,” Edwards said. “There is a strong correlation between academic achievement and attendance. You can’t learn what is necessary for success if you’re not present where the information is being taught. It helps to have all voices in one room to discuss individual student situations to build a more realistic plan for improved student attendance.”

The council summons truant students and their parents or guardians to the city of Darlington’s municipal courtroom. They sit down together with representatives of all of the agencies. All sides are given the opportunity to explain their positions, which helps the council determine the underlying reason or reasons a student is not attending school. With so many resources available at once, the council intends to generate pragmatic solutions and help the student get back in school.

Fourth Judicial Circuit Solicitor William B. Rogers Jr. hopes his involvement in the council will help alert families to the seriousness of truancy.

“The more you can keep kids in school, the more they have the chance to succeed and become productive citizens,” Rogers said. “If we lose them in the process and they leave schools, then we’re not helping their chances of success. If I had my way, we wouldn’t get any attendance referrals. This pre-judicial program should help with that. We want to provide anything our office can do to help

keep the kids in school.”

The school district’s head social worker, Sue Cataen-Ingram, brought the idea for the Pre-Judicial Truancy Council from a North Carolina school district in which she worked previously. During the past two years, DCIS and district administrators, including Attendance Supervisor Julia Peterson and Social Worker Fondtrice McCormick, developed the idea to best fit the district and the community.

“Often times, when truant students and parents are subjected to judicial intervention, we do not get to the root of the problem,” Cataen-Ingram said. “Court is too large of a setting, and we miss the opportunity to get through the barriers to understand poor attendance. I am thrilled that Dr. Edwards moved forward with this program. I hope we can eventually use it across Darlington County.”

Darlington County School District is a countywide district, serving more than 10,400 students in 23 schools and Darlington County Adult Education. For more information about this program or other programs in the district, visit [darlington.k12.sc.us](http://darlington.k12.sc.us).

## We Are DCIS!

### Making the RIGHT Choices



Darlington County Intervention School’s primary goal is to ensure that each student is equipped to attain academic and societal success by “making the right choices”. Each student at DCIS has a unique opportunity to participate in a program specifically designed to help Darlington County students continue their education and receive additional behavioral support while away from their home schools. The goals for each student for the upcoming school year will include:

- Model Attendance (Fewer than five excused or unexcused absences for the semester)
- Academic achievement (Proficiency or above in all classes)
- Improved Behavior (Few to no disciplinary issues and No excessive disciplinary issues)
- Completion of all mandated terms from the District Hearing Officer (Dr. Boyd) such as counseling etc.



# RITTER PROPELS STUDENTS AND STAFF TO ELEVATE PROGRAM

by Anna Bowman



Dr. Arlise McKinney and Dr. Barbara Ritter, Dean of the E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business Administration

CONWAY – In 1993, the same year Coastal Carolina University became a public institution independent from the University of South Carolina system, the E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business Administration was also established on the campus.

Since its inception, Coastal Carolina’s Wall College of Business has been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools Business International (AACSB), and has achieved national recognition for providing exceptional curriculum-based

courses that equip students with a highly coveted degree upon graduation that allows them to achieve career goals in their chosen business field. The Wall business college has awarded nearly 8,000 degrees; 2,000 undergraduate students and approximately 100 graduate students are currently enrolled.

Barbara Ritter, Ph.D., who joined the staff at CCU in 2004 and has had a stellar career with the university, recently completed her first year as dean of the Wall College of Business. Under her distinguished tutelage, the college continues to be a superb training ground for anyone interested in a successful, well-rounded business career.

“I’m proud to serve as the leader of a college so full of dedicated faculty, staff and unique opportunities for students,” said Ritter.

Operating under the notion that “you can’t lead from behind,” the Wall College prepares its students for the real business world via coursework, internships and additional requirements, such as participation in professional development activities.

Ritter discussed several impressive facts about the college. “The

Wall College has many points of pride. We are among the five percent of business colleges worldwide to have earned AACSB accreditation,” she said. “We are also recognized for our 100 percent job placement rate in the MBA program. Our undergraduate programs see an advanced education/job placement rate above 90 percent with job placement at top organizations, including Amazon, Ernst and Young, Webster Rogers, Edward Jones, Prudential, and Sonoco Products.”


The school offers six undergraduate majors: accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing, and hospitality, resort and tourism management. They also offer the PGA Golf Management program, which is one of only 18 programs in the nation accredited by the PGA of America. Business students can also minor in economics and international business studies, while non-business students can minor in actuarial science and risk management, business administration, marketing, and resort tourism management. Online degree completion programs are available in marketing and hospitality, resort and tourism management for students who have already completed associate degrees. The school offers two graduate programs: the master of business administration (MBA) program and the master of accountancy (M. Acc.) program.

The school currently has two accelerated programs. The Degree in Three program allows undergraduate students to earn a bachelor of science in business administration (B.S.B.A.) degree in three years, which includes summer classes.

For students seeking an accelerated graduate degree, the school offers the More in Four program, which is a combined four-year undergraduate and master of business administration (MBA) program.

Students interested in becoming the next success story at one of the premier business programs in the nation can visit [coastal.edu](http://coastal.edu).

A native of Rockford, MI, Ritter and her husband Brandon Charpiet are the parents of two daughters, Maya and Avery.



## making an IMPACT

Coastal Carolina University's E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business Administration


# 6

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE MAJORS

# 4


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job placement / advanced education rate for MBA and M.Acc.\*




12

Students with a bachelor of science degree can complete a graduate degree in as few as 12 months of accelerated study.\*

86


PERCENT OF GRADUATING SENIORS REPORTED THEIR JOB IS RELATED TO THEIR MAJOR.\*

### POINTS OF PRIDE



- ▶ Recognized as “an exceptional value in U.S. graduate business education” by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- ▶ The PGA Golf Management Program is one of only 19 programs accredited by the PGA of America.\*
- ▶ CCU is the only North American member of the Consortium of International Double Degrees (CIDD).
- ▶ CCU is ranked sixth in the South among all schools in the Best Value Category by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- ▶ CCU was recognized by *Forbes* as one of America’s top colleges for 2015.

\*According to data from the 2015 Wall College of Business Survey.



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# TO ALL THERE IS A SEASON, SOME WITH MORE MIXED BLESSINGS THAN OTHERS

Submitted by Dr. Dan Strickland



Dr. Dan Strickland

MARION - It's that time of year again when we find ourselves in a season of conflict. On one hand we have spring, the birth of a new cycle for plants, promises abounding on fruit trees in the form of flower buds, daffodils and snow drops bursting color forth from the ground and the sweet smells that float about the air. On the other hand we have our school year beginning to draw to a close, the last quarter of the academic year which is filled with evaluative assessments, final projects and preparing for year-end celebrations. This is even more poignant for many as they come to a senior moment in time, an end of a chapter in their

life. For our high school seniors it closes the chapter on their K – 12 educational experience and for senior educators, such as myself, it closes a career. One can't help but reflect on all the things that have happened during the course of the current chapter. In my reflections I see the consolidation of three school districts. A tumultuous event for all involved but it also represents a time when everyone came together for a better and stronger educational system for Marion County students. We have seen that strength in the consistent increase of our graduation rate over the last three years going from 73.8% in 2013 to 86.5% in 2015. Consequently the dropout rate has gone down from 3.3% to 2.2%. The course offerings for our high schools have also increased. We now offer significantly more dual credit courses which allow our students to earn college credit at the same time they earn a Carnegie unit for high school graduation. This gives them a big advantage when applying to the post-secondary institute of their choice. We also have doubled the percentage of students enrolled in AP courses and expanded the

choices at the Academy for Careers and Technology by adding Mechatronics, a pathway that involves mechanical engineering, electronics and computer science. On the other end of the system we have added a Montessori program for our four year olds. This coming year this program will expand by adding another classroom and increasing the current one so it will be open to both four and five year olds. As a district our community members, local business leaders, teachers and administrators collectively created a new strategic plan along with a revised purpose and direction.

Reflections are not just about the memories of what happened but should also include the effect it had on the people involved, the lessons learned. In some instances, more is better! More students in one district leads to economy of scale, allowing the school system to better leverage scarce resources (people, money and time) to improve the quality of education. More people coming together and involving themselves in the process of educating our students by serving on advisory boards, strategic planning meetings and volunteering in our schools for various functions. The teamwork theme pervades over the last five years proving a shared direction and a shared purpose will benefit all stakeholders in our community.

So as spring takes hold of our future thoughts, let us not deter from what we have garnered from the past. As chapters close, new ones will open and with great anticipation they begin the writing on what has already been built.



✓ 86% Graduation Rate

✓ New 4K Montessori Class for 2015-16

✓ New Mechatronics Class for Careers & Technology Center

✓ Caring and supportive teachers and staff

## Making a Difference Every Day

Dr. Dan Strickland, Superintendent

Dr. Kandace Bethea, Deputy Superintendent

Find us on the web at [www.marion.k12.sc.us](http://www.marion.k12.sc.us) or

Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MarionCountySchools](http://www.facebook.com/MarionCountySchools)



## WATTLES RECEIVES FMU DIVERSITY AWARD

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Dr. Will Wattles

Dr. Will Wattles, Francis Marion University, chair of the Department of Psychology and coordinator of the Master of Science in Psychology program, (clinical/counseling option), is the seventh recipient of the FMU African American Faculty and Staff Coalition (AAFSC) Diversity Award. It seeks to recognize a faculty or staff member for their significant contributions to enhance the university's diversity and inclusiveness on and off campus.

"Dr. Wattles is the kind of individual who not only embraces diversity and cultural awareness but rather embodies it with a commitment and hope to see it expressed throughout our university," says H.

Vashon Brown Jr., a member of the AAFSC, who introduced Wattles at the celebration. Wattles has been employed with the university since 1995, initially as an assistant professor of psychology. He's taught undergraduate and graduate courses in statistics, group therapy, psychotherapy, child development, and health psychology and quantitative and psychometric methods. He also serves as the coordinator of the REAL Program (Ready to Experience Applied Learning) for FMU, which provides funding and assessment for experiential learning activities campus-wide. Wattles currently serves on the S.C. Board of Examiners in Psychology.

He is a licensed clinical psychologist and a member of the Association for Psychological Science. Will received a Bachelor of Arts in economics from Tufts University, a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Texas-Austin and a Doctor of Philosophy in clinical/community psychology from the University of South Carolina.

Past recipients include Crystal Graham, instructor of nursing and simulation coordinator (2015); Yvonne Davis, acquisitions coordinator (2014); Dr. Rhonda Brogdon, coordinator of the RN to BSN Program and assistant professor of nursing (2013); Angela Crosland, director of communications (2012); Dr. Louis Venters, assistant professor of history (2011); and Dr. Rebecca Lawson, director of Counseling and Testing and psychology professor (2010).

## FMU PRESENTS ALUMNI AWARDS

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Three Francis Marion alumni received awards at the School of Education's annual recognition reception, an event among Homecoming Week activities. Carla Jayroe Brandon (far right) ('04) received the Veteran Educator Award, Kirby Register earned the Novice Educator Award ('13, '15), and Timothy B. Hunter ('96) received the Administrator Award.

The Novice Educator Award recognizes a successful FMU graduate who demonstrates leadership in education and has been an educator at the early childhood, elementary, middle, or high school level for one to three years. The Veteran Educator Award and the Administrator Award go to educators or administrators with four or more years' experience.

Register teaches third grade at Spaulding Elementary School in Darlington. She earned an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and a master's in Instructional Accommodations from FMU.

Brandon has been a teacher (reading coach) at Kensington Elementary School in Georgetown since 2014. Prior to that, she was a kindergarten teacher at Browns Ferry Elementary, also in Georgetown, and Pageland Elementary in Chesterfield. She earned a bachelor's in Early Childhood Education from FMU and the master's in Education Administration from Grand Canyon University in 2010.

Hunter is Director of Student Services and Instructional Support for the School District of Newberry County and has been since 2012. He was previously a principal at Boundary Street Elementary School and an after school coordinator, assistant football coach and homebound instructor all in Newberry County. He was also an assistant principal at Batesburg-Leesville Elementary School in Lexington School District Three.

# Spring is in the air...

## birds, bees, flowers and the warmth of the sun on your back.

What it shouldn't mean is sweaty palms, pounding hearts and a sinking feeling in your stomach because your college plans for next year are still up in the air.

### There's no need to panic!

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*Mr. Alphonso Bradley, Director*



## GET A JUMP-START ON SUMMER

Submitted By Andreka Johnson, Director of Marketing & Communications



Andreka Johnson

With the days getting longer and temperatures on the rise, the telltale signs of summer's approach are in full bloom. Now marks the perfect time to start thinking about summer plans for the little people that call you mom and dad. Undoubtedly it's hard for some of us to know what we're doing this weekend, not to mention in couple of months. Yet failing to plan now can be a recipe for disappointment and failure later. Here are a few tips to help you get the ball rolling on planning

your child's summer adventures.

**Identify your goals.** The end of school signals lots of free time for your children. As a result, many parents find it imperative that their kids find "something to do" while on summer vacation. First, however, it is important that you identify what you hope your child will gain from this experience. Are you simply looking for childcare and thus a means to keep them busy or do you want them to be actively engaged in learning?

Camps at ScienceSouth are full of activities that both engage and challenge kids on their path of discovery. Being productive is not a prescription for boredom. With a little homework on your part beforehand, your child can have just as much fun building a rocket at science camp as he or she does sitting on the couch playing video games.

**Timing really is everything.** Over the years I've gotten many a panicked phone call from a parent looking to enroll their child in summer camp. Only problem, the call comes the week or sometimes days before school ends. At times I am able to help them, but more often than not the dates and camps they want are unavailable. Many parents are unaware that early bird registrations for summer camps begin during the winter months. Also, some summer camps have limits on the number of children they can accept due to teacher/student ratios. If you have dates in mind, your best bet is to secure your camp space as soon as possible.

ScienceSouth's camps run from Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm and include a daily snack. Each camp is \$175 before April 30 and \$200 after. Visit [www.sciencesouth.org](http://www.sciencesouth.org) for a full listing of ScienceSouth's camps and their descriptions.

**Pick their brain.** Yes little ones and tweens are known to be unpredictable creatures subject to change their minds at any given moment. However, that does not mean they are without an opinion. So before you rush to sign them up for a camp, ask what they think. What was their favorite subject this year? What subject did they dread in school? So take a moment and pause before you click the submit button for a four-week math immersion class you think would be perfect to help with kiddo's angst about fractions. While you're right to want to avoid the "summer slide" that happens to most children during the summer months, there is room for compromise. Some camps, like ScienceSouth's summer camps, incorporate math and other subjects into their activities. This may be the spoon full of sugar that helps the proverbial medicine of math go down.

**Find the right fit.** Camps come in a variety of formats and sizes, so it can be a little overwhelming trying to decide which will work best for your child. Does your child like consistency or thrive in a dynamic environment where topics change? What about camp size, do you go super small or relatively big? These are all questions to consider when making summer plans for your child.

One of the benefits of ScienceSouth's summer programs is that it offers camps throughout the summer in a variety of different themes. This gives your child the opportunity to become familiar with the location and staff, and pick the week or weeks of camp they want to attend based on subject matter. For example, camps for rising fourth to eighth graders are kept to a classroom size of 25. This camp size affords staff the chance to work individually with campers when needed, as well as encourage team-building skills by working on projects in groups.

Clearly, there is no time like the present to get a jump-start on your summer plans. With a little planning now, it can be smooth sailing during the summer months. Now let the fun of summer camp searching begin!

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# HARTSVILLE HIGH'S MELANIE WATFORD RAISES FUNDS FOR HANDICAPPED'S PLAYGROUND

Submitted by Russell Cox, City of Hartsville Public Information Officer



The "Love for Laken" campaign made new equipment at the Garrison's Place playground possible, including playground chimes and a drum.

HARTSVILLE – Garrison's Place: A Handicapable Playground is the handicapped-accessible playground built at Byerly Park in 2014 with input from local concerned parents that has grown to include new equipment this month thanks to the "Love for Laken" fundraising project, taken on by Hartsville High School student Melanie Watford and made in honor of Laken Kennedy.

When Watford took on the effort for her Miss Hartsville High School pageant project, she said she was inspired by Laken Kennedy, the son of David and Shannon Kennedy, someone who she describes as a "fun-spirited little boy" who has Cerebral Palsy. With the Kennedy family, she visited Garrison's Place at Byerly Park. The facility, built in 2014 with grant funding from the Byerly Foundation and leadership from local parents of children with disabilities, already featured a wheelchair platform swing, adaptive swings and a zip line, all made to accommodate children with disabilities. Still, Watford saw an opportunity to help build something more, not just for Laken Kennedy, but for other Hartsville children as well.

"I did not choose to do this project because I felt sorry for these children," she said. "I chose this project because I wanted to show everyone else that these kids are no different than us, and they deserve a place to go and enjoy being a kid just like every other child."

She began with a flyer campaign and by seeking donations through social media, but soon she was thinking bigger. She made collection jars with information about the effort, as well as "Love for Laken" car window decals to spread the word. Altogether, the effort raised \$2470.22, making possible the

installation of playground chimes and a drum at the site.

Beyond adding on to the facility, Watford said she wanted to raise awareness of Cerebral Palsy. The playground additions have been installed just ahead of National Cerebral Palsy Month in March, a time to encourage awareness of the lives impacted by the brain condition as well as research efforts for its treatment and cure. Watford said the fundraising effort has helped her to see the world in a new light.



Laken Kennedy, left, seen at the Garrison's Place playground at Byerly Park with Melanie Watford, gave Watford the inspiration for the "Love for Laken" fundraiser project to develop new equipment for the playground.

"Before I did this project I used to worry about my appearance, what people thought of me, and so on," she said. "After this project I realized that I am beyond blessed, and life is not all about what you look like on the outside, it is what's on the inside that truly matters. I am so thankful for people like Laken who allow me to see life in a different perspective."

Garrison's Place: A Handicapable Playground, is located at the Byerly Park Recreational Complex, 700 Russell Road in Hartsville, close to the Piratesville Splash Pad.

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## DCSD & FDTC LAUNCH DUAL-CREDIT COURSES

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist



*Darlington County School District and Florence-Darlington Technical College signed contracts Monday afternoon for a partnership to offer dual-credit courses at the B.A. Gary Education Complex in Darlington. Attending the signing ceremony are (front row from left) Dr. Eddie Ingram, superintendent of Darlington County School District; and Dr. Ben Dillard, president of Florence-Darlington Technical College; (Back row from left) Connell Delaine, chairman of the Darlington County Board of Education; Dr. Willie Boyd, associate superintendent of DCSD; and Suresh Tiwari, vice president of Academic Affairs at FDTC.*

DARLINGTON – Citizens of Darlington now have an innovative and local means to pursue a college degree. Darlington County School District and Florence-Darlington Technical College officially have agreed to offer dual-credit courses at the B.A. Gary Educational Complex in Darlington on the campus of Darlington County Adult Education (DCAE) and the Darlington County Intervention School (DCIS).

The courses will count as credit toward an associate degree at Florence-Darlington Technical College and as credit toward a high school diploma. And the classes will not only be available to students of DCAE and DCIS but also available to members of the public.

Dr. Eddie Ingram, superintendent of Darlington County School District, and Dr. Ben Dillard, president of Florence-Darlington Technical College, signed the contracts inside DCIS alongside other administrative staff.

“When kids have an opportunity to start their secondary careers with at least a year’s worth of college or technical college credit, it gives them a jump start on their life,” Ingram said. “They can learn the skills that put them right into high paying jobs, and that’s really what part of our mission is: to graduate to something with a plan, a goal and a dream. I think enhanced partnerships between colleges, universities and K-12 make good sense. I look forward to many more innovative things to come.”

Dillard said Florence-Darlington Technical College is excited to expand its offerings, particularly with a presence in the heart of Darlington.

“This is really a historic event for us,” Dillard said. “The folks over here in Darlington are great educational partners. We’re excited to be expanding our partnership here and look forward to that. Our business partners are really starting to see the value of the early college dual-credit. And what they are telling me is they are excited about this, particularly for the young people that are seeking an associate’s degree.”

The two courses that will initially be offered include an entry-level psychology and college readiness. Florence-Darlington Technical College will supply the instructors.

Currently, Florence-Darlington Technical College and Darlington High School have a partnership to offer dual-credit courses to high school students. In fact, this year several Darlington High seniors will be the district’s first ever to graduate with a high school diploma and a two-year associate degree.

However, the on-site instructors at the B.A. Gary Educational Complex will mark the first physical presence for Florence-Darlington Technical College in Darlington County School District.

For more information about the new dual-credit courses, please visit [www.darlington.k12.sc.us](http://www.darlington.k12.sc.us) and [www.fdtc.edu](http://www.fdtc.edu).

# LAMAR ELEMENTARY KICKS OFF READ AND FEED AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist



Emily Harris, a first grade teacher at Lamar Elementary School, reads a book with Halo, left, and Derrick during the Read and Feed program at the school.

LAMAR – Students at Lamar Elementary School are getting a chance for extra help from teachers and community volunteers through Read and Feed, an after-school program that offers school work assistance and a snack.

Gay Jeffords, a reading interventionist at Lamar Elementary, and Sue Cataen-Ingram, Darlington County School District’s lead social worker, launched the program in early February. Students attend to read books, complete

homework assignments and enjoy some food. Other volunteers from Lamar Elementary and from outside of the school have made the program an early success.



Volunteers meet with students after school twice a week at Lamar Elementary for the Read and Feed program, which gives students a chance to complete schoolwork and enjoy snacks.

“Our vision is for them to come two times a week, where we will read to them and they can get help with homework,” Jeffords said. “There will be a snack for the kids. They can also get the chance to take a book home with them.”

Read and Feed is funded through a \$1,000 grant from Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, which is administered by Carolina’s Kids Inc. Each program lasts about an hour. The students in attendance are treated to a snack before breaking out

the pencils and paper to complete any homework assignments due the following day. Cataen-Ingram, Jeffords and the volunteers spread out across the room to help students in whatever ways they can.



Ikeya works on her math homework after school while participating in the Read and Feed program at Lamar Elementary School.

When homework is complete, each student chooses and reads a short book to one of the volunteers. Students earn the chance to take the book home to their families by completing the reading assignments.

Read and Feed can always use volunteers, Jeffords said. Should anyone be interested in helping out, she asked that they call the main office at 843-326-7575.

For more information about academic programs in the Darlington County School District, visit [www.darlington.k12.sc.us](http://www.darlington.k12.sc.us). For more information about Carolina’s Kids, please visit [www.carolinas-kids.org](http://www.carolinas-kids.org).

## STUDENT HEADED TO NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

Submitted by Pamela Little-McDaniel, Florence School District One Director of Public Information



Thomasena Thomas

Congratulations goes to 8th grade IB student Rebecca Liu on her winning performance during the regional spelling bee held at Francis Marion University this winter. This was Rebecca’s second consecutive win. Students from 13 different school districts participated in this event. The students battled it out for more than 30 rounds before a winner was crowned. Rebecca is a student at Williams Middle School. She will go to Washington in May to compete in the National Spelling Bee. It will be televised on ESPN.



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## TRINITY-BYRNES MARKS ANNUAL DIVERSITY DAY

Submitted by Rob Curran, Assistant Head of School



(Pictured LtoR) Rubaiya Anika, Emoni Gerald, Shane Orr, Les Echols, Autumn Scott, Marcus Crawford

DARLINGTON -- Timed to coincide with Black History Month, this was the fourth year that Trinity-Byrnes has held a Diversity Day, suspending regular classes and devoting time to explore issues of cultural difference, identity and perspectives.

A student steering group worked with faculty advisors to organize a day of activities for all students in grades 7-12. The day's theme was understanding and appreciating difference, an important and relevant topic for students at a school which has an almost 18% minority population, including 7% international students.

Students began the day by asking "What is diversity?", responses to which were turned into a short video, shown later that morning to the entire school. Small groups of students then talked about their experiences in a variety of previous school settings - some a few miles down the road, others on the other side of the world. Students from as far afield as Bangladesh, China, Belgium and Italy all shared their diverse perspectives and reflected on life and study in the U.S. International faculty, such as Assistant Head of School Rob Curran (originally from Britain) and Venezuelan Jose Colinas, both of whom also shared reflections on living and working in the US as immigrants.

The morning was rounded off by performances from each of the three school dance groups - a classical Italian Tarantella, a traditional Irish set dance, and a contemporary New York piece, all performed in the school's Sonoco gymnasium and directed by TBCS dance instructor, Susan Rowe, who is also creative director of the Florence-based SC Dance Theatre.

The afternoon featured a series of mini-workshops, with activities intended to encourage students to think about diversity and equity, and was rounded off by a Q&A with a panel of local guest speakers. Les Echols, Florence Chamber of Commerce's Director of Community and Minority Enterprise, and Shane Orr, Santee Electric Cooperative's Vice President of Customer Service, both spoke to students and faculty about the relevance of diversity in its widest sense, and answered questions from members of the audience.

"Taking time out from our regular schedule to work together on questions that are of inherent interest to teens and young adults makes a lot of sense to us. It's thought-provoking, energizing and also demonstrates the school's commitment to inclusion and to the continued internationalization of our curriculum and student body", said Curran.

Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School is a coeducational, non-discriminatory, college-preparatory day school serving students in grades seven through twelve located in Darlington and the institution fosters development of every student's intellect and character through strong academics, a wide variety of athletics, and extra-curricular activities. For more information contact April Munn, Director of Admissions, at (843) 395-9124, [amunn@trinitybyrnes.org](mailto:amunn@trinitybyrnes.org).

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## FMU HONORS LUNDY

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



The Francis Marion University School of Business awarded the Morgan B. Coker Outstanding Alumni Award for 2016 to Paul Lundy ('88) at its annual leadership breakfast, held recently. The award is named for Morgan Coker, the first dean of FMU's School of Business.

Lundy has served as chief financial officer for Dixon Hughes Goodman's Atlanta Office and was recently promoted

to a partner in the firm.

Charlotte-based Dixon Hughes Goodman is the 17th largest certified public accounting firm in the U.S.

Lundy's more than 25 years in the accounting field includes time spent in financial and operational management roles, and extensive public accounting experience. During his career, Lundy has served clients primarily concentrated in the manufacturing, distribution, technology and business services industries. Those areas continue to be his specialty as a partner with the firm.





# FDTC AWARDS FIRST-EVER COLLEGE DEGREES TO DARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Submitted by FDTC



FDTC Early College Program Students In Cap and Gown on Darlington High Lawn

DARLINGTON -- The first high school class of the Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) Early College Program will receive their Associate of Arts degrees in May 2016 with a group of seven Darlington High School (DHS) students set to make history. The 2016 graduating class includes: Thomas Gibson, Brittney Hales, Hayden Happ, Jade McPhatter, Alexis Ramirez, Russell Summerlin, and Kenya White.

"Each course in the program is taught by extremely qualified instructors," said FDTC's High School Outreach Coordinator, Angie Hayek. "While some courses are taught by DHS teachers who are also FDTC adjunct instructors, most courses are taught by FDTC faculty. Online classes have a DHS facilitator and an FDTC instructor."

Established in the summer of 2014, the

program offers students the opportunity to take college classes leading to an Associate of Arts degree. A certified college instructor teaches in the high school. After the students have successfully earned a C or higher, they will earn at least three hours of college credit for each class.

"The program offers a rigorous collegiate experience for students and a substantial financial savings for students and their parents," said Hayek. "In Early College Dual Enrollment, students have the opportunity to earn credits guaranteed to transfer to any public college or university within the state of South Carolina."

Currently, the program offers 71 college hours. Determined and committed DHS Early College Magnet Program students have the opportunity to earn an Associate of Arts degree that will also fulfill most general education requirements for any public college and university in South Carolina. Students in the class of 2016 are the first to take advantage of this opportunity.

Thomas Gibson's career goal is to obtain a degree in Computer Science or Engineering at a four-year college.

Brittney Hales has been accepted to Coker College, Converse College, and the University of South Carolina; she would like to pursue a career in athletic training.

Hayden Happ is the Founder and President of Darlington High School's Technology Club; he has already been accepted to the University of South Carolina.

Jade McPhatter plans to attend pharmacy school; she is a member of the National Honors Society, National Art Honor Society and Anchor Club.

Alexis Ramirez has career goals to become a surgeon; she has been accepted to Clemson University and the University of South Carolina.

Russell Summerlin plans to attend Francis Marion University in the fall. He is especially proud to be the first person in his family to earn a college degree.

Kenya White has aspirations to become a registered nurse. She is a member of the National Honors Society, Student Government and her high school's gospel choir.



## NEW OPTION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaug, President Greater Hartsville Chamber



HARTSVILLE -- This fall, parents in the greater Hartsville area will have a new option for educating their young children. The Montessori Day Academy of Hartsville (MDAH) plans to

open its doors at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in August, with classes running from 8 am to 2:30 pm and extended care until 5:30 pm. For parents needing early drop off, this service is also available. Since open enrollment began in early February, the Academy boasts 75% enrollment, with one slot being available for infants ages six months to one year and four slots each available for toddlers ages one to three and for students age three to six-years-old in the early childhood class.

A native of Hartsville, administrator Terie Rousseau and her husband Bob moved

to Hartsville last year from Naples, FL where she had been teaching at Florida Gulf Coast University and Arizona State University. "While living in Naples, we were exposed to the Montessori Method of learning and were ready to enroll our daughter when we moved here, but the closest Montessori schools are in Camden and Florence. After talking to other parents and educators in the community, I quickly came to realize that opening a Montessori school here in Hartsville was my purpose and I am committed 100% to the academy and this community," says Rousseau.

The Montessori Method emphasizes multiage learning in peer groups, whole-body learning, and most importantly, putting wonder and discovery in the hands of the students. MDAH is an education institution, not a daycare; lead teachers above infant level are required to have, at the minimum, bachelor's degrees. Lead teachers are also Montessori certified, which means they undergo 400-500 contact hours and an on-site internship evaluated by Montessori professionals. Unique to MDAH is that all

assistant teachers will possess Basic Montessori Foundation and Principles training.

South Carolina has the most registered Montessori schools in the country and MDAH's tuition is \$150 less per year than the average private Montessori school in South Carolina. For more information about MDAH, email [MontessoriHartsville@outlook.com](mailto:MontessoriHartsville@outlook.com) or visit [www.montessorihartsville.com](http://www.montessorihartsville.com).





## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO FRINK WHEN THE ODDS SEEM AGAINST YOU

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



CONWAY – If anyone would be deemed qualified to write life’s Book of Wrongs (sic), it would be Conway Ford Founder Sam Frink who vividly recalls his solo business launch in September of 1986 and a few bumps, bruises and bragging rights across the years leading up to that hugely courageous effort.

As the timing was not popular for nearly any kind of minority to undertake such a monumental task during that era, he said: “I, like others in similar shoes I’m sure, had to use a White male friend as my front man in those days for that initial lot. I would post him out before the public and I would assume a lesser position in the rear,” told the born entrepreneur who in fact knew the nuances of any Ford franchise function, having worked for the Ford Motor Company ten years as a developer teaching hands on leadership and determining what dealerships needed and received.

When he officially came out of the corporate closet -- even after proving himself as a worthy businessman to rank among the best -- there were still speed bumps to navigate. “I don’t have actual records but the atmosphere was gradually changing for Blacks and women to be allowed to do certain things in authoritative positions, but I do know that what we embrace today as diversity and inclusion was not observed so openly; it wasn’t even a buzz word,” he said, adding “I knew many women and men who bleached their skin to look white, but those manufacturers of such creams and cosmetics did not label their containers with the advisory that ‘this product does not change your DNA. So I have to say that when we don’t accept who we are as a people, then we are doing it to ourselves and assigning our race or gender or class to bring up the rear until we find and define our place. We did it to ourselves... that’s why we are behind so much.”

And when he even more boldly stepped out to take advantage of the Ford minority dealership program to assume the Holt Ford predecessor, the former MBE said some of his dealership’s first managers were Black... with the number one objective being to increase deliveries of sales and driven to that goal, the company’s first audit showed a loss of \$100 per unit. “So in seeking to remedy that pitfall, I told the (external) auditing team that to make up for the loss, I said I’d sell more, not knowing that if I continued the same practices, the losses would outgrow us,” he told,

admitting that he functions on common sense thinking, which, in some instances, reveals business naivete as in the case in point.

Still he attributes his mammoth success to his blind faith. “I thought that I was doing what God wanted me to do in planting seeds for my own dealership and I had enough faith to believe in His truth and not my lying (as we salesmen are often accused of.) And over the years we’ve grown to recognize that our hearts were always in the right place when it comes to being diverse... respecting and valuing one another, whether we were good at it or not.

Easily the life of the party, Frink is well liked and could be mistaken for an exceptionally well-groomed Indian comedian (in appearance and business acumen) as he turns any answer into a punchline. Then, having a smart, supportive wife who calibrates him whenever she needs to is a plus also. Juanita, also a North Carolina native, was a teacher by profession, is mother of their two sons and has numerous unofficial duties as his communications executive, multi-tasking hostess, emailer, personal trainer/life coach, scheduler and more. Add to that, she can answer his interview questions effortlessly. Their eldest, now a relocated businessman who learned startup in the seventh grade from his father, has a classmate who still works for the local dealership and their youngest serves in the US military.

A Baptist deacon, Frink enjoys perfect attendance in Sunday School and church and numerous awards from business, governmental and personal publics. Awarded the regional South Carolina Person of the Year for the southeast (representing seven states), he is a sustaining member of Myrtle Beach and Conway Chambers of Commerce, the AARP, NAACP, Coastal Carolina board and countless other causes and organizations. A two-time gubernatorial appointee by as many governors, he said he gained popularity by “instilling intestinal fortitude in others and sharing the belief that if things are not going our way, they have to get better and they will when we make them. What many folk don’t realize is that although this coastal area is popular and growing, it is not booming business equally everyday for everyone and when I learned that, why of course I had to share that newfound knowledge with others whose restaurants, hotels, boat or shoe shops, churches, even car lots and malls... were not full every business hour. Walking the boulevards and encouraging others also doubles as my exercise and that reduced my stress and other levels tremendously,” he told.

To become who and what he is today required some kind of background and some non corporate training that was more like corporal instruction. Aside from ‘learning to back away from business dealerships, minding his own affairs, avoiding stressful activity and practice being ready for when the next hour arrives -- whatever it brings -- to get my blood pressure down,” Frink said he avoided

early death more times than he cares to count.

For if young Sam Frink and his family’s prediction that he would follow directly in his lookalike father’s path had come to pass, he would have been gone from this earth at age 49. However, while he was preparing for his demise, he was strategizing for a bigger legacy than being just like his daddy who did transition before his 50th birthday. And his dad, for whom Frink High School in Lenoir, NC is named, helped him get to where he is now. “Oh yes, there were parental whippings and advice and warnings, but none like I have endured in my adult life. When I was young my sister Nettie took pictures of me praying and those prayers, plus the ones from years before and after, have kept me. I can’t forget the fire in my father’s eyes when he – the principal – saw his 7-yr-old son (me) driving a bus at school. It seems that that day did not ever end because my cousin and I talked daddy out of killing us,” he shared.

He is still going strong, too, showing up at the dealerships as if he has a clock to punch. Retired, he calls himself the employees’ cheap labor and expresses the most sincere gratitude to “be effective in a community more than 29 years longer than my dad.” He admits that he has customers who come in expecting to see him, telling him what detailed service they want after so many years of mutual loyalty and has inherited a new generation of customers who come in to claim what their parents said Frink promised them decades ago.

Now a starter and a finisher, he said he looks “around and accepts wisdom from those who want to help” and tells himself every morning that “yesterday is a good time to start a new goal.” In recent years, his parent company took over the failing adjacent Chrysler/Jeep/Dodge lot and together the bustling 27-acre conglomerate site houses a Hertz rental office plus other small businesses. In Loris he offers pre-owned cars at Twin State Autos.

Wishing he had invented cough syrup in another business life, he said his autobiography would at any rate be called “What A Blessed Black Boy!”

We are compelled to read that too.

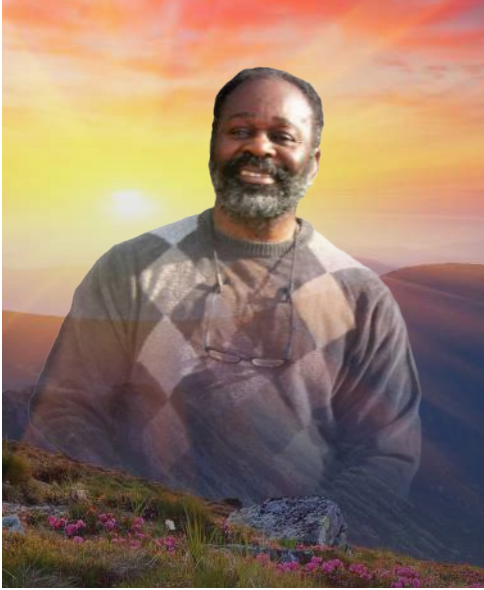




# Ode To Ed

## VALUING LIFE'S EBBS AND FLOWS IN KNOWING WHAT GOES UP...

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



As this publication showcases the 'ups' of our times, there are some significant 'downs' that need chronicling as well and in this edition, you will see --like never before -- juxtaposed to our cover feature centerfold of a hero thriving among us an attempt to pay homage to another hero who has fallen.

No amount of words or space could accommodate expressions of thanks or adequately bid farewell to The Hon. Ed Robinson, a veteran Florence City Councilman who transitioned in late March during a hospital visit. So as friend, beneficiary, student and observer of Ed, I am rendering this up close and personal glimpse of his days of thunder and glory on earth.

Paralleling a few lyrics to the song "Ebb Tide" -- which describes how the ocean mystifies yet blesses and regulates the earth by the flowing quality of water, especially the rhythmic and building forces it possesses-- with Ed's impact on those he touched and served, certain images come to mind.

Carl Sigman wrote in the 1953 song as though he could see Ed coming to be and the forces he would wield (and the corollary is in parentheses): "First the tide rushes in (conjures thoughts of Ed arriving to blaze a new perimeter incrementally every time); "Plants a Kiss on the Shore" (Ed makes his mark and establishes further boundaries as needed for the times); Then rolls out to sea and the sea is very still once more (for Ed to huddle and consult the powers of heaven and earth for strategic direction).

This progressive publication was privileged to have been office neighbors with Ed and in trying to decide where we would categorically place our tribute to him; we agreed that he could have fit in any of our sections. So here are all

of them in which we embrace him.

**Business** -- Ed Robinson was a businessman who tried, sometimes futilely, most times triumphantly, to get Florence going and enabling those who seemed overlooked by the mainstream.

**Spirituality** -- Anyone struggling so selflessly has to come up for air sometimes and Ed's spiritual connection empowered him to keep up the grunting, daunting task of foot soldier, trench-digging service.

**Education** -- Not only in his classroom as math teacher but a mere street or TV talk show conversation with Ed would leave the other parties enlightened by his thoughts and expressions.

**Special** -- No one can disagree that Ed was this and more as the unique, one-of-a-kind, incomparable, irreplaceable, unpredictable and (good) crazy genius he was.

**Financial** -- Often sacrificing or neglecting opportunities for his own personal gain to choose humility and always resist filthy lucre, Ed was financial and worked vigorously to see that everyone got their equitable piece of the pie.

**Health** -- Which does not always apply to physical, spiritual, mental, financial or relationship wellbeing, but the strongest, clearest, most absolutely unwavering vision and mindset describe Ed's reason for marching, leading, demonstrating his will and galvanizing forces about him to make public wrongs right.

**Lifestyles** -- Unflinchingly steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work to improve humanity's conditions and

from South Carolina State University in 1971. In 1966, after one year of college, Ed was inducted into the US Army but received an honorable (student) discharge to resume his studies. He taught math at Moore Junior High for several years and after leaving the school district served as a math tutor at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

A noted entrepreneur, he owned Ed's Driver Training School, was a licensed appraiser and building contractor, Owner of Shingles Lounge and part owner of Ed and Sam's Amoco station. Moreover, Ed was a humanitarian, civil rights activist, husband/father/grandfather/great-grandfather. In the spring of 1989, the people of District Two elected Ed to serve them on the Florence City Council and did so repetitively as he died in that position after 27 years.



He achieved and accomplished much. His affiliations included Chairman of the Board for PDRTA, Loving Arms board member, former chair of the Municipal Association of Black Elected Officials, founder of Carolina Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, Coordinator of the Florence Branch of National Action Network, organizer of the annual King Day March and Rally and founder of the Florence Community Development Agency.

Recognized as the 'voice' of his community, Ed was a member of Cumberland United Methodist Church and the Bible Study Group of Church of Florence.

Gone too soon, Edward Levern Robinson died in March at age 69 from complications of heart surgery in Charleston. His homegoing celebration drew thousands from far and near and it is too sad to say that the vast majority in attendance did not show up for his marches when the opportunity presented. To borrow from Don McLean's "Vincent", "perhaps they'll listen now". And possibly without lights or cameras, Ed is saying to his constituents and followers that it is time for continued constructive action.



experiences, Ed sought to champion the cause of social justice and be the change agent for equality among all men in every role he undertook.

From his obituary, Ed was born August 2, 1946 in Florence to Samuel Robinson Sr. and Geathel Matthews Robinson. A 1964 Wilson High graduate, he earned a B.S. in Mathematics

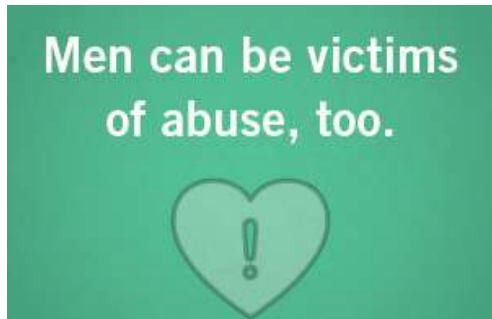


# Sexual Assault Awareness



## A VOLATILE CONVERSATION ON WHAT TO DO WHEN SHE IS THE ABUSER

by Anna Bowman



Editor's Note: Color coding reflects gendertalk in that the female speaks in pink words and the male, the blue.

On July 23, 2016 I will marry my best friend; the man I love. But it wasn't easy getting to this point. In fact, it was a six-year roller coaster ride. We started dating in 2006, the year I graduated high school. We both went to college in Bamberg, so we were always together. I used to bring her food every morning! We had a few breakups here and there, and in 2007 we moved in together.

It all started with us play fighting; friends use to tell us we should stop but we'd say "we're only playing; its love taps." Then one day he was texting and acting like he didn't want me to see. But shouldn't we tell people why I was texting? Like when we first moved in together we annoyed each other. There were things I didn't like, there were things you didn't like; that's what led me to texting other people. Don't just make it seem like we moved in together and I started texting other people. But when we first moved in together things were fine but, it wasn't long before incidents started happening.

One thing is, when he feels like things aren't going the way he wants, instead of talking with the woman he's with, he'll confide in another female. And, one thing females will do is try to be the woman that you say your woman is not. That's how one thing leads to another.

Anyway, I went through your phone and found inappropriate text messages between you and another female; that sent my angersome place that I shouldn't have been! I packed my stuff and when you realized I was leaving you tried to stop me. I feel like, I should have just let you go. Finally, after you thought I was going to hit you with my car, you let me leave. But, just as I've done, I ended up coming back.

I can't remember details of all the altercations we had but, I do remember constantly hitting you whenever you made me upset; and you would never hit me back. But this particular time I recall hitting you and saying "Hit me B---h!" I remember that day! I would get mad and want to slap you when we would go bowling and you'd get mad because

you were losing. I couldn't have a good time because you always made it seem like we were competitors.

But the details of the altercation that landed you in jail, is a littleblurry in my mind because I blacked out and saw red. I recall feeling like I just needed to leave. I loved you, but I was no longer happy. I remember packing to leave and you hiding stuff from me. I also remember spitting blood in your face, throwing the broom at you, you telling me to leave, and you calling the cops. I recall answering "No" when the cops asked, "did he hit you?" and I refused to sign their papers; I wasn't pressing charges. The head cop said, "You don't have to sign it, he's going to jail anyway!" They informed me that you'd already told them you hit me! They took me to the hospital because my nose was bleeding and they said it looked crooked. I told them my nose bleeds when I get mad. I don't remember any other details.

Okay, so this is what happened that night. It was a lot of little stuff that led up to this, but that night you came home and were packing up your stuff; I was watching TV. You were mad because I hid those things from you and... do you remember the part about walking in front of the TV? No. Well, you walked in front of the



TV and knocked the antenna off, and then you started knocking stuff off the table. I took it as you antagonizing me again. Next, you started knocking my stuff on the floor. Now that got me mad! So I jumped up and landed on your speakers crushing them. That's when she charged me like a bull. I didn't mean to hit her but, I started swinging and hit her in her nose. When she saw the blood she said, "you Motherf...er" and spit blood in my face. After that we started fighting because she tried to charge me again. When I finally got away from her, I heard a strange noise and turn around to see a broom coming at my head 60 mi/hr. I ducked and it hit the wall leaving a hole. I called the cops because she pulled a knife. I don't remember pulling a knife. I told you to



get out the house; the cops are on the way. But I was the dumb one for calling them, instead of taking her; they escorted me off to jail.

We took a hiatus and in 2012 reunited. I know we needed time apart and she had to deal with the demon inside her. We've learned from our mistakes; over the years I've learned how to control my anger and now know that I've had built up anger that had nothing to do with him. We've learned how to talk things out and are doing much better these days. We now have a loving family, she's an excellent mother, and I can't wait to make her my wife.

People think men can't be victims of abuse and violence but; they can. Then when it happens, no one wants to believe it. I was raised not to lay hands on a woman but, where do you draw the line? Because of her actions, I was fined, ordered to take anger-management classes, lost my job, future jobs, and my life suffered. But, there were no repercussions for her. Although we worked through our problems; others will not.

When HE cries abuse, LISTEN.





# Sexual Assault Awareness



## SAAM OBSERVANCE BRINGS MORE TO LIGHT

by Mallory Brayboy



DARLINGTON - April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in the U.S. During this time people shine the light on sexual

violence and how to prevent it. In the late 1980s, the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault polled state sexual assault coalitions to determine a date for a national Sexual Assault Awareness Week. A week in April was chosen and by the late 1990s many advocates began coordinating activities and events throughout not just this selected week but the entire month of April. The dedicated week thus became a month long recognition of sexual assault awareness and prevention activities.

The first national observance of SAAM was in April of 2001 and the teal ribbon is the symbol of sexual violence prevention. Sexual assault coalitions throughout the United States assist the National Sexual Violence Resource Center each year in choosing the theme, slogan, resources and materials for the national SAAM campaign.

According to The South Carolina Coalition

Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault there were 1,167 cases that involved both domestic violence and sexual assault in South Carolina in 2014. Lt. Kimberly Nelson sees cases like this on a regular basis. She volunteers her time and service at The Passageway of Hope, a domestic violence shelter in Darlington where the majority of cases seen are sexual forms of violence.

Lt. Nelson has been in law enforcement for 18 years and has been involved with The Passageway of Hope since its very beginning. She supports the shelter by providing legal guidance to the victims. "I let them know what is acceptable and how to go about setting things up legally", says Nelson. Aside from volunteering at the site, Nelson is a school resource officer, public information officer and victims' advocate for the police department as well as Lieutenant over the S.R.O.

Mary Capers had the vision to start The Passageway of Hope and her vision began to sprout three years ago. Workers and volunteers give due diligence to planning, financing, and preparing the shelter and were finally able to open its doors in 2015. Nelson says the shelter is an added resource for the Pee Dee Coalition,

who refers victims to them.

In light of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the shelter is planning a Prayer Breakfast for April to uplift victims of sexual assault. This event will feature different speakers delivering encouraging words. The shelter hopes to have a survivor of domestic violence included in the lineup. Nelson says she entered the law enforcement field simply to help people through difficult situations. "Unfortunately, most of the time when law enforcement meets someone it's when they're going through a traumatic experience or experiencing some kind of trauma. I reassure that we're here to help them and guide them on the right steps needed to move forward successfully", says Nelson.

The Passage Way of Hope was created with the intentions of assisting people who need it the most. With one year under their belt, the shelter has already made a positive impact in the lives of local residents and hopes to help more individuals in the coming years. "We're still growing and trying to branch out and become stronger in what we do. We're just an asset to all the other branches like the Pee Dee Coalition. They service so many victims. We just wanna be there to help out", says Lt. Nelson.

# Child Abuse Prevention

## SAD PREMISES YIELD GLAD OUTCOMES

by Mallory Brayboy



The CARE (Child Abuse Resource and Evaluation) House of the Pee Dee is a private, non-profit organization that provides comprehensive interviewing, therapy and supportive advocacy

in cases of child abuse. The office, located in Florence, sees sexual abuse cases most often. These case types are followed by physical abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, drug endangerment, and witness to homicides. "It's not what some people would consider the happiest of jobs but it's very rewarding and fulfilling", says Meg Temple, Director of the CARE House.

Mrs. Phillip's\* currently visits the CARE House with her two daughters and finds the house's hospitality and service exceptional. "What I really enjoy is the fact that they take every child and they tend to their needs specifically. It doesn't matter what happened to them, they really tend to their needs at that moment, and every child is special here", says Phillips who dropped her daughters, ages 7 and 5 at the time, off for a play date in November 2015. The girls spent two hours

with their playmate and her father. When the family arrived back home, things seemed normal but the family was in for a shock. Phillips says her youngest daughter took a nap, asked for a piece of candy from the candy jar, then casually told her mom that her friend's father made her, her older sister, and his own daughter touch his private area.

Her oldest daughter was better able to handle the frightening situation while her youngest daughter experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. "She didn't want to attend classes taught by male teachers. She didn't want to go to the bathroom alone and would end up urinating on herself. She had nightmares every night", says Phillips. With time and counseling from the CARE House, she has been showing significant improvement.

Though they are not affiliated with one another, the CARE House has a good working relationship with most of the law enforcement and departments of social services in the counties that they serve. These organizations send referrals to the CARE House. "There might be a time where parents are not able to reach someone and our advocate then comes in to provide support

and help that the family needs. She also goes to court with the family and explains every step and process, it's a very good support network", says Temple.

Law enforcement suggested a list of organizations to aid the girls during their distress and the Phillip's family chose the CARE House. After their forensic interview, Mrs. Phillips chose to continue her daughter's counseling with the CARE House because of "the kid friendly atmosphere and all the help they offered". The girls began their counseling sessions in December and will continue to seek counseling as needed.

The CARE House is a participant in the Big Give Pee Dee on May 3rd 2016. They are also beneficiaries of the Child Abuse Prevention Run (5k/10k and Kids Fun Run) held at Carver Elementary on April 16th. The theme will be Super Heroes and participants are encouraged to dress up. Proceeds from Leadership Florence's downtown gala on April 21st will also benefit the CARE House. Follow the CARE House of the Pee Dee on Facebook and Twitter for more information. \* name changed for privacy



## COME AND KNOCK ON OUR DOOR

by Stephanie Navarro



All 4 Autism Resource Center is waiting for everyone to become a stakeholder in some capacity! Offering case management and referral services, All 4 Autism will help families facing autism brave the overwhelming whirlwind of terminology, applications, therapies and services. More than this, All 4 Autism will offer a safe space with an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding for parents and families of autistic individuals.

Jessica Brown, the Executive Director of All 4 Autism, has recently been hired to oversee an aggressive strategic plan that opens the agency now via telephone, Facebook and website referral and support services with a physical location expected to be opened in less than 18 months. Brown has always had a heart for the less fortunate. She has worked in or around the nonprofit industry for 15 years combining her skills in organization and planning with a passion for helping those around her.

All 4 Autism will be a special assignment for Jessica, however, because she understands intimately what families with autistic children go through. Her son, Jack, was diagnosed with autism in 2005 after nearly two years of searching for an answer to his developmental speech delays. Jessica faced a lot of dismissing early on from family, friends and even healthcare professionals who were quick to explain away Jack's symptoms. It was a difficult time for her. "I was a recluse for a long time," says Jessica. "It was very sad and very lonely." The diagnosis, when it finally came, did little to bring relief. Jessica discovered there was nearly no help locally and found herself traveling regularly to Surfside, Columbia

and Charleston for services. "I was staying up all night reading and meanwhile my son is falling further and further behind. You feel like you're failing as a parent," explains Jessica.

This is exactly what Jessica and the Board of Directors at All 4 Autism, the majority of which are parents of autistic individuals, hope to help other families avoid. "We do not want anyone to feel lost or helpless or to feel that you're not doing all you can do," explains Angela Watts, President of the All 4 Autism Board. "There's nothing more therapeutic to hear from someone than 'me too.'"

Autism spectrum disorder can be difficult for people to understand, especially if they have not dealt with it directly. Autism presents with a range of symptoms that vary widely and are often unique to each individual, but most cope with some level of social anxiety and heightened sensitivity. If the individual is also dealing with other



All 4 Autism Executive Director Jessica Brown, Board Member Amy Pennington and Board President Angela Watts. The sons of these proud mothers, Jack, Griffin and Landon, respectively, are each on the Autism spectrum.

physical or mental handicaps, the effects of autism can be compounded.

Living with autism is further complicated by the fact that the disorder is not visible to others. "Our kids look like everybody else, but how they experience life is completely different," says Angela. Something as simple as the organ hitting a high note at church can cause an autistic child to react in what appears to most like a tantrum with very little a parent can do except to let it run its course. "I had an older lady tell me once that I clearly don't spank my child and I should," says Jessica. "But what others do not understand is that a tag in my shirt might bother me but it feels like nails on a chalkboard to them." When an autistic child tantrums, it is often because they do not know how to handle a



Gabby Ramos and her mother Jackie enjoy the activities at All 4 Autism's Puzzle Mania camp held last summer. This summer, All 4 Autism will be sponsoring the Autism Avengers Day Camp, July 11-21, 2016.

situation and cannot express what is wrong. "You don't want other people to think less of you or your child," explains Angela. "It takes a lot of courage for the parent and the child to go into unknown situations because you can't know how the child will react."

Celebrating the courage of the autistic individuals and their families is what All 4 Autism does. "Just knowing there are other people out there like you. Providing that support system will be tremendous," says Jessica. All 4 Autism referral and information services are currently available online at [www.All4Autism.org](http://www.All4Autism.org) or on Facebook. They will also be sponsoring a two-week long Autism Avengers Day Camp July 11-21st. This camp will bring together autistic children in a fun, interactive and specialized setting where they can continue to learn and grow. More details about the camp are available on the website or by calling 843-471-6295.

Both Jessica and Angela agree the benefits of raising an autistic child are tremendous. Increased patience and understanding, judging others less harshly – these are just a few of the gifts raising an autistic child can bring. "We do not take a single moment for granted," says Jessica. This is what they hope to share with those who visit the All 4 Autism Resource Center, so come and knock on their door. They are here for you.

To support All 4 Autism Resource Center, participate in the ZombieWalk in downtown Florence in the fall, in the Paces for Pieces Music Hall Marathon & 5K Run/Walk in the spring, or you can also donate directly at [www.all4autism.org](http://www.all4autism.org) or mail to P.O. Box 13477, Florence, SC 29505.



# Autism Awareness Month

## BROWDER AND TEAMMATES MOVING THE NEEDLE ON AUTISM IN THE PEE DEE

by Anna Bowman



Autism Spectrum Disorder is a serious neurodevelopment disorder that impairs a child's ability to communicate and interact with others. It also includes restricted repetitive behaviors, interests and activities. These issues cause significant impairment in social, occupational and other areas of functioning.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is now defined by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), as a single disorder that includes disorders that were previously considered separate.

The Center for Disease and Control (CDC) estimates that about 1 in 68 children has been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and it's nearly five times more common among boys than among girls.

With the growing number of children being diagnosed with one of several types of ASD, the work that is being done by the South Carolina Department of Disabilities & Special Needs, becomes more important every year. Cathi Browder, Regional Administrator, of the Pee Dee

Autism Division, has seen the increase across the Pee Dee, and in fact the state of South Carolina. "In the 12 counties that our organization serves, our client numbers grew steadily, and in 2015 we had 1,155 people eligible for services from the Pee Dee Regional Autism Offices. This number reflected 946 males and 209 females, ranging in ages from 2 to 67," said Browder.

The Autism Division of the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs handles issues regarding individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the people who assist them on a regular basis. The three main service areas of the Autism Division are evaluation, consultation and training. The Autism Division also operates the Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) Waiver Program. The Autism Division has offices located in Florence, Charleston, Columbia, and Spartanburg.

One of the Autism Division's primary missions is to provide effective training and consultation to families, professionals, and other people involved with the individuals with autism. The ultimate goal of the Autism Division is to improve the lives of people with autism living in South Carolina.

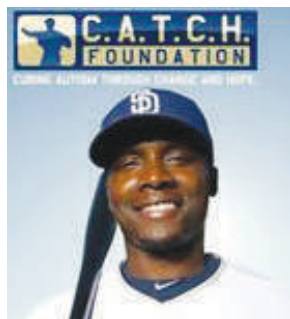
Browder, a graduate of Limestone College with a BA degree, holds an M.Ed. from the University of South Carolina and works with a highly trained group of autism specialists, most of whom have master's degrees in related fields

and extensive training in applied behavior analysis to ensure the best results for every client. "The Pee Dee office has five consultants serving 12 counties. Allison Rowe serves Darlington, Chesterfield and Marlboro counties. Claire Wise serves Georgetown, Williamsburg and Clarendon. Andrea Walker serves Sumter, Lee and Florence, and I serve Horry, Marion and Dillon. Rebecca Mussman serves the Pee Dee Center, and coordinates our evaluation clinic," said Browder.

The SC Department of Disabilities & Special Needs is located on the Pee Dee Center Campus, 714 National Cemetery Road, Florence. The hours of operations are Monday-Friday from 8:30am – 5pm. Even though there isn't a cure for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Browder wants people to know that early, intensive treatment can make a big difference in the lives of many of our area children as well as effective educational programs. If you or a family member believes you have autism spectrum disorder, please call toll-free 1-800-289-7012. This toll-free referral line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Messages that include a contact name and phone number should be left. Calls will be returned during normal business hours within two business days. If the applicant meets screening criteria, he/she will be referred to DDSN's Care Coordination Unit and assigned to a Care Coordinator.

## CREATIVE HELP ABOUNDS FOR AUTISM

by Les Echols



Orlando Hudson

DARLINGTON - Early autism detection, awareness and treatment are vital in the eventual elimination of the disease. The C.A.T.C.H. Foundation helps to lead a worldwide charge,

and it started right here in South Carolina.

The C.A.T.C.H. Foundation was founded by Orlando Hudson, a 10 year MLB veteran, All Star and 3 times Gold Glove Recipient. Orlando is committed to bringing awareness to Autism, as he has a first cousin who was diagnosed at an early age. An active volunteer for organizations that promote Autism research advancement, Hudson created the C.A.T.C.H. (Curing Autism through Change and Hope) Foundation, to provide resources and a support system for youth coping with Autism.

Under Hudson's Leadership, The organization works to develop and maintain a high level of awareness of the needs of the community; working

collaboratively with representatives of other sectors of the community on issues of importance to the foundation; and representing the foundation in local and/or national forums. The Foundation has a number of practical programs that assist in their efforts.

The C.A.T.C.H. a Dream Scholarship Fund awards scholarships to children who cope with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and has a demonstrated financial need. The students prioritized for assistance should reside in Darlington or the surrounding Pee Dee area, with parents that intend for them to attend the Autism Academy of South Carolina (AASC). Consideration is given to families with a financial need. Parents are encouraged to submit a scholarship application provided by the Autism Academy of South Carolina.

The C.A.T.C.H. Grant program allows for teachers and parents to apply once a year for funding to purchase items that will assist in enhancing an Autistic child's life. From iPads to speech therapy, the C.A.T.C.H. Foundation's grants contribute to improving a child's life. The Rookie Reader Program is another school initiative that promotes literacy and a passion for reading. "Through our volunteers, we are able to visit local

schools and read to children of all ages in several counties," Hudson said.

For the past eight years, the C.A.T.C.H. Foundation has hosted an annual charity weekend. This weekend brings out families from all walks of life for three days of complete fun. Events during the weekend include a charity basketball game, bowling fundraiser and this year, an adult do-over prom. Proceeds from the weekend allow the C.A.T.C.H. Foundation to raise money for its efforts of helping families who live with Autism and generating awareness.

The Homerun Holiday Christmas Dinner takes place in Darlington and though it is not a fundraiser, it is a night for families who live with Autism to enjoy food, fun and entertainment. The Foundation's President, Orlando Hudson, dresses as Santa Clause and gives invited children a gift sack with Nike shoes and a toy. Events like this are able to take place with dollars collected from fundraising events." Through the donations received, we are able to host a petting zoo family day for the children, which is a great form of therapy for children with autism," he further shared.

For more information on the CATCH Foundation, email [catch.charity@gmail.com](mailto:catch.charity@gmail.com)



## A LIFE OF LONG SERVICE SHOULD BE FOR ALL

by Stephanie Navarro



Mary Butler of Darlington stands in the food preparation room of The Lord Cares, a nonprofit she helped create nearly 30 years ago. For more information about The Lord Cares and how you can help, call 843-395-1001.

Can you think of anything you've done for 30 years? It is pretty rare these days to find anyone who dedicates that length of time to a single activity. But looking for those few who do is worth the search because that kind of stamina, dedication and determination is just plain inspiring. Together, Mary Butler of Darlington, SC and Delores J. Wilson of Marion, SC have dedicated over 100 years of service back to their communities.

Mary retired in 1966 after 30 years of working for the state of South Carolina. The majority of that time she served as a child services case worker and Children and Family Services supervisor for the Department of Social Services in Darlington. After retirement, the families Mary had met throughout her years as a case worker weighed on her mind. "I worked with all of these indigent families," said Mary. "I felt like there were a lot of people that were falling through the cracks and needed help." It was not until Pastor Olin Whitener joined her church, Darlington Presbyterian, however, that Mary thought it would be possible to do more. Pastor Whitener was a firm believer in the power of community service and helped Mary research possibilities. A committee was soon formed that laid out a plan to bring a service center to Darlington that could respond to the immediate needs of its neighbors. The idea was enthusiastically received by churches and businesses in the community and, from there, The Lord Cares was born. The first step was to find a location. A local businessman donated the building which still houses the agency to this day, though it originally had a dirt floor and a walkway built out of wooden crates. All Mary saw was potential. With a lot of work and a lot of help from local businesses, the building was transformed.

In no time, The Lord Cares opened its doors to offer services with Mary and Dot Truluck, another social service retiree, serving as the first managers, free of charge. "They wanted to pay us," explains Mary. "But we knew that we were able to take care of ourselves. Not that we have a lot but we felt like it was something we could

offer to the community." That was 1988. Fast forward 28 years and you can still find Mary serving as the Monday shift manager surrounded by a group of volunteers that remains enthusiastic. "Mary is definitely the cornerstone of The Lord Cares," says Sandra Timmons, a volunteer who works the Monday shift with Mary. "I'm very proud of her and I respect her a lot." In its nearly 30 year existence, The Lord Cares has assisted in the establishment of the Darlington County Free Medical Clinic and has helped thousands of local residents. "I don't think anything I've done is that impressive," says Mary. "I feel like when the Lord blesses you, you should share in some way with somebody less fortunate. So, as long as I can do this, I will."

Delores has also dedicated her life to a career for others as well as in service for the community. From an early age, she knew she wanted to be a teacher. "I knew it wouldn't be a lot of money," says Delores. "But it was never about the pay. I wanted to reach people." Soon after moving to Marion from Greenville, Delores started working for the Marion County School District where she was a math teacher for 30 years. Delores inspired students to excel in and out of the classroom, directing the school's chorus and serving as advisor the Math Club among various other



Delores J. Wilson of Marion has dedicated her life in service to others. In her limited free time, she serves as "Wilson Taxi Service" to her beloved grandchildren and recently completed a throw of which she is quite proud.

activities. After retiring in 2000, Delores returned to education over the next 15 years in various capacities for the school district and state before retiring again last year. "I'll probably go back next year," adds Delores.

With 45 years of her life dedicated to education, it would seem like Delores would not have had much time for anything else. That is far from the case. For 47 years, Delores has been an active member of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., serving as President of the local chapter for 12 years. She now serves as second Vice President and Advisor. To promote the organization's four main principles of scholarship, service, sisterhood and finer womanhood, Delores has engaged in countless service and community-based projects. She has regularly visited homebound seniors,

hosted parties at the local retirement home and planned annual events to honor and highlight the efforts of other women in her community. "I'm just a service person," says Delores. "I'm not a stay at home person. I'm on the go all the time."

Besides Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Delores has also been a loyal member of several other



Gloria Hill, Sandra Timmons and Pearl Hammonds (L-R) volunteer with Mary Butler at The Lord Cares as the Monday morning food bag prep team. They have volunteered together as a team for nearly 4 years.

civic organizations based in service including the Elks and Order of the Eastern Star for more than 30 years and the Shriner's for some 20 years. At her church, Delores teaches Sunday school, advises the Youth Women's Auxiliary and serves as Assistant Clerk, Assistant Financial Secretary, Youth Advisor and in the Missionary Society. She serves on advisory boards for the City Council and Marion County Board of Education and tutors in math at the RISE Mentoring program. For all of these activities, Delores is constantly trying to recruit new members. "I get told a lot, 'We do a lot in our churches.' I do too," says Delores. "But we are a small community here so we all need to get out and help Marion." With boundless energy and newly found free time now that she has retired again, there is no doubt Delores will find more ways to help Marion. "I don't know how to stop," says Delores. "It is in my bones to serve."

When it comes to service, it's never too late to start and there's no one way to do it. Seek out your hometown heroes like Mary and Delores for some remarkable inspiration. Challenge yourself to a life of service and good luck keeping up with these ladies.

What we do for ourselves dies  
with us – what we do for  
others remains and  
is immortal.

- Albert Pike



## OH, HOW HELPFUL THESE HANDS AND HEARTS ARE

by Michelle Beckham



Danny Floyd a firefighter/engineer at the Lake City Fire Department. (Photo credit to Mike Eaddy)

Somewhere in time along one of the many paths in life I traveled down, I asked a gentleman how he knew he wanted to be a first responder. His response was one I will never forget and went a little something like, "I just knew." After I mulled this over for a bit, I ultimately decided to press more in hopes to gain further clarity. How does one just know? As the last bit of pronunciation fell from my mouth

to ask this question, it met another quick and secure answer, "I do what I was called to do."

He did just know. And, he's not the only one.

First responders as I've experienced them, stand united not only in task but as one incredibly indestructible and supportive family. Although some first responders are paid, some volunteer, but many do both. There's an abundance of compassion, empathy, and drive to want to help others in the most helpless situations. Perhaps Savannah Eaddy, a volunteer firefighter for South Lynchess and Lake City summed this up well, "I only volunteer. I don't get a pay check or have a shift to work on. Instead I take time out of my own schedule to go to calls and drills and I train and train. Volunteers are a special breed of firefighter. We don't do it for the money; we do it out of the pure love for the job."

Savannah who has been volunteering for four years also went to mention that she takes risking her own life knowing that she may be the difference in someone else's life and she may be the person that's in the right place at the right time. Savannah's husband, Mike Eaddy, has been a firefighter for 13 years in Lake City. Mike is a full time firefighter/engineer at the Lake City Fire Department in addition to a volunteer lieutenant for South Lynchess Fire Department. Mike began volunteering within a year of his own home catching fire in 1985. Mike mentions, "The pay for a volunteer is the complete compassion of others. A hug or a thank you, even a smile is better than any pay I get from being a career firefighter."



Savannah Eaddy a volunteer firefighter at the Lake City Fire Department pictured with her and Mike Eaddy's son, Wyatt. (Photo credit to Mike Eaddy)

Alongside Savannah and Mike, is Danny Floyd who has been a firefighter for 13 years and began because his family and friends did it. He states, "I love what I do in helping people who need help." Mike also recalls he enjoys being a hero for kids, "Not just saving them but being a fireman." Just a week ago a lady and her son came up to Mike as he was eating because the woman's son was having fit to come say hi to a fireman. It may have made this eight year old days to hi but Mike states, "he made my week."

First responders regardless of being paid or volunteering run high in passion for helping, empathy, and compassion for all others. There's

an immeasurable amount of strength, courage, and bravery in every first responder. The sacrifice, loss of time with their families, missing out on holiday meals, or family togetherness... times they may sleep light or not at all, a head full of moments or traumatic memories they wish they could shake or forget. These heroes day after day anchor themselves to their calling wearing the heaviest gear in order to be prepared for that moment's notice to respond. To our first responders - thank you for all that you do, every mission you were called to do, and all that you are. Additionally, a special prayer request for Tessie Odom Smith for all prayer warriors.

"If you want to make a difference in someone's life, if you want to know what you are made of and find a part of yourself that will make you feel proud, become a volunteer firefighter. It's something you can never regret." – Savannah Eaddy

## HEEDING THE CALL TO SERVE

Submitted by Cynthia Schaefer



Cynthia & Dennis Schaefer

HARTSVILLE --Local resident Dennis Schaefer has composed a traditional-style Mass for Chorus and Orchestra, dedicated to his adopted city of Hartsville and the Hartsville Community Chorus in honor of Director Dr. James Beaumier's completion of 25 years as director of the chorus. The world premiere of this work will be performed, along with the highly-acclaimed Mass for the

Children by the famous modern English composer John Rutter, at 7 PM May 7 at West Hartsville Baptist Church on W. Carolina Avenue.

Schaefer, a music education graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon W. Va. (class of 1970), taught choral and orchestral music for some years in Parkersburg, WV before moving back to his home state of New Jersey, where he met his wife of 44 years, Cynthia (nee Victoria) a graduate nurse of the University of the Eastin Manila, Philippines. Both husband and wife will perform as soloists in the program.

Until his relocation to South Carolina in 2006, the composer, (organist/choir director of Trinity Methodist Church in Clifton, NJ from 1972 until 1989, subsequently organist/soloist etc. at Old South Church [est. 1723, Bergenfield NJ], First Presbyterian Church [Tenafly, NJ] and St. Paul's Episcopal Church [Englewood, NJ] was considered by many to have the finest private music collection in the state of New Jersey. Schaefer, an avid reader with a library of more than 10,000 books ranging in date from the early 1400's to modern times (with special emphasis on 17th century drama; "rogue's literature;" 18th century satirical poetry; history from ancient times through World War II; and works on philosophy, witchcraft, and the occult), has largely dedicated his life to exploring the forgotten byways that have helped formed modern culture and scholarship. His model from early youth has been Chaucer's 14th-century Canterbury Tale character who would "gladly learne and gladly teache." In the composition to be performed at this concert, the composer says his purpose was "to present a modest work to the singers, orchestra, and the public that would be enjoyable to perform and listener-friendly to the audience, tuneful and immediately appealing."



## THE HEALING POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

by Stephanie Navarro



Volunteer Emmanuel Burris helps client Tara Nichols to her car after receiving food assistance from New Deliverance Outreach Ministry.

PAMPLICO -- When District Elder Kenneth Wilder and his wife, First Lady of the Church and church secretary, Brenda Wilder first opened the New Deliverance Outreach, they hoped to minister to the spiritual needs of those in this underserved and seemingly

forgotten town. They soon found that the needs of those they served went well beyond the spiritual and decided to add a food ministry. The program was designed to help sustain individuals and families in the community as they struggled to make ends meet. They could not imagine, however, how their efforts would go on to save the life of one man.

When the New Deliverance Outreach food ministry first opened its doors in 2004, Donnie Damon's life centered around one thing, feeding his addiction to drugs and alcohol. "I was a functioning addict," explains Donnie. "But I was terrible. Drugs and alcohol took precedence over everything else." Donnie grew up in the Florence area and joined the Army after graduating high school, working as a supply clerk and baker. He loved being in the military, but at the age of 22, succumbing to peer pressure and a desire to be socially accepted by his peers, he tried drugs for the first time. That was the start of what snowballed into a 23 year journey of drug addiction.

After serving six years in the military, Donnie chose to get out and returned home to Florence where his drug use grew. "I didn't have any self-esteem. The drugs take that from you," says Donnie. "I was tired and just wanted to sleep so I tried to commit suicide." Donnie went into his mother's bathroom and began taking any pill he could, two by two. That was on a Monday. Donnie woke up the following Saturday. Finally aware of the depth of his addiction, Donnie's family and doctors put him into his first drug rehabilitation program. It didn't work. None of the 14 treatment facilities which Donnie went to over the next two decades worked either. "I wasn't ready," says Donnie. "You can go as many times as you want but if you haven't made up your mind that you want to quit, then it doesn't do any

good." While battling his addictions, Donnie moved multiple times, spending a total of five years living in shelters and halfway houses before ending up in the Washington, DC area.

Then in 2005, his family convinced Donnie to come home to Florence. They put him to work in the food program his sister Brenda had recently started with her husband Elder Wilder at New Deliverance Outreach. There, Donnie felt a connection he had not had before. "I had never done any other volunteer service," explains Donnie. "It was like reality finally hit me and I looked up and saw where I was." Donnie enjoyed reaching out to help people, remembering all the people who had done the same for him over the years. He found that, finally, he was ready to say goodbye to his addictions. This year, Donnie celebrates 11 years of being clean and sober.

At the church, Donnie now volunteers as Outreach Coordinator for the church's ministries which include the food program and a back-to-school supply giveaway. He is in charge of creating relationships and increasing support for the programs. And he's not too shy to ask. "I met the representative from United Way at a local Wells Fargo when I heard



Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Donnie Damon stands in front of the New Deliverance Outreach Ministry church and food program site in Pamplico, SC.

her say they were giving away school supplies," explains Donnie. "I walked right up to her, introduced myself and told her we could use some of those." Donnie has since helped the food program receive FEMA funds through United Way of Florence County for the food program as

well as developed a partnership with Florence-Darlington Technical College which supports the school supply drive. "It's been a challenge because there's a lot to learn, especially how to write and request funding," explains Donnie. "But the Pamplico area has a lot of need and we want to help so I keep trying." Besides volunteering, Donnie runs his own landscaping and pressure washing company, and cares for his older brother.

Whether it's Donnie's military background or simply the passion and dedication of Elder Wilder and his team of volunteers, one thing



Outreach Coordinator Donnie Damon prepares a food box for delivery to home-bound clients through the food program at New Deliverance Outreach Ministry in Pamplico, SC.

is for certain, New Deliverance Ministry's food program is a well-oiled machine. More than 300 boxes of food are efficiently distributed twice a month, with boxes prepared in advance and a coding system that identifies the contents of the boxes. More than this, every client is known by name, greeted as family and personally escorted

to their car. Boxes for disabled and elderly clients are prepared and delivered by volunteers in their personal vehicles without a moment's pause. "The ministry would not be possible without the volunteers," explains Elder Wilder. "They play a great role and don't stop moving until all the boxes are gone."

The impact of the program goes well beyond the nourishment of the body. The smiles on every individual's face, from church leaders, to volunteers, to clients, demonstrate that lives are changed and souls are touched. Donnie would certainly agree. "I woke up just in time and volunteering helped," says Donnie. "Now I'm doing my part, my share. It makes a difference."

New Deliverance Outreach offers church services in both Florence and Pamplico. For more information about the food and school supply ministries or to offer support, contact the church at 843-493-2023.

## CELEBRATING Our VOLUNTEERS





# Contributions of Our Library

## Celebrate Contributions of Our Libraries & Librarians

It is a time to recognize the valuable contributions of our libraries, library staff, users, administrators, friends and groups and to promote library use and support. All types of libraries - school, public, academic and special - participate.

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF LIBRARIES

by Stephanie Navarro



Linda Ard, President of the Friends of Olanta Public Library, Bobby Slabaugh, Children's Services Librarian and Jan Alexander, a booster for the library pose for a picture after a successful St. Patty's Day themed Saturday movie event.

Can you name a place where you can see a puppet performance, watch a film, learn to speak French or even see Africa, all in one day? There is a place that has all of this and much, much more. It's called a library and it's full of vast opportunities and possibilities.

"Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one." -Neil Gaimon, author of *Coraline*

Meet Robert "Bobby" Slabaugh and Nipa Brown, two local librarians representing the hundreds of librarians who are available to help patrons daily at their local libraries.

Bobby is the Children's Services Librarian at the Dr. John M. Thomason Public Library in Olanta and is a walking, talking example of determination. He grew up in Chesapeake, VA and attended college locally at Longwood. Not long after graduating, Bobby began working at the local library. "I saw what the manager did and figured I would like to do that one day," says Bobby. "So I asked him what he had to do to get to where he was." The answer sent Bobby to Florida State for a Masters in Information Services. After graduating and applying to 120 job openings, Bobby did get a little discouraged. "Getting your first job in library can be hard," says Bobby. "I tell the kids if you think you can do something, try. You might surprise yourself." Bobby's steadfast optimism gave him the courage to follow his dreams through six more moves, three libraries and four states before finding his way to South Carolina seven months ago. "I'm glad to be here," says Bobby. "It's helping people and it's rewarding."

Nipa, the Children's Services Librarian at the Sumter County Library's main branch, took a similarly circuitous route to get to her current position. Originally from Thailand, Nipa attended the University of Oregon on a Fulbright scholarship and earned a Master's Degree in Journalism. After

returning to Thailand, she met and married her husband W. Harrison Brown, a US Foreign Service officer. Together, they lived and worked in China, Singapore, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Washington, DC before coming to Sumter after the birth of their daughter. Even at that time, Nipa believed strongly in early literacy education and visited the Sumter County Library often. "We were allowed 15 books for each card," explains Nipa. "My husband had one and I had one so we checked out like 30 books each time. I read to my daughter every day."



Children's Services Librarian Nipa Brown has been entertaining, energizing and educating children at the Sumter County Library's main branch for over 16 years!

By the time the Children's Services Librarian position came open, Nipa was already familiar with half the children's collection. She got the job and has spent the last 16 years in the position, creating learning opportunities for local children. "I do this job for two reasons. I believe in it and it's so rewarding," says Nipa. "It's not just about reading a book. Every interaction is about much more than that. It's planting a seed for success."

"The only thing you absolutely have to know is the location of the library."

-Albert Einstein, author of *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory*

Countless resources are available for children, teens and adults of all ages at the Florence County & Sumter County Libraries. "Our goal is to serve everybody, all walks of life, all ages," says Nipa. Amenities include:

- computers and internet access;
- collections featuring books, newspapers, magazines, videos, DVDs and CDs;
- special events and programs including the upcoming Summer Reading program;
- classes; and, of course,
- story time.

There is also an incredible array of online services that you can access from the comfort of your own home by simply signing in with your

library card. These services include:

- DISCUS: Digital databases with access to encyclopedias, career services and professional development, health and medical information and much more!
- Learning Express: Online access to important practice tests and study guides for the GED, ASVAB, GRE, SAT and NClex.
- Zinio: Digital access to hundreds of magazines.
- Mango: An online education resource for learning new languages.
- Audiobooks and e-books available at your fingertips!

Visit Bobby at the Dr. John M. Thomason Public Library for the monthly movie (which includes a free snack) or one of the upcoming arts & crafts activities including piñata making, glass painting, paper making and trace & paint. For more details call the library at 843-396-4287 or visit the Friends of Olanta Public Library website, [www.olantafriends.com](http://www.olantafriends.com).

Also stop by to see Nipa at the Sumter County Library main branch during Saturday Kids Flicks or weekly story time. Have a daycare that is unable to transport children to experience the library? Call for more information about the Day Care Book Bag initiative, the Bookmobile or a special story time with Nipa. Additional details can be found online at [www.sumtercountylibrary.org](http://www.sumtercountylibrary.org) or by calling 803-773-7273.

"Some books are so familiar that reading them is like being home again."

-Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*

Your local library has a variety of services and programming, but it all started with books. Here are a few recommendations for your reading pleasure. From Bobby: *A Friend Like Henry* by Nuala Gardner and *Wesley the Owl* by Stacey O'Brien. From Nipa: *Please Mr. Panda* by Steve Antony and *Can I Play Too?* by Mo Willems. From Stephanie Navarro (the writer- I couldn't resist, I love books too!): *Watership Down* by Richard Adams and *The Little Matador* by Julian Hector. All of these are available at your local library and your first library card is free! Visit the wonderful world of libraries today!



Nipa Brown, Children's Services Librarian at the Sumter County Library's main branch, sings a song with the children from *Rubye J. Johnson Headstart*.



# Appreciating Our Military

*Military & Veterans Appreciation is celebrated every May and is a declaration that encourages U.S. citizens to observe the month in a symbol of unity, to honor the current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those who have died in the pursuit of freedom*

## WORLD CLASS LEADER TAKES CENTER STAGE

*Submitted by Bishop Michael E. Goings, Outreach Family Fellowship, Senior Pastor*



*Mr. Major Bethea*

DILLON-This biographical article is not just about a person whose contributions in Dillon County have been very historical and important, but about a man who I have known nearly all of my life. This is about a man who was a friend of my deceased father. He was a comrade with my father during World War II, as well as the person who led my father to the Lord in the final days of his life. This is about a man who stepped forward to endorse and support me with his money, prayers, and presence during the genesis and struggling stage of my call to plant and pastor a church (Outreach Family Fellowship), although he was not a member whose name was on the roll. I am writing this article about Mr. Major Bethea, the founder and owner of Major's Cleaners for nearly 60 years.

Major Bethea was born on April 3, 1926 in Robeson County, NC. Before he was born his father died. He was an only child who was raised by his grandmother, stepfather and mother, Ben and Sarah (McLain) McNair. He attended school



*Mr. & Mrs. Major Bethea*

in Little Rock, and at Southside School in Rowland, NC. He graduated from high school in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1944, he joined the United States Army where he served in World War II and also spent two years in the Philippines. After being discharged from the Army, he attended and graduated from Denmark Technical College in Denmark. Major was convinced to be a

tailor by the dean of the school. He later received a diploma and became a licensed tailor. He received his first job at a dry cleaners and tailor shop in Hartsville, South Carolina. His desire was to have his own business. In 1955, he opened his first business, Major's Cleaner's and Tailoring, which was located in a rented building on Hampton Street in Dillon. Major's Cleaners has been successfully in operations for more than 60 years. It has been functioning since 1993 from its fourth location on East Calhoun Street in Dillon. Although he is now retired, his children are still keeping the business going successfully.

On March 18, 1947, Mr. Major married the former Hattie McDuffie of Marlboro County and they were blessed with six children: Cynthia (James) Moore of Florence, Karl (Robin) Bethea of Myrtle Beach, Christopher Bethea of Little Rock, Cheryl (Steven) Berry of Latta, Terrance (Brenda) Bethea of Columbia, and Pam (Levonda) Singletary of Charlotte, NC. They also have 13 grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. In October of 2012, I had the honor to lead them in renewing their vows for their 65th wedding anniversary. I thought of how fortunate I was to have been chosen by them to officiate and perform this special ceremony.

Mr. Major, as he is affectionately called, has been a faithful member of McCoy Chapel United Methodist Church in Little Rock. He has been an active member in various capacities and activities for many, many years. He has also served as a certified lay speaker-preacher with the United Methodist Church. In 1993, he returned to the Philippines on a missionary trip. Also, he ministered in Israel two years later. In 2001, he was one of thirty-two South Carolinians who were selected Businessmen of the Year by the Wall Street Journal. He was also honored with an induction into the Pee Dee Black Hall of Fame. In 2007, he was invited to attend the President's Dinner with former President George W. Bush. He has received numerous other awards and plaques for his religious and civic involvement. Also, on April 26, 2015, Mr. Major and his wife were honored with a



*Street Naming Ceremony*

reception at the Ellis Performing Arts Center in Latta. The theme of the event was "Hard Work Never Hurt Anybody" for which he was recognized locally and statewide with resolutions and tributes. On January 15, 2016, he was honored with an unveiling ceremony of the naming of the Major Bethea Intersection (located on the corner of East Calhoun Street and McArthur Avenue in Dillon).

Mr. Major Bethea has truly been a mentor and example for many in our locale. He has stood out across the years as a beacon of hope for other African-Americans who desire to start and successfully run a business in a small southern town. Generations yet to be born will remember him as an example to all who aspired to beat the odds and to be the best at whatever you aspire.

*In October of 2012, I had the honor to lead them in renewing their vows for their 65th wedding anniversary. I thought of how fortunate I was to have been chosen by them to officiate and perform this special ceremony.*





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## FOR THESE VETERANS: HELP COMES CLOSER TO HOME

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister

TIMMONSVILLE – “The true value of life can be measured by how many times your soul has been deeply stirred.” The sentiment behind this quote by Soichori Honda, founder of the company that bears his name, reflects the philanthropic spirit of a project currently underway in Timmons ville. In this town of just more than 2,500 residents, a commitment to community



Mr. Harrison (right) and Mr. Ham

improvement has deeply stirred Honda of South Carolina Associates who envision better things to come, particularly in regard to veterans who call this area home.

The company is joining forces with other concerned citizens to renovate the former Florence County health department satellite clinic so it can serve as a Veteran’s Resource Center. Former Timmons ville councilman and U.S. Navy veteran, Curtis Harrison, said genesis of the center can be traced back to Seasoned Saints, a senior citizens group he attended over the years.

“Every holiday, Mrs. Patricia Nero would appreciate the senior citizens at each appropriate time and when it was our turn to speak at those parties – whether praising or complaining or just wishing one another a Merry Christmas – many of the comments would be about the lack of services for them,” said Harrison. “The veterans especially would lament that they had nowhere locally available to go for help, nor the transportation to get to any help that might be available elsewhere. So I just began relaying their concerns to others whom God directed our paths to cross and, after talking with immediate and neighboring community leaders, we came to formulate a plan.”

This plan led them to the former clinic, which has recently housed various lease clients, including Honda of South Carolina Manufacturing, Inc. during its initial move to the area. Veterans, church leaders and diverse do-gooders came together to launch their plan. This team then asked HSC, who had sentimental ties to the property, to join the revitalization efforts.

HSC was eager to step in and incorporated the project in its 2016 Day of Service prompted annually by observance of Dr. Martin Luther

King’s birthday. Honda Associates gathered at the former official site of their company and joined in the effort to create a place where local military veterans can find much-needed assistance.

“Honda is very proud to be a part of the Timmons ville community and we do much to demonstrate this responsibility,” said Michele Pridgen, assistant manager of administration. “One of Honda’s fundamental beliefs has to do with giving back to the community and this was another example of that. I like that I work for a company that gets it. They not only value their Associates as individuals, but they understand that as a company they, too, have a responsibility to society. They provide opportunities and encourage Associates to participate in community outreach.”

The mission of the Veteran’s Resource Center, which is located at 211 E. Main Street, is to help further meet the needs of active, disabled and retired veterans of all U.S. branches by providing medical screenings, healthy living training, referral services and coordination of transportation for medical services.

Additional services offered by the center will



Team Total Results

include counseling for veterans and their immediate family members, sharing information about available resources, providing assistance for applying for entitled benefits, and offering an easily accessible community space where veterans can access the services they need to no longer be homeless or jobless.

The vision for this project resonates with HSC Associates, particularly those with military ties.

“It means a lot to veterans/military members to work for a company that supports the military,” said Deon Evans, an active U.S. Army 1st Lieutenant and Honda Associate. “Honda always supports me in whatever I need – whenever I need time off for leave. It makes me feel optimistic about working for them.”

HSC readily undertook a role in the project and appealed to Associates, contractors, community groups, churches and leaders for help with landscaping, pressure washing, painting and

furnishing the facility. Veterans, concerned citizens, students and merchants are also pitching into advance the project. Still, volunteers are needed to assist with the ambitious “to do” list, which includes plans for a new roof, new or vigorously shampooed carpet, painting and fence protection. The aim is to have these tasks completed in time for the center’s grand opening in the coming weeks.



Henry (Joe) Lee and Jeff Augenstein

Henry (Joe) Lee, who served 15 years in the U.S. Navy, 12 years in the U.S. Army and, so far, has worked 14 years at Honda, identifies with the mission.

Dr. King had hope in all of the messages that he shared with us,” said Lee. “Hope is what I have when we all come together and do what we can for a common

cause. What better cause than to support the ones that have sacrificed so much for all of us: the U.S. veterans and their families? So to me, this day means hope... hope that we can always come together as Americans when the going gets tough and to help those in need.”

Honda Parts Quality Associate, Brenda Bradley, has no direct military connections, but her ties to the project are just as deeply rooted.

“I am a Timmons ville native and daily I drive through the town with visuals of so many things that need to be done,” she said. “The MLK Day of Service was an opportunity for me to give back to my community. Working to enhance the appearance of Timmons ville Veterans Resource Center was exciting and even more rewarding knowing that this building will assist veterans and their families in their efforts to have a better life. Their service to this country is major compared to what I did at the center, and I will continue to participate in the MLK Day of Service in this and other communities because I am dedicated to fulfilling Dr. King’s dream by giving back and investing in where I live.”

Editor’s Note 1: Honda’s community involvements to date are spread as follows: 33% education/youth, 24% in civic/community, 20% in arts/culture, 15% in health/social services and \*% in environmental.

Editor’s Note 2: Seasoned Saints is a local charitable organization designed to recognize and honor senior citizens founded by retired educator Patricia Simmons Nero of Timmons ville.



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## HER CHOICE SPARKED A FAMILY TRADITION

by Anna Bowman



LaBonie Guerra

LAKE CITY—As a young adult, LaBonie Guerra’s parents gave her three options: School, military or find a job! “At the time, I didn’t know what I wanted to do, so the military sounded good.” Even though her father had served in the Army during the Korean War, after much research, she

decided to serve in the U.S. Navy.

After becoming the first child in the family to following in her father’s military pathway, a tradition was soon born. “My sisters and brother, Charlotte, Harriet and Robert, joined the U.S. Army, while my brother Charles joined the Marine Reserves and he then joined the U.S. Air

Force.”

Once she made her decision to join the military there was no turning back – well, unless you count the time when she had a “sudden” influx of self-doubt. She fondly described a time, early in her career, when she wanted her mother to intervene on her behalf. “It was my first night stationed in Great Lakes and it was so cold that my tears froze before they could leave my eyes,” she jokingly stated. “I remember asking my mother to call anyone to get me out of the Navy, that night!” Thankfully her self-doubt dissipated quickly. “Having pride in serving my country took center stage after that night,” she said.

During her service, she became a Yeoman (Administrative Assistant) at the BE&E School, a job she truly loved, because it allowed her to travel, and especially to intermingle with a variety of people (all ages) during her time in the military. “Being in the military, I was able to interact with an array of people and cultures that I wouldn’t

have had an opportunity to meet – I learned that people were the same no matter where they came from – just that their stories were different.

A graduate of Lake City High School, Guerra also attended Fish University and Virginia College. Since leaving the Navy, she has mastered her skills in working with people and will advance her studies by returning to school in May. She is a certified Victim Service Provider, and has worked with the Pee Dee Coalition as an Advocate for Women and Children of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Guerra, who is a divorcee, enjoys working in her garden, party planning, reading and writing poetry. She realizes that joining the military isn’t for everyone, but the Navy Veteran wants everyone to know that there are numerous benefits from the people who do join. She is extremely proud that she, her siblings, and her father, served their beloved country.

## HE IS HAILED PROUDLY ALSO

by Anna Bowman



Ret.) Sgt. Gerald Tanner

HARTSVILLE – Sgt. (Ret.) Gerald Tanner is one of America’s true patriots! He is the kind of man you think about each and every time you see our beloved American Flag waving back and forth, effortlessly, against a gentle breeze, proudly displaying the stars and stripes of our country’s rich and

glorious history. Tanner and thousands of American men and women are the true heroes who have, and continues, to make our country great by honoring us with their “personal” sacrifice by joining the military and vowing to protect the United States of America from enemies, both foreign, and domestic.

A Vietnam Veteran, Tanner always knew he wanted to join the military. “My father was in the Army, and I just knew that I wanted to follow in his footsteps,” he said. As a young soldier, he served 13 months in Vietnam. “I was in the Infantry (a grunt) in Vietnam and a Platoon

Sergeant,” he said. “I felt honored to be serving my country during its time of need,” said the Army Veteran; who carried three mortar rounds on his back during the war! With this type of dedication, It is clear why he returned from Vietnam with a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Air Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, National Defense Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and various other medals.

While serving his country, Tanner states that he had an opportunity to learn several valuable life lessons. He respectfully stated, “The military made me grow up and understand the basic fundamentals of how to be a man and how to raise a family, which was extremely helpful to me; especially after losing my father at the early age of 25 years old.”

Over the years, Tanner has watched America fight in various wars on foreign soil and praise the men and women who are now serving in the military. “America’s fight with ISIS is a new type of war, but one that I strongly believe our proud soldiers can conquer,” said the decorated veteran.

A native of Atlanta, Tanner lived in both Jacksonville, FL and Charlotte, NC, before retiring to Hartsville, SC in 2010 and marrying

his former high school classmate, Marsha Thomas Tanner. A family man, Tanner is the proud father of five children: a son, Sam, and four daughters, Kelly, Ashley, Stephanie, and Wendy. After proudly serving his country, he enjoys his retirement spending time with his grandchildren: Lennon, (18 months); twins, Sophie and Chas (10); James, 27; Denna, 26; and two great-grandchildren, Karalyne, 3, and Kendall, 2.



# Appreciating Our Military

*Military & Veterans Appreciation is celebrated every May and is a declaration that encourages U.S. citizens to observe the month in a symbol of unity, to honor the current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those who have died in the pursuit of freedom*

## LED TO SERVE FROM EARLY YEARS

by Stephanie Navarro



*Onyx Danois prepares a food bag for clients during the Homeless Connect Event held the first Friday of every month at Lighthouse Ministries in Florence, SC.*

Nearly 75,000 individuals every year, most of whom are young adults right out of high school, choose to join the US armed forces. At that early crossroads in life, looking towards every possible future, why does one choose to go into the military service?

Onyx Danois of Florence, and Michael Beckham of Darlington, had different starts to their military careers, but both were led to serve others and doing so through the military was an easy decision to make.

From a certain perspective, Onyx has served his country his whole life. His mother was in the US Navy for 21 years and together they moved 12 times before Onyx was 18. After high school, Onyx went to community college for a semester and decided it was not a fit. His mother was quick to respond, telling him he had to go to school or join the military. "It seemed like the easier option," said Onyx. "I was already familiar with that lifestyle and I think I needed the structure." At the age of 18, he enlisted in the US Navy where he worked as a nuclear mechanic on a submarine. Seven years later, his life took a completely different direction. On Easter Sunday, just months after taking up motorcycling as a hobby, Onyx was in a life-threatening crash that left him partially paralyzed for over a month. As he recovered, he had to relearn to walk, eat and live independently.

After four months of intense therapy, Onyx was back at home and soon after, was medically retired from the military. Looking at a full day of free time for the first time in his life, Onyx again got advice from his mother. "As soon as I retired, my mom told me, 'don't just sit around the house, go do something,'" says Onyx. "That's when I started volunteering." He started by working at a pantry near his home in Fernandina Beach, FL. After moving to Florence, Onyx again started looking for ways to give back. He regularly volunteers for the First Friday Homeless Connect Event and has

worked on various projects for Lighthouse Ministries, United Way of Florence County and the Florence County Homeless Count. "Pretty much they call and tell me what they need and I say yes," says Onyx. "I may not be able to do everything, but I'll work hard and do the best I can." Work ethic no doubt instilled in Onyx by his mother and the US Navy.

Michael joined the armed services at the age of 19, but at a very different time when the world was in conflict and the US was heavily involved in the Vietnam War. "I just felt it was time to give something back to the country," says Michael. "We all needed to do something whether you were active duty or part of a reserve component." Michael chose the latter, joining the Army Reserves and serving until 1984 when he switched over to the Air National Guard to finish out his 27 years of total service. The National Guard is an additional reserve unit of the US Army and US Air Force. Its



*Onyx Danois, a Navy Brat and US Navy Veteran, volunteers at Lighthouse Ministries in Florence, SC and works at Da Mossimo Ristorante Italiano in Hartsville, SC.*

members can be called up in domestic or international times of need and report both to the local state governor and the US President. At home, they might respond to national disasters and internationally, they serve shoulder to shoulder with service members from all of the branches.

It was not long after joining the Army Reserves that Michael joined the American Legion Post 13. The American Legion is a system of nonprofit patriotic veterans organizations originally incorporated by the US Congress to bring together veterans in mutual assistance. Each American Legion has different activities as dictated and made necessary by their members. Just two years ago, the Legion that Michael had joined at such a young age almost closed its doors. "A group of us got together and decided that we couldn't let it go downhill," said Michael. "It needs to be here to serve veterans now and in the future." At that time, the Legion had 12 members. They



*A monument dedicated to Darlington-native William G. Farrow, U.S. Army Air Corp, who lost his life in World War II as part of the Doolittle Raiders highlighted in the 2001 blockbuster Pearl Harbor. The monument is part of the Darlington Veteran's Memorial park maintained by American Legion Post 13.*

are now up to 55 members and have an open house planned for May to try to encourage the 5,700 veterans in Darlington County to join. "We come together for fellowship and camaraderie, but we also do service projects throughout the community," explains Michael. "Think about how much more we could do if we had more members."

Michael, serving in his Post Adjutant role, helps coordinate the many service projects of the Legion which include raising money for scholarships to Palmetto Boys State, collecting sleeping bags for Kids Count, maintaining the Veteran's Memorial Park in downtown Darlington and partnering with Ageless Aviation Dream Flights giving local veterans a chance to fly in a Stearman open cockpit biplane. Dream Flights will return to Darlington, SC this year from August 31st-September 2nd.

Whether it's through military service or community service in your community, the importance of giving back is something Onyx and Michael believe in. Military service comes with an indescribable pride and purpose that is felt the rest of your life. Community service is tremendously heartwarming and impactful to those right in your hometown. While not



*Michael Beckham, National Guard veteran, stands in front of the American Legion Post 13 for which he serves as Post Adjutant. American Legion Post 13 has been chartered since 1919.*

everyone is led to service, everyone can serve in some way. Just like Onyx's mom said to him, go out and do something. That's the most important thing. Hooah, Oorah and Hooray.



# Appreciating Our Military

*Military & Veterans Appreciation is celebrated every May and is a declaration that encourages U.S. citizens to observe the month in a symbol of unity, to honor the current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those who have died in the pursuit of freedom*

## JOIN OTHER WOMEN VETERANS AT THE TABLE

Submitted by Melissa Watson



Melissa Watson

COLUMBIA - A report recently published by Disabled American Veterans says, "Today's military clearly understands that returning... to a home installation is a significant emotional adjustment... Service members today may feel that they are in a war zone one day, ready to fight in the company of their fellow personnel, and home the next day, expected to fulfill the duties and obligations [as] a spouse or parent. The military has focused attention on the topic of reintegration to ensure that soldiers, airmen, Marines, and seamen return home successfully... deployment impacts both the deployed service member and their families left behind, reintegration resources address both sides of this relationship."

While all veterans and their families are important to SC Thrive, we want to provide support specifically for women veterans as they reintegrate into civilian lives as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, friends and coworkers. As of September 2015, the Department of Veteran Affairs reports that there are 46,700 women veterans in the state of South Carolina. Many service organizations and support groups for veterans are male-oriented and are not structured to provide a safe space for women veterans to let down their guard and deal with their unique experiences as women veterans. Without support from those who can relate to their military experience, women veterans can become isolated as they re-enter civilian life.

Are you one of the 46,700 women veterans in South Carolina? Join us at the table! SC Thrive has partnered with Texas-based organization Grace After Fire to bring Table Talk™: Color Me Camo to South Carolina. Table Talk™: Color Me Camo is a Women's Veteran Support Group that serves as a peer support system designed specifically for women veterans. Table Talk™: Color Me Camo focuses on gender specific aspects through structured positive interaction with trained facilitators and fellow peers while identifying and addressing barriers women veterans face on the path to positive change.

Table Talk™: Color Me Camo's goal is to help women veterans help themselves. The program provides educational materials and activities that promote self-knowledge, self-understanding, self-development and self-renewal for the woman veteran. The purpose of the program is for peers to help peers by talking to each other and to establish a bond among the veterans in their local areas. Results of the program will be healthy women, healthy families and healthy communities.

Table Talk™: Color Me Camo helps women veterans help themselves. We serve to protect the veteran, connect the resource and renew the women. Table Talk™: Color Me Camo is ready to expand our program through teaching, developing and listening to the woman veteran and her needs upon returning home. We

commit to assisting with her transition back into family life, achievements in the work place and her pursuit of happiness.

SC Thrive also helps the woman veteran and her family as a whole. From requesting records, like DD214s, to comparing and applying for education benefits from the Department of Veteran Affairs, to filing tax returns, SC Thrive can help families with a number of household needs. You can learn more about the assistance that SC Thrive provides at [scthrive.org](http://scthrive.org).

If you're interested in joining us at the table as a facilitator or as a peer, contact Lance Newman, Director of Military and Veteran Programs, at [lnewman@scthrive.org](mailto:lnewman@scthrive.org).

(See ad on page 66)



## Veterans and/or Family Members:



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- Medical Issues or Documents
- Mental Health Concerns
- Finance Issues and Advice / Retirement
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## 5 REASONS WHY YOUNG FAMILIES NEED FINANCIAL PROTECTION NOW

If you've played sports at any level, you know how powerful momentum can be. When it's on your side, the game feels easy. When it's not...well, things can snowball on you in a hurry.

That's why it's so important for young families to start building financial security—and to do it right away. While this may seem like an impossible task in today's economy, you may find it comforting to know that there are steps you can take—no matter how small—that can have a significant impact on your future.

Take life insurance for example. While many young couples mistakenly believe that life insurance is too expensive, those who look closely are often pleasantly surprised. Let's look at a few reasons why:

1. Life insurance is more affordable the earlier you buy it. The premiums on life insurance policies are partially based on age. In most cases, that means the earlier you buy, the lower your premiums will be.

2. Term life insurance provides economical protection. Term life insurance policies provide temporary protection (as opposed to the lifelong protection of permanent life), so they are initially less expensive. That means you have the ability to provide your family with more protection than you ever thought.

3. You may be able to upgrade later. Many term life policies allow you to convert to permanent life insurance if your needs and budget change. That way, you can lock in a lifetime of protection and never have to worry about being denied coverage due to a change in health.

4. You never know when something will happen. While we don't like to admit it, tragic events can—and do—happen every day. For young families, this can be especially troubling since they often have

the fewest assets to fall back on and the most time to live without your financial support.

5. You can use other assets more freely. Knowing you have this basic protection in place, you may be more willing to put your other financial resources to work.

It isn't easy for young families to make financial headway these days. But like most things in life, the sooner you start, the better off you'll be. As we've seen, life insurance can be an affordable way to get the ball rolling, and to give your loved ones the financial protection they need, at the time when they need it most.

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 [jacord@ft.newyorklife.com](mailto:jacord@ft.newyorklife.com) or 317.289.3010.



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# ABB LOOKS BEYOND CREDIT SCORE

by Mallory Brayboy



Micky Watts

MULLINS - The town of Mullins was one of the many cities that suffered during the Great Depression. The city's main source of income was the tobacco market and farmers who patronized local businesses. Unfortunately, none of the "big city" banks were willing to finance a small town tobacco market. Seeing the town's need for financial assistance, brothers Ernest Anderson and Bishop Bonar Anderson established Anderson Brothers Bank in the back of the Anderson Warehouse in Mullins in 1933.

There are now 20 branches of Anderson Brothers Banks across South Carolina, with a majority of them located in the Pee Dee area. Micky Watts is the Senior Vice-President of Indirect Lending at the main branch in Mullins. A native of Hemingway, he studied Accounting and Finance at the University of South Carolina and worked at a finance company for ten years before joining Anderson Brothers Bank in 1989. His duties at ABB include managing the indirect lending department which they refer to as "Dealer Services". Dealer Services works with car dealers through direct lending. "The bank does car loans for about 150 car dealerships across South Carolina. Last year we did 4,500 car loans for nearly 79 million dollars", says Watts.

Other duties include managing the collection department and some of the bank's consumer loan branches. The bank's willingness to help consumers is something Watts believes set

Anderson Brothers Bank apart from others. "The majority of banks that are larger do only about 10% consumer loans while Anderson Brothers are very consumer oriented with about 25% of their loans being consumer type loans for things such as personal expenses, buying a car, and home loans". ABB handles several consumer loans and real estate development and commercial loans. Watts says larger banks are generally commercial oriented, doing more business with larger businesses while community banks typically do business in smaller towns and work with more "mom & pop" type businesses. He takes pride in working with clients on a more personal level. "We know you by name, we know your business. We know who you are."

Watts accounts his personality as a leading factor in his career. "I'm a people person and lending was a business that had me dealing with people. It's a people business. A relationship business". He even relates the job to that of a salesman saying, "We sell money".

ABB was opened in 1933 with the passion of helping families and businesses in the community. Today, their commitment to customers and communities remains unwavering and strong. With branches in Conway, Myrtle Beach, Hemingway, Loris, Aynor, and Marion, to name a few, the institution has built a reputation of helping individuals, families and businesses as they journey along life's path. "Being smaller helps us look at more than the credit score and that sets us apart quite a bit. We're proud of the fact that we're able to look at more than the credit score", says Watts.

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## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START

Submitted by Rachel Baggett, Director of Marketing and Initiatives



Eighty contestants from all walks of life launched the United Way of Florence County's 2016 Biggest Loser competition the first of this year. There were mother and daughter contestants, husband and wife contestants, and sister contestants. Some contestants who wanted to lose a lot of weight and some who just wanted to lose a couple pounds. There were also some contestants who had joined for the first year and even some contestants who had participated in all three years of the competition. Regardless of what brought them to the competition, they all had one goal: to get healthy.

Over the course of ten weeks, the contestants were given the tools they needed to change their lifestyles. Each week, they met as a team with a certified trainer from McLeod Health and Fitness. They were also given temporary memberships to McLeod Health and Fitness to continue their fitness outside of the trainings. The contestants were also taken out of the gym to experience other fitness activities such as kayaking with Naturally Outdoors.

Along with the fitness tools, the contestants also attended several nutritional classes led by McLeod Health and Fitness nutritionist Kitty Finklea. The contestants were also taken to Harris Teeter to get first hand experience on how to read nutrition labels and select healthier products. After attending a couple of classes, the contestants got to put their new knowledge to the test with a "Top Chef" style healthy recipe cook-off.

The contestants' ten-week journey ended in March with a finale celebration at the Carolinian. The two contestants who had the greatest weight loss and inches lost percentage will each win \$500 provided by Health Facilities Credit Union. The contestant who raised the most Brownie Points will win a six-month membership to McLeod Health and Fitness and the winner who showed the most perseverance will win a \$250 shopping spree to Belk. Although there will only be four grand prize winners, every contestant will end the night as a winner. At the time of this article, the contestants have already lost a combined total of 1,101 pounds and more than 350 inches. Even those who may not be seeing large losses on the scale or in measurements,

say that the competition has allowed them to move easier, breathe better, improve their health, and re-gain their confidence.

The competition was originally started to address the growing problem of obesity in the Pee Dee area, but it also serves as a fundraiser for non-profits in Florence County. Each year, the UWFC holds a campaign to raise donations for our partnering agencies and the programs they have created to help the residents of the community. At the time of this article, the Biggest Loser contestants, sponsors, and supporters have raised some \$19,000 in donations that will all go to more than 17 non-profits in Florence County.

Although the next Florence's Biggest Loser competition will not start until January of 2017, it is never too late to start your journey to better health. Below are some tips from Biggest Loser trainers, nutritionists, and sponsors on how to start living healthier today.



*Florence's Biggest Loser contestants enjoy an afternoon of kayaking at the Freedom Florence Complex pond.*

### Fitness

Before you walk into a gym and start working out, make sure you set a goal. Ask yourself if you're looking to lose weight, build strength, or gain muscle. Once you determine what your goal is, you can decide what kind of exercises you need to focus on to achieve your goal. Biggest Loser and McLeod Health and Fitness trainer Millie Obregon recommends using a combination of strength training and cardiovascular training. Cardiovascular training is generally what most people associate with losing weight, but strength training will help develop muscles, which will burn more calories over time. As a beginner, it is also important to make sure you are performing movements with proper form. Improper form can lead to injuries; so don't feel embarrassed to ask a fitness professional for advice.

### Nutrition

Eating habits are one of the most difficult habits to change, so it is important to go into creating new habits with a plan. Biggest Loser and McLeod Health and Fitness nutritionist



*Contestants learned how to prepare simple and healthy recipes during their nutrition classes.*

Kitty Finklea recommends starting with a food journal. Record what you eat every day for a week and then look over what you have eaten to see what unhealthy eating habits you may have. Are you eating breakfast each morning? Are you drinking enough water? Are there certain times of the day where you tend to eat more unhealthy foods than others? Once you have asked yourself these questions you can identify what areas you need to change. Make sure to also start checking the nutritional information in the products you buy. Try to pick products that have short, simple ingredients lists that contain items you recognize and avoid any products that are not nutrient-rich or include a high amount of added sugar.

### Mental Health

Healthy living is not all about just eating right and exercising; you also have to make sure you're lowering your stress and getting enough sleep. If you are stressed often or are not getting the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep a night, it will often cause your appetite to decrease and make it more difficult for your body to lose weight. Start by identifying the stressors in your life and what you can do to lessen that stress. One area that tends to cause long-term stress for individuals is their finances. If finances are a stressor for you, Biggest Loser sponsor Health Facilities Credit Union recommends thoroughly examining your credit report. Examining your credit report can help you prevent fraud, catch any possible account errors, understand what's affecting your credit score, and potentially save thousands of dollars.

For more recipes, workouts, and advice from our partners and contestants, go to the Florence's Biggest Loser website at [www.burnandlearnflorence.com](http://www.burnandlearnflorence.com). Be sure to also check out the "2016 Losers" page to see the finishers, grand prize winners, and the amount of donations raised for the United Way agencies from the 2016 competition.



## HERE'S A BRIEFING IN THE LIFE OF 'GOT ALLERGIES?'

Submitted by Dr. David Gittens

Allergy symptoms include itchy eyes and skin, sneezing, nasal congestion, wheezing, and rash. Seasonal allergies result from grass, weed, tree pollen, or molds. Common allergens include, dust mites, pet dander, peanuts, and seafood, medications, latex, metals such as nickel, chemicals in household cleaning products, perfumes and dyes found in beautyproducts can also set off a reaction in some people.

### What Is an Allergy?

Allergies are an abnormal response of the immune system. People who have allergies have an immune system that reacts to a usually harmless substance in the environment. This substance (pollen, mold, and animal dander, for example) is called an allergen. Allergies are a very common problem, affecting at least two out of every ten Americans.

### What Happens During an Allergic Reaction?

First, a person is exposed to an allergen by inhaling it, swallowing it, or getting it on their skin. After a person is exposed to the allergen, a series of events create the allergic reaction. A person develops an allergic reaction when the immune system inappropriately reacts and releases chemicals like histamine to attack a harmless protein as if it were a threat. Histamine produces many of the symptoms associated with allergies. The hundreds of proteins that may trigger allergic reactions range from pollen to pet dander to penicillin. A normally functioning immune system protects the body from foreign substances -- known as antigens -- by producing antibodies and other chemicals to fight against them. Usually the immune system ignores harmless substances, such as food, and fights only dangerous ones, such as bacteria.

At this time, researchers are not sure what factors contribute to the development of allergies, but heredity seems to play a role. Allergies may flare up and subside throughout your life. Most allergic reactions are not serious, but some, such as anaphylaxis can result in an inability to breathe or a severe drop in blood pressure and can be fatal.

Severe allergies can't be cured outright, but a variety of treatments are available to relieve the symptoms. If you have a severe allergy, it is vital that you visit a doctor -- ideally a board certified allergist -- and get immediate treatment. A severe allergic (anaphylactic) reaction can be life threatening and requires emergency treatment.

Some natural treatments for allergies include: Acupuncture One 2013 study found that 8 weeks of acupuncture cut allergy symptoms. It worked so well that people were able to take lower doses of their allergy drugs.

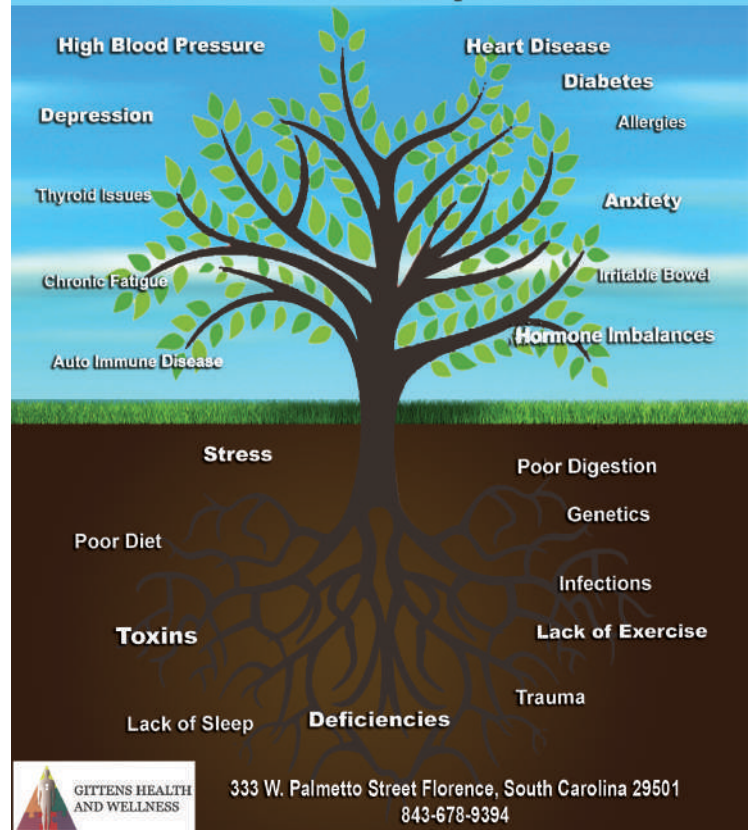
Allergy-proofing your home: You can't stop pollen from blowing outside. But you do have some control over what happens inside your home. Keep your windows shut and use high quality filters.

Probiotics: These are healthy bacteria that live in your digestive tract. Some studies show that probiotics might reduce allergy symptoms such as runny nose and congestion. You can get them naturally from foods like yogurt and the milk drink kefir. They're also available in supplements.

Supplements: There are a variety of supplements that effectively control allergy symptoms without the side effects of medication. Protection. If it's allergy season, keep your triggers at bay. Don't do outdoor activities when pollen counts are high and avoid contact with allergens.

ASERT (Allergy/ sensitivity Elimination and Reprogramming Technique) is a synergy of many holistic techniques that result in a normal response of the immune system to naturally accruing substances. Allergens are cleared one or more at a time in a specific sequence, rendering the individual allergy free in most cases. For further information or if you have questions contact us at Gittens Health and Wellness 843-678-9394.

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## CONTROL IS THE KEY WORD HERE

Submitted by Dr. Jocelyn A. Myers, M.D.,

*Hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia aren't limited to those with diabetes — people without diabetes also experience them.*

### THE GLUCOSE COASTER...



Dr. Jocelyn A. Myers, M.D.,  
Specializes in Endocrinology

Controlling your blood sugar can be a wild ride. When it comes to glucose (blood sugar) levels, highs and lows may be a part of life for people living with diabetes, but sometimes those highs and lows are too extreme. When that

happens, people with diabetes experience conditions called hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia.

### THE 411 ON HYPERGLYCEMIA...

Hyperglycemia happens when blood glucose levels skyrocket above the level that you and your doctor have set as your target. It can be caused by not exercising enough, not managing stress well, skipping insulin doses, eating too much food or the wrong

kind of food. If it becomes a chronic problem, hyperglycemia can put you at risk for stroke, heart attack and congestive heart failure. Symptoms include:

- blurred vision
- fatigue
- increased thirst and increased urination
- unexplained weight loss

Drinking plenty of water can help lower blood glucose levels. If spikes are happening frequently, look at your actions around the time they occur — what were you eating? Did you exercise that day? Make appropriate changes to your meals or drinks, and always talk with your doctor if you think your medication needs to be changed.

### HYPOGLYCEMIA 101...

Hypoglycemia, on the other hand, occurs when your blood sugar drops too low. Typically this is due to not having eaten enough or properly, though it can also happen as a side effect of some diabetes medications. Symptoms include:

- anxiety
- lightheadedness or dizziness
- nervousness or confusion
- shakiness
- weakness and fatigue

Hypoglycemia often can be treated by consuming milk, fruit juice, hard candy or glucose tablets. If you find yourself experiencing it more than once or twice a

week, speak with your doctor about how to best treat it.

### KEEPING UP WITH YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE...

Maintaining a healthy blood sugar level can be tricky. One of your best tools is staying aware of what your levels are, including what they look like at different times of day. We've got a few suggestions of how to keep track: •a small journal you can keep with you •free apps for your smartphone •the American Diabetes Association's online tool, Diabetes 24/7 Keeping your levels in one place allows you to look at them and see over time how physical activity, meals and stress affect you and whether your highs or lows are a consistent enough problem to warrant a change in your routine.

Having trouble getting your blood sugar levels under control? Talk with your doctor. Need one? Visit [CarolinanMedicalAlliance.com](http://CarolinanMedicalAlliance.com) or call 843-661-DOCS.

Jocelyn A. Myers, M.D. is associated with Carolinas Endocrinology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. Dr. Myers is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System.



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## DR. IRIS D. IGNACIO JOINS PEE DEE FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator, Carolinas Medical Alliance



Iris D. Ignacio, M.D.

Dr. Iris D. Ignacio was born in Olongapo City, Philippines, outside Subic Bay. “My mother had really wanted a girl and when she didn’t get one, she decided to name me Iris anyway,” said Dr. Ignacio. His mother is a first-grade school teacher and his father, who is 70, is an electrician in a hospital in Olongapo City.

At an early age, he left his home and family and moved to Manila to attend a special high school for gifted students. “It was the first time I had been away from my family, and from that time until I finished medical school, I lived in a dorm room,” he said. “The high school I attended concentrated on the sciences and the competition to get accepted was difficult. You had to be in the top 10 percent in the school you came from and then pass an acceptance exam.”

After high school, he earned his Bachelor of Science in biology from the University of the Philippines and his Doctorate in medicine from the University of the East Ramon

Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center. He completed his internship at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Manila and his residency at Grand Forks Family Medicine in Grand Forks, ND. He moved to Florence in 2008, and recently joined the staff at Pee Dee Family Physicians.

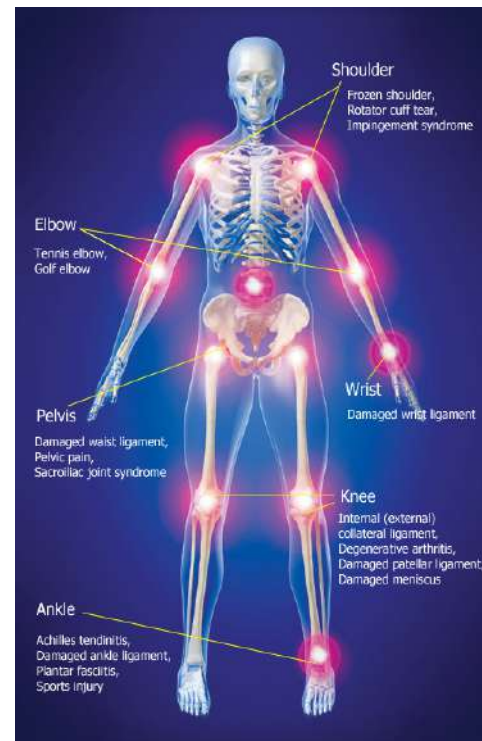
Dr. Ignacio and his family enjoy keeping life simple in Florence in comparison to the traffic and population density in the Philippines. “I miss my family, the food and the family gatherings, so we try to go back at least every five years,” he said. “In America, the healthcare system is better; the cities, the traffic and there are better job opportunities here.”

Dr. Ignacio met his wife in medical school, and they have been married for 10 years. She is from Manila and also works in the medical field. They have two boys, ages 2 and 5. He and his wife speak English and Filipino in their home and are teaching their boys Filipino words and phrases. The family loves traveling, photography and especially camping in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. They enjoy attending and serving in the Filipino Christian Church in Florence.

Dr. Ignacio is board certified in Family Medicine. He is associated with Pee Dee

Family Physicians, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. He is accepting new patients.

To schedule an appointment, call (843) 664-9696.



## HER CAREER PATH MOVES HER FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator, Carolinas Medical Alliance



Traesa Brown, MD

When Traesa Brown was a young girl growing up in Fleming Island, FL, not far from Jacksonville, one of the most influential people in her life turned out to be her family physician, Dr. Hardin. She admits that at first she was afraid of him, as all children equate a trip to the doctor with a shot and pain. However, as she got a little older and saw his compassionate care for her family and other families, she knew she wanted to become a physician like him.

With that goal in mind, her course and focus in life had been set. Upon graduating high school, she received her bachelor’s degree from Winthrop University and her medical degree from Ross University in North Brunswick, NJ. She completed her residency in family medicine at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta where she also served as chief resident. She then joined the faculty as an assistant professor for five

years. At the same time, she started her own family medicine practice.

“Family medicine allows a physician to be involved in almost every aspect of medical care. I get to work with everyone from children to senior citizens,” said Dr. Brown. On a typical day for Dr. Brown, you will find her in her office on Vance Drive in Florence in the morning. She arrives back at her home late in the evening. “If I have only a few patients in the hospital, I will make my rounds in the morning. But if I have several in the hospital, I will make my rounds in the evening; that allows me to have more time with them individually,” she said.

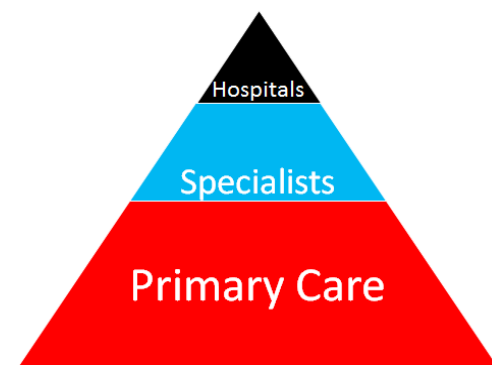
Dr. Brown did not grow up in a “medical” family. Her mother, originally from Cheraw, is a rehabilitation counselor and her father recently retired from a 30-year career with the railroad. Her parents now live in Jacksonville, FL, but visit her regularly in Florence.

“Had I not become a physician, I would have probably been a teacher,” Dr. Brown said. “A teaching career offers another wonderful opportunity to help others, and I believe helping others is what life is all about. It’s a happy day for me when I diagnose an

illness or even help someone get their blood pressure under control. Often, I am able to discover an illness that a person has and they are unaware that anything is even wrong with them, that’s rewarding.” she said. “In family medicine, it sometimes works out where you can attend to the medical needs of everyone in a family. Before long, they have become your friends and not just your patients. I like that!”

Dr. Brown’s hobbies include reading, traveling and volunteer work.

Dr. Traesa Brown is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance – Primary Care. She is accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call (843) 679-4019.





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# BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Contributing Author: Shawn Maxwell



Dr. Rishika Motiani

Anniversaries elicit a desire, a need to reflect on historical events, in particular, the beginnings of a journey. The start of 2016 marks the 25th anniversary of HopeHealth's existence. It is the story of an organization that began as a support for individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and their families. Since our inception in 1991, HopeHealth has expanded its mission to become a Federally Qualified Health Center and to include more rural and underserved communities such as Kingstree, Manning and Timmonsville. Services now include primary care, pediatrics, internal medicine, women's health, behavioral health and psychiatry, chiropractic care, medical massage therapy, chronic pain management and substance use treatment.

Even so, the commitment to the lives and wellbeing of individuals living with HIV/AIDS has not been lost. HopeHealth's HIV services are now located within its Infectious Diseases (ID) Department. Sites now include, Orangeburg, Aiken, and Florence. While support groups are still a vital component to the model of care, services have grown to include:

- HIV and HCV screenings (free)
- Primary Care
- Medication Assistance
- Education and Prevention
- Infectious Disease Treatment
- Medical Case Management
- Behavioral Health
- Community Outreach

In addition to HIV/AIDS, the HopeHealth Infectious Diseases Department provides treatment for a range of acute and chronic infectious diseases, including Hepatitis. Services concentrate on the treatment and support services for all viral Hepatitis, with primary focus on Hepatitis B and C. Similar to HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis services include medical, case management, behavioral health, nutrition counseling and referrals. The program also offers resources for other physicians and providers to learn more about Hepatitis screenings, diagnoses, treatment options and other resources.

Most recently, HopeHealth's Infectious Diseases Department provides primary care for its patients. Individuals who receive care for their ID diagnosis(es) can now receive primary care from an ID provider. This shift in care has truly enhanced the treatment model for Infectious Diseases. The new model provides an opportunity to impact the number of patients receiving care, the number of patients retained in care, increase efficiency of service delivery and support the continuity of services. One of our newest providers to join our Infectious Diseases team is Dr. Rishika Motiani.

Dr. Motiani is a board-eligible physician specializing in infectious disease and internal medicine in Florence. She received her degree from M. P. Shah Medical College in Jamnagar, India. She completed two residencies: Internal Medicine/Pediatrics combination program, University of Missouri, Kansas City, MO; and, Internal Medicine, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN. Dr. Motiani is concerned about the holistic wellbeing of patients. She believes the combination model of infectious disease treatment and internal medicine, allows for specialized care and awareness of patients' needs. Perhaps most importantly, it increases the patient's understanding of and adherence to the prescribed treatment plans, resulting in a better quality living.

Additional treatment and care is available for the following diagnoses:

- PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis)
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Chronic Pneumonia
- Lymphadenitis/Lymphadenopathy
- Recurrent Staphylococcal skin abscess and cellulitis
- Pacemaker and ICD site infections: Endocarditis
- Bone and Joint Infections: septic arthritis, prosthetic joints, osteomyelitis
- Granuloma: Histoplasmosis, Coccidioidomycosis, Cryptosporidiosis, Mycobacterial infections
- Neurological infections: infection of the brain and spinal cord, infection of the brain following neurosurgery, meningitis, brain abscess and encephalitis
- Tick-borne illnesses
- Hypogammaglobulinemia
- International Travel Clinic

HopeHealth's Infectious Diseases department proudly offers three locations around the Pee Dee, Edisto, and Lower Savannah regions of the state—Florence, Orangeburg, and Aiken. To make an appointment, or for a complete listing of services contact Laura Mitchell, Director of Infectious Diseases, at (843) 667-9414 or [lmitchell@hope-health.org](mailto:lmitchell@hope-health.org).

For more information about HopeHealth's 25th anniversary celebration, please contact Tiffany Straus, Director of Community Relations, at (843) 667-9414 or [tstraus@hope-health.org](mailto:tstraus@hope-health.org).



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Alan Barrett is a physician assistant specializing in family medicine and a graduate of the Medical University of South Carolina.



Alan Barrett, PA-C

Dr. Brinda Chokshi specializes in internal medicine and is a graduate of the Medical University of South Carolina.



Brinda Chokshi, MD

Dr. Reynald Garma is a pediatrics physician, he is a graduate of the University of the Philippines and he has a medical degree from Manila Central University.



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# TIPS FOR PARENTS: SMOOTH SAILING FROM SPRING TO SUMMER

Contributing Authors: Stephanie Caffee & Dr. Michael K. Foxworth II



Dr. Michael K. Foxworth II, HopeHealth Medical Plaza

Spring and early summer mark the end of the school year. Parents can often feel overwhelmed with additional year-end activities, planning for summer schedules, and more. Here are a few tips from one of our pediatricians at HopeHealth to help ease you and your kids from a busy spring to a safe and fun summer.

## Healthy Eating

Healthy eating can be hard — family schedules are hectic and grab-and-go convenience food is readily available.

Whether you have a toddler or a teen, it can be tough to get kids to eat the foods that give them the nutrients they need, especially when there are 100 other things to do before the day is over! Having regular family meals gives you the opportunity to serve a variety of healthy foods, allows you to be a role model by eating healthy yourself, and provides the chance to involve kids in the process of preparing meals so they know how to prepare simple healthy snacks on their own. Family meals can be comforting rituals for both parents and kids. Children like the predictability of family meals, and parents get a chance to catch up with their kids. Kids who take part in regular family meals also tend to eat more fruits, vegetables, and wholesome grains.

## Teen Sleep

As our pre-teens and teens conclude their hectic school schedules, the need for adequate and quality sleep remains extremely important. Bedtimes should be consistent and allow for eight consecutive hours of sleep throughout the week and the weekends. This routine will help with academic success as well as good physical and mental health. A consistent and relaxing bedtime routine should include turning off electronics an hour before bedtime, daily exercise, and eating no later than two hours prior to going to sleep. Regular check-ups at an established medical home are also encouraged to receive important guidance and health screening as your child matures.

## Reading

Do you read to your children? HopeHealth Pediatrics and the School Foundation's Start SMART believe that education doesn't just begin when a child reaches kindergarten. It begins at birth. This is why we encourage reading aloud to your



Dr. Beryll Bacchus-Keith, HopeHealth Manning Pediatrics

children, including infants, on a daily basis! Reading aloud promotes literacy and social-emotional skills. Reading with young children is a joyful way to build strong and healthy parent-child relationships and stimulate early language development. Did you know that there are great tips available on how to read to your child based on his age? There are also books available through Start SMART and organizations like HopeHealth Pediatrics to help guide you through this process. Check out all the great resources at [startsmartflo.org](http://startsmartflo.org).

## Sun Safety

The intensity of the South Carolina sun is among the strongest during this time of year! Did you know that kids get much of their lifetime sun exposure before age 18? This is one of the reasons it is important to learn how to enjoy fun in the sun safely! Everyone needs a moderate amount sun exposure; in fact, it's the top source

of vitamin D, which helps our bodies absorb calcium for stronger, healthier bones! However, it is important to take the right safety measures to reduce the chance of developing skin cancer in your child. Try to avoid the sun when it's at its hottest, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and always be sure to apply and reapply sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30 that screens out both UVA and UVB rays. Don't forget to apply sunscreen during after-school outdoor play time! Even on cloudy, cool, or overcast days, UV rays travel through the clouds and reflect off sand, water, and even concrete! Try to cover up when possible, using hats, sunglasses and long sleeves made of light weight materials.

To learn other important tips regarding keeping your child healthy and safe this season, contact one of our pediatricians in Florence and Manning. Visit [hope-health.org](http://hope-health.org) for more information.



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Katrina Graham, Event Lead at [katrina.graham@adp.com](mailto:katrina.graham@adp.com)  
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# CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM NURSES RECEIVE PALMETTO GOLD AWARD

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator, Carolinas Medical Alliance

## CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM



Front row - Neva Lawson, Surgical Services, Second row (l-r): Calperta Green, 9th Floor; Ashley Hudson, Education and Third row (l-r): James Rand, 8th Floor and Brandon Hooks, Director of Orthopaedic Services, Neurosurgery and Joint Care Center.

A coalition of South Carolina nursing organizations has named the state's top 100 nurses, designating them Palmetto Gold. Five of those nurses are from Carolinas Hospital System: Neva Lawson, Surgical Services; Calperta Green, 9th Floor; Ashley Hudson, Education; James Rand, 8th Floor and Brandon Hooks, Director of Orthopaedic Services, Neurosurgery and Joint Care Center. 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 received and 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, Chief Nursing Officer.

Net proceeds from the gala are used to endow scholarships for students in state-approved registered nursing programs in South Carolina, thereby continuing the legacy of excellence in nursing practice for South Carolina citizens. The Palmetto Gold Scholarships will be managed by the South Carolina Nurses Foundation, a 501-C 3 organizations, 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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**BEST LONG TERM CARE OPTION : ACTIVE DAY OF THE PEE DEE MEDICAL ADULT DAY SERVICES**

*Submitted by Corbett Rothwell, Center Director*



*All Star Bowling Outing- left to right- Emma, Pearlise and Larry*

When a loved one is diagnosed with a chronic condition, many families feel as if they have only two options for care: having someone in the family take on the role of full-time caregiver or placing their loved one in a nursing home or institution. However, there is another option between these two difficult extremes: adult day health services.

Adult day health services, such as Active Day of the Pee Dee- Medical Adult Day Care are designed for adults who have chronic physical or cognitive impairments. Those who can benefit from the services include: adults with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementias, Parkinson's, neuromuscular diseases or developmental disabilities; victims of stroke, heart attack or traumatic brain injury; elderly adults who are homebound and in need of social stimulation; and those who require assistance with daily activities such as eating, toileting and bathing. These centers are also well-suited for individuals who are leaving high school or a sheltered workshop environment, as staff can work with school transition teams and other organizations to continue the member's developmental and educational curriculum.

"Our members enjoy a wide variety of activities aimed at keeping them engaged during the day. Our therapeutic programming includes arts/crafts, theme weeks, contests, many parties, crocheting circles, sensory therapy, music therapy, local entertainers, devotion from local pastors, many games, stimulating trivia and discussions, daily exercise and community outings. Some of our outings include shopping, community events, bowling, museums, restaurants, etc," said the director.



*Florence County Museum Outing- Eleanor (standing), Lucille (sitting)*

A highly cost-effective long-term care alternative, adult day health centers administer nursing care, meals and therapeutic activities in a safe, structured and homelike environment. Registered nurses, personal care staff and therapists help members maintain the best possible quality of life while also offering respite for family caregivers. Much more than an outlet for social engagement, adult day health centers also provide health care support services including assistance with daily personal care and hygiene, administration of medications and injections, wound care and regular monitoring of blood pressure and blood sugar. When compared to the average \$17/hour price for at-home care, our rate breaks down to less than \$8/hr for our 8-hour day rate. But, there are also other pay sources that may be explored, such as Veteran's Administration benefits, Respite Grants and Medicaid Community Waiver Programs.



*Parachute Ball Toss Game always produces laughter while sneaking in some exercise.*

"At Active Day of the Pee Dee

we take pride in being an approved provider to our Veteran's Administration. We work closely with our veterans through the local Florence Veteran's Clinic," he added.

Here is what Jena Sallenger, R.N., MSN, GNP-BC, from the Florence Veteran's Clinic had to say: "I would like to draw your attention to the excellent work I have witnessed at Pee Dee Active Day and Senior Care. I am a Nurse Practitioner with the Veteran's Health Administration. We have had several veterans who attended and are attending the center and have been extremely impressed with the personalized care and attention they receive there."

"As Diversity Works Magazine© is recognizing military service in this edition, we would also like to take this opportunity to recognize our courageous veterans and thank them for their service:



*Back row from left to right: Jason White, Wayne Harris, Frank Sawyer, Jr. Front row from left to right: Larry Hunter, Terrell Johnson*



*Back row left to right: Jason White, James Harrell, Wayne Harris, Frank Sawyer Front row left to right: Abraham McClary, Larry Hunter*

Larry Hunter served in the Army in Vietnam, Terrell Johnson served in the Navy in Desert Storm/ Gulf War, Wayne Harris served in the Army in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star, Abraham McClary served in the Army in WWII and Korean War, Jason White served in the Army in the Gulf War, James Harrell served in the Army during Desert Storm and Frank Sawyer served in the Army in Vietnam," he said.

If interested in learning more about Adult Day Health Programs at Active Day of the Pee Dee, call Corbett Rothwell at #843-665-1919. Or visit 2120 Enterprise Drive, Florence SC 29501. Office hours are Monday thru Friday 8am-4pm.



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## HOW TO CHOOSE HOSPICE CARE

Expert Advice from Agapé Hospice



Opting for hospice care is one of the most compassionate decisions ever to be made. Agapé Hospice provides support and comfort for people who need end-of-life care. You will find Agapé Hospice workers in assisted living centers, nursing homes, hospitals and residential facilities. Many patients receive care in their own homes or the homes of friends and family.

Hospice isn't only for the dying as loved ones also benefit from hospice care. Workers will support them through some of the most difficult moments in life. Agapé Hospice provides an entire team to help with this by providing social workers, grief counselors, personal aids, chaplains, registered nurses and a medical director. All of these services are coordinated through a personal Patient Care Coordinator. And while all hospice providers are regulated by the government, each provider has meaningful differences in personnel, policies and facilities.

Agapé Hospice specializes in making the patient feel as comfortable as possible and that care can take place anywhere. Patients can receive treatment in their own homes, where they are most comfortable. Some diseases may require more specialized care than others. The patient can also choose to stay in a facility that can give them easy, 24-hour access to nurses, medication, and medical equipment needed for their comfort. It is always best to consult with a doctor regarding this decision. The hospice staff will meet with the patient's physician to talk about the current symptoms, medical history and life expectancy. Then they will let you know which options are available to you. When choosing a hospice service, be sure to choose one that helps you feel at ease. You are going to have to ask and answer some extremely difficult questions. Death is a tough subject to discuss. Clear, caring communication is absolutely essential.

A quality hospice program will give you all the time and personal attention you need to ease your mind. Part of picking hospice involves having the right feeling. If the hospice staff is personable and makes you feel comfortable, that's a good sign. Every patient who receives hospice treatment must be qualified by a physician. Usually, this means there is a life expectancy of six months or less. Since some physicians may hesitate to broach the subject of hospice care, you may need to bring it up yourself. Ask whether hospice care would be appropriate and which services might be most helpful to ease the end-of-life process. You can also approach Agapé Hospice directly to ask about their services. They will help you determine which care is most appropriate. Hospice care has been growing since the 1990s. Many people are realizing that it is possible to die with peace and dignity. Hospice can help the end-of-life experience a little easier for the patient and loved ones.

Agapé has offices throughout the Pee Dee serving the entire region and state of South Carolina and can be reached by calling 843.669.5760 or 843.383.5115. Agapé Senior is a faith-based company, and our values reflect the qualities described in the nine fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23. These virtues are instilled in the care we provide to residents, patients, and families and are reflected in the way we interact with our customers and with each other. Our works are an expression of who we are. Our residents, families, and employees interact in an environment illuminated by the virtues of peace, love, joy, and patience. Our daily interaction with residents, families, and employees is guided by and reflected through the virtues of kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.





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## LUNCHEON HONORS FLORENCE COUNTY MAYORS

Submitted by Jesseca Horton, Marketing Coordinator



The Senior Citizens Association in Florence County presents the 12th Annual Dorothy Blackwell Luncheon Honoring the Florence County Mayors on Friday, May 6, 2016 at The Leatherman Senior Center in Florence. Registration will open at 11:30 a.m. and the program will begin at noon featuring Fox TV's "Hell's Kitchen" 13th season winner Chef NaTasha McCutcheon, a Lake City Native.

The Dorothy Blackwell Luncheon is SCA's primary philanthropic event each year. Proceeds directly benefit homebound services, including Meals on Wheels (homebound meals), housekeeping, and transportation for Florence County senior citizens.

This year's luncheon will offer the opportunity to support services for Florence County senior citizens and honor the Mayors of Florence County while enjoying the culinary delights of Lake City native, Chef LaTasha McCutchen, winner of the thirteenth season of Fox TV's "Hell's Kitchen".

Sponsorship opportunities include reserved seating, special program recognition, and media acknowledgement based on the following levels of sponsorship: Platinum \$1,000 (1 Reserved Table/8 tickets), Gold \$500 (4 tickets at a Reserved Table) and Silver \$300 (2 tickets at a Reserved Table)

In addition, individual tickets are available for \$50 per person. The deadline for sponsorship and ticket purchase is April 22, 2016. Contact Jesseca Horton for your sponsorship @ 843-669-6761 ext 231

## MORE SENIORS FINDING PEACE OF MIND



Are you worried you might one day outlive your retirement savings? Running out of money is a common concern, and the sad reality is that it does happen to some people. The Administration on Aging predicts the number of Americans age 65 and older will reach 98 million in less than 50 years, so it's possible many will struggle to take care of themselves physically, medically and financially.

Seventy percent of everyone 65 and older will need some type of long-term care at some point in their lives, the Department of Health and Human Services says. When health issues force seniors to require a higher level of care, they can quickly exhaust their retirement savings. The burden of caring for them either falls on loved ones or Medicaid. A growing number of seniors are turning to life care communities, to preserve their own long-term well-being and to ease emotional and financial stresses on their families.

A life care community - also commonly referred to as continuing care community - charges an upfront entry payment and a monthly fee in exchange for long-term accommodations and health-related services. A contract formalizes the arrangement between the community and the residents, guaranteeing seniors receive the agreed-upon care even if their financial resources are eventually exhausted.

Longer lives and increasing health care costs mean it's a harsh reality that many seniors will struggle to care for themselves later in life. The good news is that life care communities can be a long-term solution, helping seniors maximize the value of their retirement savings, and ensuring they'll have access to the care they need throughout their lives.



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## 2015 IMPACT



**269** Active Sites  
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**11** Active Networks



**17,696** Healthcare Applications Taken by SC Thrive Contact Center



**212** People Certified in Mental Health First Aid



**254,421** People Informed about Healthcare Coverage and Food Assistance



**107** Trainings  
**1,355** Trainees



**2,804** Military Members, Veterans or Their Family Members Served



**249** Attendees at SC Thrive's 5th Annual Training



**9,139** Tax Returns Filed  
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## CONTACT US





## South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation

The South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation supports the efforts of the South Carolina African Heritage Commission to identify and promote the preservation of historic sites, structures, buildings, and culture of the African American experience and to assist and enhance the efforts of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Support these efforts by becoming a member of the SCAAH Foundation.

### Membership Form

Complete and return to: South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation, PO Box 1053, Hartsville, SC 29551 or contact Foundation's Executive Director, Jannie Harriot, at 843-332-3589 or e-mail: scaaheritagefound@gmail.com

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## NOVICE OR VETERAN, RALDEX ASSOCIATES STAY

Submitted by Annette Ross and Robin Osborne



Dionne Goodman and Sharon Shields

Executive Housekeeping Supervisor Mrs. Dionne Goodman has been with the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Civic Center and Raldex for 10 years. In that capacity, she says no two days are the same and that is what keeps her job interesting. Currently supervisor of an 11-member team, she beams at the fact that 7 of them have been with her for 8+ years.



Dionne has extensive ongoing training with IHG that includes the award winning Green and the Stay Real Programs. "I'm very proud to be a part of a team that consistently remains at the top 5 percent of all Holiday Inn Express & Suites Worldwide. My team and I are proud that the IHG Owners Association recently congratulated our hotel as one of the elite winners to achieve the Green Guest Experience Winner Metrics out of 5,032 IHG branded hotels. My job would be impossible without my team-members". Dionne has lived in Florence all her life and considers Holiday Inn Express & Suites as her second family.



Sharon Shields has been with the organization since July 2015 and by November was promoted to Front Office Supervisor. She currently supervises 5 team members and plays a major role in the success of the company's Guest Services reviews and rankings on Trip Advisor and Yelp.



Sharon greets our guests with her beautiful smile and enthusiasm. "The best thing about my job is making sure our guests are happy and they have all their needs met. I strive for 100

percent guest satisfaction every single day; I consider myself an example to our team members". Sharon has lived in Florence her entire life.

Holiday Inn Express & Suites-Civic Center has 87 rooms; indoor saline pool and spa, meeting room, and guests enjoy a free hot breakfast. Contact the office for Corporate and group rates.

## ALLEN SPEARHEADS FOREVER YOUNG INITIATIVE

by Les Echols



Andrea Barney, Roger Allen and Amanda Rogers

With a strong work ethic and extensive responsibilities, Roger Allen's leadership prowess is seldom in question. Roger manages a diverse team at the General Manager Hampton Inn & Suites-Florence Civic Center. His dedication to hard work and to diversity is contagious, and is reflected by his staff.

A veteran of the Armed Forces, Roger served in the United States Marine Corps Reserves for six years. He has twelve years of retail and hospitality experience that serves him well as General Manager. He manages a team of department heads, and finance managers, as well as creating and enforcing objectives and goals, crisis management, and other major issues involving guests, team members and facilities management. The latest big project is the Forever Young Initiative, a project which involved ground-up restructuring of the Hampton Inn and Suites.



The forever young initiative (fyi) is designed to extend the life of current Hampton properties, those with good foundations and great teams in ideal locations, nearing the re licensing process. For existing hotels such as Florence, the program upgraded guestrooms, guest baths and exterior design elements.

As it relates to consumers, fyi is focused on the emerging millennial traveler market. Millennials today continue to outpace the boomer generation and have unique priorities. fyi will draw this new generation into the brand without



sacrificing the service that loyalists have come to love. The ultimate goal of fyi is to provide owners and guests with a space that is multi-functional, convenient, comfortable and clean. Updates can be tailored to each market with options including traditional, transitional and contemporary.

All great leaders need great teams, and Roger has some of the best, brightest and most diverse staffs in Florence. His Facilities Manager, Amanda Rogers, started in 2009, and has steadily moved up into her current role. Starting out at the front desk, Amanda demonstrated exceptional skills working with people and was promoted to a position and sales, then to her current position, Amanda enjoys the close knit environment of the employees she works with, and expresses great pride in watching the property grow and change. Much like Amanda, Andrea Barney is another vital member of the team.

Andrea was born in Camden and moved from Bishopville to Florence in 2009 to seek better opportunities. She found that opportunity with Hampton Inn and Suites by Hilton. Within 6 months of being hired, Andrea was promoted to team leader within the housekeeping department. In 2015, after learning everything she could about her job and the brand, she was offered the position of Executive Housekeeper at the Hampton Inn and Suites located by the Civic Center. Andrea revels in the challenge of the change in environment and new faces to work with.

With a re-branded property and a strong team, the Hampton Inn & Suites looks to continue its impeccable service to the community and its diverse clientele for years to come.





# THIS WRITER SOWING SEEDS GLOBALLY FROM HOME

by Miesha Shaver Thomas



Dawn "D.A." Goodwin  
(Photo by Walter Preece Photography)

Author Dawn "D.A." Goodwin received her undergraduate degree from Francis Marion University where she majored in Political Science and minored in English Writing and Language.

In June of 2013, Dawn went on to pursue her passion for editing and writing by joining SNHU's English and Creative Writing Non-fiction graduate program. In December of the same year, she also launched [www.youeditingpro.net](http://www.youeditingpro.net), a website that offers customers editing and writing services online.

Her journey did not stop there.

To pursue her passion for sharing her knowledge of English with others, Dawn began teaching full-time in 2015 and today is an English instructor at Virginia College. She recently published her first memoir, *The Offender I Once Defended*, under her pen name D.A. Goodwin. To learn more about Dawn's editing and writing services and to get information about her new book, please visit [www.youeditingpro.net](http://www.youeditingpro.net). Dawn currently lives in Florence with her husband and two sons.

Blurb from the book

If you have ever been alone but still felt like you were on center stage in front of a packed, whispering audience, then someone has probably been watching you.

In 2014, Dawn Goodwin realized she was the target of an unknown harasser who knew all of her whereabouts as well as all of her actions.



But what the harasser did not know was that Dawn had grown up in the most dangerous city in South Carolina where, if she had been taught nothing else, she had been taught to pray, stand, and fight for herself. *The Offender I Once Defended* is Dawn's very first memoir, published under her pen name D.A. Goodwin. It reveals the intriguing true story about the unfathomable incidents she experienced while attempting to uncover and then stop a faceless pervert who got a kick out of making her squirm.

But this page-turner does not stop there. It also personally invites you to answer the question: Which is really

worse, being harassed or not knowing who is harassing you?



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# CITY GRILL A ONE STOP ENTERTAINMENT HOT SPOT

by Mallory Brayboy



Debra and Tommy Mitchell

Tommy Mitchell has a goal to keep the people of Florence entertained and is doing so through his sports bar City Grill. "City Grill is a little bit of everything.

We started out as a sports bar but we are a one-stop shop now", says Mitchell. The bar features live bands, karaoke, and djs. Its space is also available to be rented out for events like baby showers, wedding receptions, and anniversaries.

A native of the Florence area, Mitchell attended Wilson High School. Afterwards, he began working with Duke Energy and has been with the company for the past 36 years.



Tommy Mitchell and Mallory "Mal" Kershaw

He and his wife Debra still call Florence home. Tommy Mitchell, along with Earl Muldrow, opened the doors of City Grill nearly a decade ago in downtown Florence in 2007. When the building's owner's decided to open a restaurant in its location, the bar relocated to its current location on Palmetto Street. Mallory Kershaw has assisted Mitchell with the bar since its relocation.



Mitchell says the idea for City Grill came about due to Florence's lack of an adult atmosphere. Though the bar was created with an older crowd in mind, many younger individuals have taken a liking to the bar as well. Mitchell hopes to maintain his adult crowd while still being an enjoyable spot for his younger clientele. "It is tough. If it was strictly just an older crowd we



Ron Johnson

wouldn't be as busy because they don't go out as much; they only go out on special occasions and holidays. We try to cater to

everybody. It's a good safe environment", says Mitchell. Mitchell's nephew Ron Johnson manages the bar and Deidrick Thomas is the head bartender.

As for the future, Mitchell is taking things one day at a time. "I don't know if I will be open another ten years or another year", says Mitchell. "My goals are to keep City Grille open and retire from Duke Energy in the next 4-5 years to have that to fall back on."



Deidrick Thomas

City Grill is open Thursday- Saturday (sometimes on Sunday) and has happy hour specials from 6-9pm.



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More events & Schedule: [www.cityofdillonsc.us](http://www.cityofdillonsc.us)



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7:00 pm - 9:30 pm  
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# LEADING LADY WOMEN'S EXPO SET

Submitted by Leya Elijah-Eller, Event Coordinator



Leya Elijah-Eller

Mother's Day weekend will be a dynamic one in Florence as BOLD Productions is hosting The LEADING LADY WOMEN'S EXPO on May 7, 2016 at Poynor Adult Center. This unique and fun event is "the Ultimate Experience for Ladies Who Lead in Life!" Built upon the premise that every lady leads in some area of her life; whether it's being a mom, business owner, community leader, minister or mentor, she is a Leading Lady. So this is her day!

"This expo is so amazing! Once you walk through the door, you are truly walking into an Experience - not just an event. From 12pm-7pm, there is shopping open with more than 30 vendors (beauty, diet, clothing, tea, shoes, jewelry, accessories, fragrances and so much more!); Empowerment Sessions (healthy relationships, living from inside out, mental health, Relax Your Mind, Fierce Finances & Others!); Performances from Local Singers and Dancers on Main Stage and Beauty Make Over Area with Makeup Artist and Photo Sessions. We also have three Fabulous Fashion Showcases (Women's Fashion, Cultural Fashion & Beauty Remixed Plus Size Fashion) featuring 18 dynamic models walking for Catherine's, Fearfully & Wonderfully Made Boutique Vdrix Curvy Couture & Couture Plus, Mea's Closet, Outer Wear and Fa'niqne Crochet Creation. We have incredible door prizes being given away every hour including some cash prizes and some bonus gifts given away at special times of the day and during special events! And as if that wasn't enough, national recording artist Michelle Lampert will be joining us to celebrate all the lovely leading ladies in a special mini-concert. She is a talented singer and musician, playing violin and electric mandolin," said a visionary.

"This event is very special to me and comes straight from my heart. As a wife and mother of three amazing young adults, I looked at my active life in the church, work, and other interests and realized the need for this day. I am currently a cancer survivor (ovarian and leukemia), I have had weight loss surgery and understand the battle of obesity, I have survived divorce, domestic abuse, sexual assault, and much illness including multiple miscarriages. I have dedicated my life to working with teens for almost 20 years and worked so hard at all I do and fought hard to rise above, go forward and push hard to Lead in Life. I discovered there wasn't much to just make a lady feel like a lady regardless if she's a business woman or a pastor. We all like pretty things and we all need to just relax and not feel guilty! I wanted to create a day that allowed women to simply feel special in every way. I want you to enter a "zone." When you come in, I don't want you to feel you can leave until it's over! There is so much we want to offer you and so much we want you to experience. There are so many people we want you to meet and you will want to connect with. Plus, we have some extra surprises being added," she continued.

Admission is \$7 for the entire day and \$12 for VIP, which affords patrons one hour early admission to shop before the doors officially open, morning refreshments, special gifts in your Swag Bag. Pay online via Eventbrite and automatically receive \$2 off! <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/leading-lady-womens-expo-tickets-20119949310>



For more information please contact Leya Elijah-Eller 843-615-6232 or Email: [Boldproductions78@gmail.com](mailto:Boldproductions78@gmail.com) and follow us on Facebook!



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# MARION FOXTROT FESTIVAL

## Thursday Night (May 19, 2016)

FREE Children's entertainment at Marion Opera House

## Friday Night (May 20, 2016)

Fireworks at Withlacoochee Park @ 9:15pm

## Saturday (May 21, 2016)

FREE Marion Foxtrot Festival Souvenir bags while they last

Parade @ 10am

- Marion County elected/appointed officials
- Variety of marching bands
- JROTC Color Guard/Drill Team Units
- Past/Present Homecoming Queens
- Churches
- Civic Groups
- Cartoon/Storybook Characters
- Motorcycle Clubs

## **Food**

International Food Pavilion, includes foods from a variety of cuisines

## **Entertainment**

- Cruizin 4 Christ Car Club Car Show
- Live Entertainers at the main stage to include: local singing groups/soloist including Socially Awkward, Bubba Rushing, and closing act: D. Myers Band; dance schools including: Justine

Roberts Performing Arts Academy, Emmalyn Davis School of Dance, Driven By Design Dance Studio; step teams, live DJ, street dance, and much more.

- Zumba with Jessica Herrington
- Mime
- Cartoon/Storybook Characters
- Electric Bull
- Children's carnival rides
- DNR exhibit
- Game truck with the latest gaming systems (Nintendo, Xbox, etc.)
- Inflatables
- Trackless Train
- Orbitron

## **Arts/Crafts Vendors**

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## **Marion Foxtrot Festival Contact Information**

**President: Regina Stanley (843) 206-4182**

**Vice President: Sharon Grice**

**Treasurer: Joey Powell**

**Secretary: Pat Burgess**

**Address: P.O. Box 1454**

**Marion, SC 29571**

**E-mail: [marionfoxtrotfestival@gmail.com](mailto:marionfoxtrotfestival@gmail.com)**



## ALONG THE RIVER: A COLLECTION BY JENNIFER ERVIN COMES TO FLORENCE

Submitted by Uschi Jeffcoat, Executive Director FRAA



The Florence Regional Arts Alliance is pleased to collaborate with the Florence County Museum and introduce a spring exhibition in the Florence County Museum Waters Gallery featuring the work of Mrs. Jennifer Ervin. Along the River traces the stories, heritage and

landscape of a southern family's experiences within the Pee Dee. The exhibition will run April 4 - June 10.

Mrs. Ervin specializes in film-based photography. Born in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, the artist moved to Florence in her formative years. She received her MFA in Graphic Design from Boston University, and a BA in Fine Art from Francis Marion University. Originally a painter, Ervin became interested in photography during her graduate studies under the tutelage of Alston Purvis, former student of master photographer, Walker Evans.

Motherhood soon followed graduation, initiating a more personal exploration of photography as medium. She actively exhibits her work and has been published on Aint-Bad, Lenscratch, Don't Take Pictures and Feature Shoot. Her Polaroids have been exhibited in galleries and museums alongside notable photographers such as William Christenberry, Sally Mann, William Eggleston, Andy Warhol, Kathleen Robbins and Susan Worsham. Ervin currently lives in Charleston with her husband and their three daughters.

The Florence Regional Arts Alliance hopes Florence County will enjoy this series, which aims to tie current family history in to the past.

To learn more visit [www.jenervin.com](http://www.jenervin.com).

The Artist Reception for this exhibit will coincide with the Florence Regional Arts Alliance's Arts Awards Presentations on May 10 in the Waters Building at 6pm. These prestigious awards annually recognize the important contributions that individuals, groups and businesses make to the cultural life of our community. Mrs. Ervin will also conduct a gallery talk on May 11th at 11 am describing the exhibition. The talk is free and open to the public.

This exhibition is made possible through the generous support of individual donors and the sponsorship of First Reliance Bank.

The Florence County Museum Waters Gallery is located at 135 South Dargan Street. The Legacy exhibit is open to the public and free of charge from Monday through Friday from 10am - 5pm.

The Florence Regional Arts Alliance is a community-based local arts agency that serves the citizens of Florence County and the Pee Dee. FRAA is committed to preserving, supporting and promoting a vibrant arts community for Florence County and the surrounding region. This organization is funded in part by local support and the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information on the Arts Alliance or its programs please visit [www.florenceartsalliance.org](http://www.florenceartsalliance.org) or call director, Mrs. Uschi Jeffcoat at 843.407.3092.







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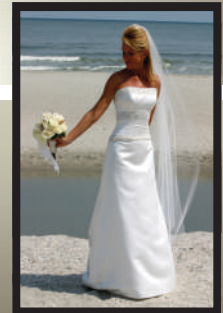
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