

DIVERSITYWORKS

APRIL 2015 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

"For All of Us"



FINDING & BEING
OUR BEST SELVES

PASSIONATE &
PROFESSIONAL

CHIROPRACTOR
SENSITIVE TO CALLING

OVERTON CLIMBS
LADDER AT CCU

FLORENCE ONE'S
TEACHER OF THE YEAR



BENITA JACOBS



DR. BRIAN HUTCHESON



DEAN TRAVIS OVERTON



LINDSEY BIBLER

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Will Crosswell



Coker College
Sandra Shaw



SC Thrive
Lance Newman



Anderson Brothers Bank
Susan Grant



CHS
Dr. Jad Skaf



Ladies Divine to Shine
Shakeita Price

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: Yadira Santiago, MA

NUESTRA MISIÓN

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

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

NUESTRA VISIÓN

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

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'Tis the Season to Contemplate

The newness of spring is once again upon us bringing with it replenishing of the earth, and our labors are about to reach fruition through our readership, all simply for the asking. For this edition, the crops are overflowing with everything found in Phillipians 4.

Our Business section brims with whatever things are of good report as in news of increase at Global Trusted Partners; high achievers and maps for new direction in the Hartsville and Florence chambers of commerce respectively; the splash landing of Walmart's new neighborhood market; new coastal office location for AccuStaff; the return of boutique shopping introduced by MiLadies 182; Johnson Controls' commitment to valuing diversity; State Farm's eyewitness account; the popularity of apprenticeships through the SC Workforce Investment Board; Michael Hemingway's impact as the City of Florence's Director of Utilities; Florence County's Capital Projects Sales Tax in effect and how to keep millenials engaged on the job.

The Spirituality garden features whatever things are pure like Majority Baptist Church's noonday Bible Study class co-authoring a compelling book; how Women on Wisdom must seize the moment no matter their lot in life and the lifestyle-altering movement underway at Whole Life Outreach Ministries, Inc.

Whatever things are noble have been covered in our Education section forest as we appreciate our teachers of the year across the region; how to prepare for school year end testing; explosive summer camps at ScienceSouth and the state Governor's School for Science and Math; Francis Marion University's online RN-to-BSN program being named among nation's best, Crystal Graham receiving FMU's African-American Faculty and Staff Coalition Diversity Award and three alumni receiving awards; Florence-Darlington TEC's Phi Theta Kappa students earning medals at the State House and the school's hearing Engineer/Entrepreneur /motivational speaker Dr. Calvin Mackie on how to succeed; Coker College continues to promote adult students; Florence District One's new superintendent and Coastal Carolina University's Dean of Students are introduced.

The Special section orchard has copious offerings of how to appreciate our veterans, encourage those abused as children and adults and how to support the facilities like CARE House and DuRant Children's Center, SOS Healthcare and all the wonderful volunteers who keep the wheels of humanity turning.

Financial section pickings are ripe for the things that are true when it comes to building a team of professionals for your business board network; being head of the class in farming and soil conservation and building financial security.

What could be more lovely than a good Heath report? My mom used to say if wishes were horses, beggars would ride and for a long time I didn't know what that meant. But now as a perennial patient since last year, I can sort of relate as I yearn for my body to produce good levels and numbers for my physicians to read and interpret back to me. Florence's Biggest Loser may share some of the same goals as maybe patients of chiropractor Dr. Brian Hutcheson, cardiologist Dr. Jad Skaf and bone specialist Dr. Robert Turner and those of Dr. David Gittens, as well as participants in (the third annual) Walk to Health.

Our Lifestyles section provides the rain to water the seeds from the following: Chrysalis Center and Eastern Carolina Community Foundation, a guide for women planning to retire, folk who want to audition for Florence Little Theatre's *Spamalot*, tourists of lower Florence and Williamsburg counties, listen to the Burundi Choir perform East African gospel music in Dillon, join Ladies Divine to Shine in their mission, get busy at Forest Lake Greenhouses, further the Girl Scouts' cause, or partner with the Florence Regional Arts Alliance and Florence County Museum on a new exhibition. It's just good to meditate on all of these things.



Rennie Lunn-McAllister
Executive Editor

UTILITIES SERVICES KEY TO CITY'S FUNCTIONS

Submitted by Amanda P. Pope, CMO Administrator



Michael Hemingway

For Michael Hemingway, City of Florence Director of Utilities, moving the City from “Good to Great” is more than a challenge; it’s an opportunity. The chance to pursue improvements and be the best, no matter the task, is on his daily list of personal and organizational goals.

Well-known for his bright smile and personality, those around him express an appreciation for his reputation as a leader and an encourager with enthusiasm so infectious you want to be part of his team. Michael is perceived by his co-workers and the community as being attentive and accepting of people, no matter their position in life. Michael’s positive approach as well as his exceptional character qualities have created a recipe for success. The City is fortunate to have an employee of his caliber.

Michael is a native of the Brittons Neck community in Marion County. He is a 1993 graduate of Clemson University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology. He received his Master of Business Administration degree in 1999 from Francis Marion University and his Master Certification in Health Administration and Policy from the Medical University of South Carolina



Waste Water Management Facility

that same year. He began his career with the City of Mullins as Laboratory Director from 1994-1999 and was promoted to Assistant Utilities Director where he served until 2002.

Michael joined the City of Florence team as its Wastewater Division Manager in 2002. Michael was promoted to Production and

Treatment Division Manager in 2006, gaining the responsibility of water production and waste treatment. He then became the Production and Treatment Department Manager in 2008. In 2011 Michael was promoted to Director of Utilities, and he continues to serve in that position today. As Director of Utilities, Michael is responsible for daily operations in the following work divisions: Waste Water Treatment, Ground and Surface Water Production, Distribution Operations, and Collection Operations. Because of the regulatory requirements in these work areas, Michael maintains the following certifications in the State of South Carolina: Biological Wastewater “A” Operator, Collection System “A” Operator, Distribution “A” Operator and Water “C” Operator.

David Zimmer, Senior Vice President, of CDM Smith (Engineering Consultant firm for



Pee Dee Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant

the Florence Regional Wastewater Management Facility and Pee Dee River Regional Water System) said the following of Michael: “I distinctly remember a conversation I had with Drew Griffin (now City Manager) regarding his decision to hire Michael. While Michael was younger than some of the candidates, the City Manager was excited about Michael’s skills and leadership potential. When I later met Michael, I too was impressed with his positive outlook, his genuine interest in and kindness to people, and his professionalism. These strengths have propelled him to successfully take on new leadership positions with the City.” Michael has proven over the years that he builds positive working relationships to ensure success in all of the City’s efforts.

Michael has played an instrumental role in numerous significant projects during his career with the City of Florence including:

- Operational start-up of the City’s Pee Dee River

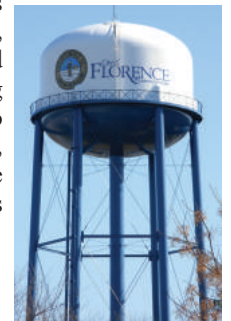
Regional Water System, a \$35 million water system project that allows the City to treat and process 10 million gallons of water per day from the Great Pee Dee River.

- Implementation of the City’s Stormwater Phase II Program to minimize stormwater pollution in the city. This program, a mandate of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), required cities to apply for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and establish long-term stormwater management activities and projects.
- Planning, design, and construction of the Florence Regional Wastewater Management Facility and Administration & Laboratory Building (the City’s first LEED® certified building) completed in 2013.
- Acquisition of the Town of Timmonsville water and sewer system to assist the Town, residents,

and local industry with the restoration of a failing utilities system

These projects, combined with his responsibility for day-to-day operations for the City’s Utilities System require that Michael work with various regulatory agencies, industries, engineering firms, citizens, and co-workers.

Regardless of the circumstances, he works in the best interest of the City following its **Mission Statement** (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.) He exemplifies the organization’s core values of **Collaboration** (Pursuing the best solution or outcome – thinking “we, not me.”); **Professionalism** (Demonstrating competence, proficiency, and skill, as well as honesty, integrity, and respect); and **Ownership** (Taking personal responsibility to be engaged, innovative, accountable and receptive in the completion of tasks and assignments).



Elevated Tank



NPSETA: A PERFECT FIT FOR FLORENCE

Submitted by Tony James, President



Training and development is anything and everything that can be done by an organization to enhance the skills and improve the overall performance of its employees. Recognition reinforces the desire to have that performance repeated over and over to the company's advantage.

Global Trusted Partners, LLC has announced plans to establish a **Service Employee Training Academy** in Florence, SC – the first of its kind in the entire state. Its focus and mission will be to advance the region's service mentality acuity in a manner consistent with an area that boasts such an enormous service and hospitality expanse.

NPSETA service modules will revolve primarily around Service Mentality, Personal Development, Communicating Effectively, Preparatory Leadership Training, and Regional Awareness.

The vast and emerging service industry that exists in this region is quite unique. Here are some facts that supported our decision in selecting Florence, SC as the NPSETA site:

Interstate 20 (I-20) is a major thoroughfare cutting across the state of South Carolina, linking the state and Florence with important transportation and business hubs to the north, west and south, including Atlanta, GA Charlotte, NC (via I-77), Savannah, GA (via I-95) and Washington, D.C. (via I-95) and all the way to New York. Florence is well known as the half-way point between New York and Miami and is popularly known to have more hotel rooms/beds and restaurants than any other rest stop between these two points on the eastern seaboard. Hence – enormous opportunities as well as requirements for service industry employees.

Obviously hospitality is a very significant part of this burgeoning

industry. Simply put, we seek to make it better. Take a look for instance at your own consumer behavior whether traveling for business or leisure. What is your preference – to be treated like a number or a person with his/her own unique needs and desires? If treated as the latter it is more likely that you will return, correct? Here's my own personal example: I practically reside at one of the local Hampton Inns in Florence. I could choose to stay at other hotels probably for less money and probably even closer to my office. But the folks at this Hampton Inn understand my needs and expectations and meet them on every level and they treat me the way I like to be treated - not like a number, (Thanks Jada, Shanna, Nina, Liz, Nikki, & Flojo!) so I return time and again. The fact is - employees must be trained sufficiently to understand customers empathically and learn how to meet and exceed customer expectations. This is what we refer to - not as just customer service, but having a real Service Mentality. Indeed it is what we train and teach.

The Service Industry as defined by **Business Dictionary.com** is: an industry made up of companies that primarily earn revenue through providing intangible products and services. Service industry companies are involved primarily in retail, transport, distribution, food services, hospitality, administrative, as well as other service-dominated businesses, i.e., medical and finance, etc.

When you consider many of these types of environments you may note that not very often will a visitor actually see an owner, the CEO, and many times not even a General Manager as they patronize these establishments.

The point here is that in most instances the front line employees are the actual "faces" of most of these

establishments. This means that they are consequentially being somewhat relied upon as **pseudo ambassadors** who will make either a good or bad impression for your company. It all comes down to preparation for these inevitable encounters.

We want to bring awareness not only of the true depth - but also the consequences of such problems particularly in locations where pools of employees may be sorely lacking some of the basic qualifications and skills required by employers. This has a very negative impact on customers, workplace performance, and our economy as employers diligently seek those who can adequately and effectively fill their job openings.

We live in a global economy, and as younger generations (Ys and Zs) enter the labor force today, employers must adjust to an entirely new era of employee expectations, attitudes, and opinions, etc. These processes of change have some companies caught in a state of **customer service paralysis** waiting to see what consequences will eventually occur that forces them to snap out of this state of denial. We think however that the consequences have already begun. We see what typically becomes the norm for many business enterprises – a loss of customers and revenue due to a lack of skills, competence, character and objectionable customer service toward consumers, all to be witnessed by the world's consumers - some who reside locally and many who may be traveling through our region.

The **Next Phase Service Employee Training Academy** will assist especially smaller size companies where the challenge to provide critically needed employee proficiency and real service training have always been hindered by budget constraints. We are not simply selling a service. We are bringing this academy to Florence to provide real solutions to a deepening problem in a region that will benefit immensely from its existence.



Speaking of "faces of an organization", one of the primary faces you'll see when visiting the office of Global Trusted Partners, LLC is our Administrative Assistant, Shateesha Haynes. Shateesha is a native of Georgetown, SC., a U.S. Army Iraq War Veteran, and - she's also pretty awesome!



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AWARDS, HONORS FLAVOR BANQUET

Submitted by Norm Steadman, Communications Specialist, Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce

HARTSVILLE – The Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Membership Banquet is traditionally a night to honor the area’s highest achievers in both business and citizenship. The 2015 banquet was no different, and featured four excellent and deserving award winners. Each winner has contributed something unique to Hartsville in 2014, and the Chamber was humbled to be the venue for these prestigious award ceremonies.



James Kurtnacker and Eliza Truett

The Pilot Club selected Nancy Barfield as their Caregiver of the Year. Nancy volunteers her time to serve others selflessly and was nominated by her local community. Nancy was not able to attend the event due to health complications; the award was accepted by family friend James Kurtnacker.

Hartsville is home to a tremendous spirit of citizenship, and there are two awards that focus on recognizing those in the community who go above and beyond what is expected of them. The Duke Energy Citizenship and Service

Award was presented to SPC Credit Union for their work with the Cares2Shares and scholarship programs. SPC makes a point to always give back to the community that supports them, and tonight it was their turn to be on the receiving end of this well-deserved award.



SPC Staff and Mindy Taylor

The Rotary Club chose Casey Copeland as its Citizen of the Year. Casey is a Hartsville Chamber Board member, director of the Florence-Darlington Technical College Hartsville Site, founder of the OneHartsville initiative, and a constant presence at all of Hartsville’s community events. His list of volunteer service projects is too long to list in this article; it goes without saying that if there was an event in 2014 in Hartsville, Casey was on the front lines doing whatever he could to make the event a success.



Casey Copeland and Lucy Brown

Finally, the Will Woodham Business Person of the Year award was announced; this is the award selected by the chamber’s board of directors from nominations from the business community. The award has been the highlight of the banquet’s festivities in the past, and this year was no exception: the 2014 Business Person of the Year was Kanti Patel, general manager of the Fairfield Inn.

Kanti serves on numerous committees and boards that keep Hartsville running behind the scenes. He is never shy about volunteering his time, his resources, or anything else asked of him. He never hesitates to jump into the fray whether it is for a small community gathering or a county-wide initiative; Kanti is quick to provide insight from his 30-plus-year career in the hospitality industry to those who can benefit from his guidance. Kanti was surprised to receive the award, and visibly emotional at the recognition he obviously deserves, but rarely receives.



Kanti Patel and Brenda Cranford

These three individuals and one organization all share the spirit of caring and service that make Hartsville such a unique and endearing community. The awards represent the community’s thanks for their efforts, and for their willingness to pour themselves into their work and volunteering. The celebration of their accomplishments is what makes the banquet such a special time for the Chamber, whose staff feels fortunate for the opportunity to host the event. 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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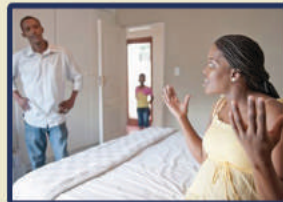
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BUILDING CAPACITY IN COMMUNITIES PART 2

Submitted by Tony James, President, Global Trusted Partners, LLC



Anthony R. James

While all men are created equal, we are not necessarily all equally endowed scholastically. Having said that, let's not make a wrong assumption that if not

intellectually comparable there is no place for one within the boundaries of the middle class. Not so. I'm certain that most would agree that the attainment of a college degree is definitely not for everyone. This has never meant however that because of its nonexistence one should be relegated to the ranks of the working poor and incapable of sufficiently providing for their family.

Consider some of the jobs today in our service industry that are "high touch" as opposed to "high tech". Although honorably employed, most college graduates with prospects of greater opportunities would not prefer pursuing these jobs as career paths. But somebody has to do it right? My point is that people without the wherewithal or even the proclivity to pursue college level credentials however do much of the 'heavy lifting' that

helps keep the rest of us happily moving along each day. They prepare and serve meals in our restaurants; they insure that we have clean rooms to sleep in when we travel leisurely or for business; they care for our small children and our elderly; they ensure that retail and grocery store shelves are sufficiently stocked; they keep the public spaces and places where we work and play clean and safe; they also insure that our yards and public gardens are well manicured, etc.

Let's understand that many of these people may also be products of economically depressed or similarly disenfranchised regions. Many of the "ostensibly non-available" individuals located in these areas require adequate training to begin acquiring even a basic set of work readiness skills to prepare them for the journey of self-reliance, but certainly could eventually contribute to our economy. This enables entry to that respectable realm of 'taxpaying citizen'. When this doesn't occur, many of these very same people become/remain dependent upon social services and those limited resources already dwindling from city and state coffers, which are subsidized by whom? Why taxpaying citizens of course! Many times if this is not their fate,

all too often the other alternative unfortunately may be negative interaction with law enforcement. So, the question becomes; are we doing all that we can to grow an economy where everyone at least has an opportunity to contribute with dignity? Or are we restricting the will and resolve of many, thus perpetuating impossible situations that can only result in continuous struggle and imminent failure for some in our society? I once again note that economic development is not only about buildings and structures but very importantly also about people and opportunities.

We must seek out opportunities that promote inclusion and awareness of all that will be good for Florence in the midst of its awesome redevelopment. This will support the reduction of community violence and other community ills while improving the long-term labor market prospects of participating individuals especially our youth. Even school curriculums should reflect "a situational response of today". Providing targeted instruction at an early age on comportment, essential life skills, and of course - soft skills that adhere to values, principles, and social norms, can help begin to purge our community of many social ills.



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KEEP MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES FROM LEAVING WITH BETTER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

The Millennial generation encompasses the employees who will be tomorrow's leaders in America's companies. In just 10 years, they'll make up 75 percent of the workforce. This generation of college graduates - buried under student-loan debt and entry-level income - is looking for ways to engage in the workplace and climb out of the recession that has plagued its members in recent years. Businesses bringing Millennials into their offices should look for ways to increase their employee engagement to make them more valuable members of the company.

Millennials are the future of our companies, and are not entering a company like their parents did or anticipating they'll stay at that company for their entire working career. They are hard workers who've been hit with many economic roadblocks, and they want to become engaged in their careers. Companies may need to adjust some practices to help encourage this engagement.

Research found Millennials find functional and emotional attributes in the office workplace big drivers of engagement, but many companies aren't delivering. Here's what small business owners and human resources departments can do to create a change in the workplace for better Millennial engagement:

*** Improve communication** - The gossip mill is not necessarily a good thing to encourage,

and it will run rampant in your company if you don't have good communication about what's happening from the top down. In smaller companies, you can create quarterly meetings to share information, and at larger companies, newsletters and departmental meetings will help. Encourage your employees to ask questions. Promote an open-door policy with all management. And above all, only provide information that is accurate and true. If a question is asked and the answer isn't known, say so.

*** Encourage growth opportunities** - Millennials are interested in making their way up the career ladder quickly, and many will jump companies if they find it in their best interest. Since you've put a lot of effort into training them to perform perfectly for your company, it might be in your best interest to encourage them to stay around. Encourage your management team to discuss with Millennials on your staff their career goals, and identify direct paths they can take to grow in the company.

*** Get to know your workers** - For many generations, the attitude has been to not ask personal questions of employees, but instead to let employees tell their stories if they wish. Millennials would like their managers and coworkers to be interested in them, not just as an employee, but as a complete person. These

employees want to know that their supervisor cares about their personal life and understands how it affects the work they do for the company. Your company might want to look into ways of getting to know each other, especially outside of the job. Consider hosting an annual family event like a picnic so coworkers can meet spouses and children. Create a monthly newsletter that features some stories about big life changes, like workers buying houses or starting families.

When employees are more engaged in their work and company, they are more productive and satisfied with what they're doing every day. This leads to better employee retention and trains workers to lead your company into the future. To learn more about the Dale Carnegie research, visit www.dalecarnegie.com/employee-engagement and download the free whitepaper.



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DIVERSITY IN HIRING

Submitted by Bridgette P. Coates, Workforce Program Developer, Pee Dee Regional COG



(L to R) William Sorrells, Technical Advisor Apprenticeship Program, and Phil Homan, Manager- Human Resources, Schaeffler Group-INA, Cheraw, SC.

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) recently recognized Schaeffler Group-INA, of Cheraw, as its SC Outstanding Business Partner for 2014! The Pee Dee Workforce Investment Board (www.peedeewib.org) was honored to nominate Schaeffler Group for this award because of its support of the public workforce system and its commitment to developing the talent pipeline through apprenticeships. There is a multitude of diverse ways to hire new employees, but the Return on Investment (ROI) for Apprenticeships makes it the best!

Why did INA start the apprenticeship program? Phil Homan, Manager of Human Resources, says: "Because we could not find employees who were equipped with the skills they needed to work at INA. The apprenticeship program and the development of high school courses in trade skills and machine tooling provide INA the opportunity to create a pool of its own technically skilled workers. It allows us to evaluate, train and move these individuals into more technical roles as they become available." On top of this, INA can provide an opportunity to young people to enter highly skilled work opportunities in their own backyard and to advance and grow with the company in salary and opportunity. Schaeffler Group-INA was committed to apprenticeships before apprenticeships were cool in the Palmetto State. Its program started in 1988 and is the oldest DOL certified journeyman program of its type in South Carolina. The apprenticeship is a three-year program

and apprentices attend one-half of his/her time each day at Northeastern Technical College (NETC) for the first two years. These individuals are full-time employees with full benefits and are being paid while they are in school and at Schaeffler for the second one-half of the day. And beyond this, Schaeffler is paying for their tuition at NETC! That may sound expensive, but Phil Homan, Manager-Human Resources, would say that it's one of the best business decisions Schaeffler has ever made!

Homan reports that Schaeffler Group-INA hires 15-20 apprentices each year. Since the program's inception, 261 apprenticeships have been enrolled, 222 have graduated for an 85% retention rate and 198 of these are still employed for a retention rate of 90%! Now these are good statistics.

When Schaeffler Group began the apprenticeship program, it was more difficult to do so than in 2015. Today, Pee Dee Area businesses, can call Teri Luther, at 803-896-5206 who help map a plan. And apprenticeships are not just for manufacturing companies anymore. Almost any occupation can be apprenticed. "One of the things we've done really well that really differentiates us from the rest of the country is that we've taken this apprenticeship model and, where traditionally you would see only trades like carpentry or electricians as apprentices, we've taken that to completely different industries like health care, like IT, like advanced manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, energy," Brad Neese, Director of Apprenticeship Carolina.

The word to employers is to consider diversifying how to train and hire your workforce. It pays to investigate Apprenticeships. Schaeffler Group-INA is glad it did! Contact Phil Homan, at 843-537-8757 or homanpil@schaeffler.com for more information.



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THIS SMALLER STORE PACKS MORE POWER IN INVENTORY AND PERSONNEL

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Marquisa Rogers

Like the two other big box Walmart stores in Florence, the newly opened neighborhood market on the corner of Cashua and Second Loop is a very similar compact replica of the grocery /pharmacy/gas departments that offer everything a full service community convenience store could, but the key advantage of this shopping center is in its manager – Marquisa Rogers. A Marion County native, she has travelled the country servicing Walmart customer, store and personnel needs, growing and gaining far more than she could have ever imagined. With her initial exposure to Walmart through her father, an associate of 23 years, she thought she would “try it for a year” as a stepping stone to a career in radiology and cosmetology. But that’s not even close to how her story unfolds as she forges a progressively upward path to management schools, on-the-job training and niche leadership.

Now 19 years with the company, she has been in charge of specialty (shoe and jewelry) departments in as many as 15 stores simultaneously and has grown to be fully responsible for every aspect of the store’s overall operation from financials to merchandising to developing teams. “When it comes to the Walmart philosophy of ‘save money, live better’ we have to do both without compromise and this means having a diverse group of associates who can represent all people. At first, Walmart’s focus was on developing super stores, but in this new movement toward neighborhood markets (open 24 hours with only 95 associates), we must be sure that we are right for the community” she said, pointing out that like a good pastor would, she introduced herself to the new market’s neighbors by knocking

on every door of nearby houses announcing the soon to come novelty.

Given the knowledge, tools, ability and resources, the company’s talent is sufficiently covered and prepared for work and yet there is room for creativity. “Yes, we have a routine map to follow and that mandatorily has to be done. However, as a leader, I am the (OCD) hands on type who prefers the one on one approach to lead from the floor up and just as I was glued to Walmart from the beginning, the company keeps finding ways to keep me attached and engaged. They have sent me to school and I will soon possess my MBA thanks to my employer. Walmart invests in its associates (and their children’s) education from GED to MBA. We also teach English to those who work here and need proficiency in the language and it provides great mentors. One of my top mentors is a buyer in Arkansas, Anna Marie Browning, with whom I talk very often,” she said, reflecting more glue at work.

Walmart is also of the belief that being a successful business requires a diverse workforce made up of the best talent and an inclusive environment that “enables and empowers all of us to be at our best. When we model



(L to R) Justin Bass, Marquisa Rogers, Tyrone Francis and Eric Flores

inclusive behaviors, the benefits not only stretch to all 2.2 million of our associates, but also our customers, our company and the communities we serve. Additionally, in the giant retailers’ Diversity Goal Program, nearly 60,000 managers are held accountable for elevating the standards of diversity and inclusion throughout the company. According to a corporate statement, “Up to 15% of management bonuses and 10% of performance

evaluation scores tied to their diversity goals achievement. These goals motivate our leaders to participate in diversity events, mentor associates and to place diverse candidates at a rate consistent with the qualified applicant pool for field management positions.” It continues: “Once we hire the right people, with varied perspectives and ideas, it is essential to develop them and their careers. Our belief is that with a meaningful sense of purpose, our associates will be fulfilled and chose to stay with Walmart. This means providing unique opportunities for advancement and growth – through mentoring programs, sponsorship programs, various leadership courses and Associate Resource Groups – where our associates can connect, collaborate and proudly celebrate their diversity.”

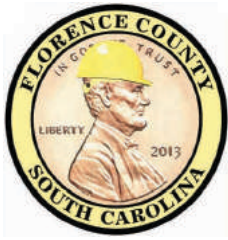
These factors make Walmart today one of the most diverse employers in the United States with 57% of its associates being women, and across the past 10 years, its people of color representation in the US increased from 29% to 39%. 45% of its management associates are women and 29% are people of color.

All these facts and figures paint a picture of a healthy and full cornucopia of which everyone can partake and through which all can contribute and Rogers urges aspirants to latch onto both the giving and receiving ends. “We are not solely focused on diversity of thought or of teams but of merchandise also. For example, in our smaller store, we may not carry everything (like grits in one location) but repeated requests for them, our market manager had changed the planagram to include them on our shelves within the next 72 hours.

Walmart also has a 12,000 square foot Express Mart that stays open until 10 p.m. staffed by 40 associates. And Rogers says that after she has mastered them all, her goal is to retire from the Walmart of this everchanging world to pursue something else as stimulating, challenging, financially rewarding and overall gratifying. None of us should every settle to be satisfied because that position holds the risk of missing a big piece of change and progress,” she said.

FLORENCE COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECTS SALES TAX AT WORK

by Alicia C. Phillip



The Capital Projects Sales Tax, also known as the Florence County One Cent Sales Tax, and the Penny Sales Tax, was implemented to provide funding for infrastructure and

capital improvements in Florence County. It dates back to November 7, 2006, when Florence County voters approved a One-Cent Capital Project Sales Tax for roads, which subsequently went into effect on May 1, 2007. At that time, the South Carolina Department of Transportation oversaw the projects funded by the tax. On August 22, 2013, the present Florence County Council again re-imposed the tax, by a unanimously approved Ordinance.

County Council will retain control over the funds generated by the tax, as well as the projects funded by the tax. Residents started incurring the tax in May 2014, and then in September 2014, Council established a bond to allow funds to be available to start projects. Approximately \$4 million was allocated to each County Council District to fund projects, with \$1.7 million currently available to fund road resurfacing projects, and the balance will be available for other projects as funds increase.

Florence residents were given the opportunity to participate in determining the projects to be funded by the sales tax. Council held nine meetings, one in each district, and during those meetings, residents gave their suggestions. A total of 472 projects were suggested, and the Capital Project Sales Tax Commission (CPST) made the final selections, taking into account the recommendations of County Council. County Council then created a ballot question, and Florence residents were invited to vote on the selected projects. Residents showed overwhelming support for the selected Capital Projects, which are: Public Safety (Fire and EMS); Emergency Management; Sheriff; County Administration; Water & Sewer Improvements; Veteran Affairs; Municipalities; Florence County Recreation; Lake City Community Hospital; Watershed Improvements; Road Paving and Drainage; and General Road Improvements. These will particularly include: road resurfacing; building fire stations, EMS stations, and community centers; renovating town halls; upgrading radio stations; and fixing drainage problems, among others. Phase One will focus on road projects, and once those are completed, then other projects will commence.

Although the penny tax generally applies to items purchased within the county, groceries will not incur the tax.

District 3 Councilman Alphonso Bradley is very excited about the tax and the projects that it will fund. According to Bradley: "I think that the penny tax is the smart way to raise money without raising property taxes. One out of every three pennies spent in Florence County is spent by non-residents; so this means that for every two pennies Florence residents spend, another penny is contributed by non-residents. It's a great way to fund projects that will greatly improve our community."

If engaged in a small, local or minority business in any of the following industries: construction, engineering and design, utilities, waste management, printing, trucking and hauling, landscaping, building and roadway materials, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, furniture, security, pest control and interior finishing, and would like to learn more about the projects, contact Carlos Osorio at 803-376-6044 or via email at cosorio@bstonegroup.com.

Councilman Bradley urges residents to be patient as the projects are completed. The County is working with a small staff and tackling projects in phases, with the goal of completing all projects within the next three to four years. For more information about the tax, funds allocation, and project progress, please visit <http://florenceco.org/road-projects>.



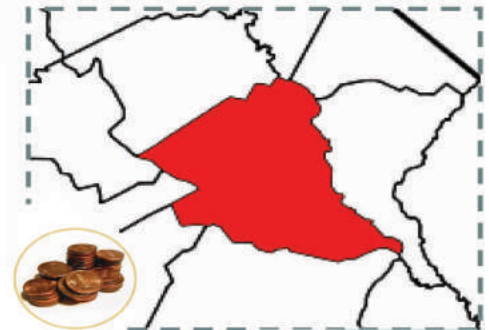
FLORENCE COUNTY SMALL, LOCAL & MINORITY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Capital Project Sales Tax provides funding for capital and infrastructure improvements throughout the County. The County desires to enhance small, local, and minority businesses' participation in these projects. If you are a small, local or minority business in the area of construction, engineering and design, utilities, waste management, printing, trucking and hauling, landscaping, building and roadway materials, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, furniture, security, pest control and interior finishing and are interested in learning more about the projects, please contact Carlos Osorio at 803-376-6044 or email at cosorio@bstonegroup.com.

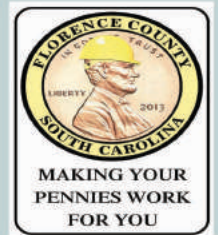
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JOHNSON CONTROLS DOES BUSINESS RIGHT

by Alicia C. Phillip



For Johnson Controls, a multi-industrial company that employs hundreds of people in South Carolina, diversity is a requirement for doing business the right way. It's very likely a Johnson Controls battery started your car this morning, or that you sat in a Johnson Controls car seat on your morning commute. It's also likely that when you got to your end destination – an office building, a hospital, a school – your building was controlled by a Johnson Controls product. Some of those Johnson Controls products reach the marketplace thanks to the work of employees in Florence. In South Carolina, and throughout the 150 countries worldwide where Johnson Controls operates, diversity is a driving force. The company believes that focusing on diversity is a way to better serve customers. Diversity allows Johnson Controls to develop products and services reflecting the preferences of a diverse global marketplace.

“Diversity at the Johnson Controls Florence Distribution Center has always been an important component to our continued, measured improvement,” said plant manager Jeff Vine. “Employees have rallied around one another to repeatedly achieve new heights of performance. These successes are a reflection of what is possible when a very diverse workforce from Florence and the surrounding community comes together for a common cause.”

Johnson Controls is committed to attracting, developing and training the best talent in South Carolina and throughout the world. The company recognizes that excellence comes in many forms and from every region. Johnson Controls fosters a culture that promotes excellent performance, teamwork, inclusion, leadership and growth. This focus on diversity has led to measurable results. Female representation overall and at the officer and board levels exceeds U.S. manufacturing benchmarks. The number of minority executives at Johnson Controls continues to grow and the number of our minority employees in the United States mirrors the population. “Diversity helps build a strong team of both employees and leaders here at the Florence Distribution Center. Our employees help us utilize our diversity of thoughts and processes by participating on many employee committees,” said Valerie Fulwood, manager of human resources at the company's Florence Distribution Center.

Diversity and inclusion continues to be woven into how Johnson Controls does business—from the worldwide employee resource groups open to all employees (called Business Resource Groups) to leadership training programs—for both mid-level and executive level management. Johnson Controls recognizes work is ongoing and continues to ask for employee input on diversity and inclusion progress as part of its annual global survey which is sent to each employee. Johnson Controls believes that by valuing diversity, all employees can fully realize their potential.

At Johnson Controls, diversity is a necessity for doing business the right way, providing customers with products and services reflecting the preferences of a diverse global marketplace—and this requires a workforce with the thoughts, ideas and experiences needed to serve all markets. Johnson Controls' diversity progress is a focus of Johnson Controls' chief operating officer and the Executive Operating Team. “Our workforce expects a workplace that is diverse and supports inclusion. As leaders we owe it to our employees, we owe it to our customers, and we owe it to ourselves,” said Chairman and CEO Alex Molinaroli. “When the gender, complexion, ethnicity and background of our leaders reflects our customers, markets and communities, we will be competitively advantaged,” he said.



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FIRST HAND WITNESS

by Anna Bowman

Precious Gilbert – “I’m Treated Like Family”

Ms. Precious Gilbert has been a customer of Starlee Alexander since 1978, after relocating from Maryland to South Carolina. “I’ve been affiliated with State Farm Insurance my entire adult life, so when I relocated to South Carolina, I knew I wanted to continue my relationship with a new State Farm agent,” said Gilbert. “My former agent gave me a list of numerous State Farm agents, and I immediately selected Starlee Alexander,” on pure instinct.

“I can’t say enough about the quality of the service Mrs. Alexander and her staff provided from day one when I arrived at her former location on Evans Street in Florence. I was like “family” to Mrs. Alexander. Her warmth and compassion was evident from our first “hug,” as she welcomed me to South Carolina. She took time to discuss with me the various automobile insurances available and walked me through the process of transferring my auto insurance to her agency.”

On every level, the service I received from Mrs. Alexander and her knowledgeable staff, far exceeded my expectations.” Gilbert is extremely pleased with her decision to work with Starlee Alexander and her equally outstanding and supportive staff that provides excellent customer service. “I can’t tell you how great I feel about seeing Mrs. Alexander each time I go to her office. I’m greeted with smiles from her staff and a great big hug from her, she is more than an agent; she’s family to me, as well. I’ve recommended her insurance agency to everyone I know and will continue to do so in the immediate future,” she said.



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FLORENCE CHAMBER HAILS BUSINESS COMMUNITY LEADERS

Submitted by Patricia Burkette, Chamber Marketing Director

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce welcomed a crowd of more than 500 business and community leaders on March 12th, for its Spring Outlook Luncheon at the Florence Civic Center.

Governor Nikki Haley was the keynote speaker for the event, which highlighted the current state of business and emphasized the direction in which the business community is likely to take in the year that lies ahead.

In addition to updates from Gov. Haley, Florence Mayor Stephen Wukela, Florence County Council Chairman Roger Poston and Chamber President Mike Miller also

spoke to the crowd about various items impacting the business community on the local level.

During the luncheon, the Chamber also recognized its Small Business Person of the Year- Ellen Cooke, owner of Freeman's Bakery. Additional recognitions were given to the Chamber's Ambassador of the Year- Ashley Christenbury of SAFE Federal Credit Union and the Chamber's Volunteers of the Year- Shane Orr of Pee Dee Electric, Teresa Ramey of Francis Marion University and Jamie Carsten of South State Bank.

During Gov. Haley's address, she spoke of several issues impacting small

business owners and larger corporations alike. She also spoke of several political efforts that she intended to focus on during the year ahead.

Chamber President Mike Miller said the luncheon was a great success and said that he and the chamber staff are already looking forward to next year's event, which Miller said will have an increased focus on local lawmakers in the Pee Dee and the growth and changes the City and County of Florence will likely undergo as economic development and downtown revitalization efforts progress.



Small Business Person of the Year- Ellen Cooke



Chamber's Ambassador of the year Ashley Christenbury and Tim Norwood



Volunteer of the Year: Shane Orr



Volunteer of the Year: Teresa Ramey



Volunteer of the Year: Jamie Carsten

ACCUSTAFF EXPANDS TO COAST

Submitted by Courtney Snipes, Sales Associate

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-Florence-Darlington Technical College

Rewards of their continued efforts and ongoing support from the Florence and surrounding Pee Dee area have allowed them to open a new branch to further service the Coastal areas. A major step for the franchise owners who has been dedicated to the Pee Dee for over 30 years; Doris and Nathaniel Lockhart opened their office in Conway, SC December 2014. AccuStaff is now embarking on a new journey to serve the community of Horry County. With an amazing staff backing them, the Conway office has gotten off to a great start. We look forward to building strong relationships with the organizations and potential applicants in Horry County. AccuStaff Conway, located at 702-A Main Street, is available to serve Horry County for any temporary, temporary to permanent placement, and permanent needs. Call today at 843.438.8337.



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NOVELTY SHOP BOOSTS DOWNTOWN

by Mallory Brayboy



Owners Starlee B. Alexander, Doris B. Lockhart and Charlene G. Lowery

Florence is now home to upscale women’s boutique Mi Ladies 182. The boutique is owned by three of Florence’s own: Charlene G. Lowery, Starlee B. Alexander, and Doris B. Lockhart. The women all envisioned a new place for women to shop and combined their efforts to create the boutique located at 182 W. Evans Street. “The initial vision of adding to downtown development is something that all three of us felt would be a good thing. We are all business owners and we feel that we can enhance downtown”, says Lockhart.

Lockhart has been running AccuStaff, a temporary staffing service that places people with temporary jobs, for 33 years. Starlee Alexander owns State Farm Insurance Agency on Irby St. and will have been with the company nearly 30 years. Charlene Lowery, owner of Children’s Depot and More has been in retail over 15 years.

While working in retail Lowery noticed that today’s parents are more into casual wear than boutique fashions for their children. This generational change prompted Lowery to change courses. “I started thinking about ladies’ fashion; especially tall ladies. It’s hard for women 5’8 and above to find something to wear in this town” she professed. Once she had the idea Lowery contacted Alexander and Lockhart and says she couldn’t be happier with her partners.



The fashion show models from the Private Opening held on Sunday March 22nd.

The boutique will sell women’s clothing, accessories, scarves, jewelry, hats and shoes. “Our niche is tall girls”, says Alexander. The store will not just host small sizes but carry clothing sizes up to 3X and shoe sizes 6-13. Some brands you can find in MiLadies 182 include Lafayette 148, Masook, Linens by Bryn Walkers, Matchpoint, Elana, and Nora Gardner just to name a few. Being a specialty boutique the women want to be able to order specific items for their clients as well. Lockhart, Lowery, and Alexander threw around different names for the boutique before finally deciding on MiLadies 182. According to Lowery, a store called My Ladies was once located on West Evans Street. “It stood for statuesque women. The women wanted to embody this same essence. “MiLadies” signifies the partners and also the ladies we cater to” says Alexander. The “182” comes from the address of the store, but interestingly enough the women discovered it had a deeper meaning. While shopping for their boutique in Atlanta a gentleman informed them of its relation to prosperity and richness. “Ask anyone in China and they will tell you”, he exclaimed.

The women are excited about bringing their business to the downtown area. “We see all of us as having different target markets. It’s not a competitive thing among us”, expresses Alexander. Having fine quality products for Florence women was a major concern for Lowery and Lockhart. “Now women won’t have to drive to Columbia, Charlotte, or Charleston just to shop”, says Lockhart. The owners of MiLadies have put much work into bringing an amazing shopping experience to the Pee Dee area and would appreciate the community’s support and longevity.



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WOMEN OF WISDOM MINISTRY: SEIZE THE MOMENT

Submitted by Reverend Dr. Cynthia James Walters



Reverend Dr. Cynthia James Walters

The book of Esther offers us, as women, an opportunity to witness God's providence and purpose in our everyday lives; and not to merely

exist or live happenstance. We can be assured that God is God and what He has for us will prevail, individually and collectively. Nothing can stop His will for our lives if we stay deliberate, intentional and focused. Although we have the few or many times that we falter, we can always come to ourselves (Luke 15:17) and recommit to a life of Christian purpose. Let's look at how Esther's story can help to empower us as women to seize the moment(s) and become all God intends for us to become and do all he intends for us to do. (Empower means to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in following and advancing the mission of Christ's as we live true to our best in Him each day- Dr. Richard Leslie Parrot blog, August 2013).

1. Esther was willing to go through a time of preparation (v12). As Christian women we must prepare ourselves by spending time with God: reading his word, praying and stepping out on faith. As we seek God's will through preparation, just like Esther we can take comfort that just as the king called Esther by name, so the king of king knows our individual names. He knows us intimately and personally; and will

give us what we need during this preparation process to ultimately move us to our purpose and mission.

2. Esther received God's favor through obedience (vv 2: 8-9, 15-17, 5:2). It should be evident that favor does have a source which supplies it, and that this source is no other than God. Thus, it was God, the source of favor, who made Esther to obtain readily her beauty preparations with her allowance, who gave her the best place in the house of the women, who brought her to the favor of all that saw her, who made her wife of the king-the queen, who saved her from death when she came to the king's court uninvited and who brought that great deliverance to her, Mordecai and all the Jews. That same God will grant you favor when your are obedient and walk in His way.

3. Esther had teachable spirit. It takes wisdom to succeed and it takes a teachable spirit to gather wisdom. There must be a willingness to learn in order to progress. A teachable spirit is a heart ready to apply what is learned, abandoning the old for the wisdom of the new. You must be willing to receive instruction. Many people hear, but have not heard; hence, Jesus says: "Let him that have ears, hear what the Sprit is saying to the churches." (Rev. 2:7)

4. Esther was courageous and faithful. Esther's sterling example of faith and courage brought her victory. When her nation Israel was in jeopardy of being wiped out (3:13), Mordecai told Esther "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's

house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this" (4:13-14)? After the entire nation fasted, Esther said that "I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish" (4:16b). Queen Esther risked her life when she went before King Ahasuerus because if he did not put out the scepter, then she would have surely died but we know that by Esther's bravery, the Jews were saved. When we know God has called, given us a purpose and mission—we must step out. As we are faithful and see the hand of God, we become more courageous to do what He has called us to do.

Every woman of God must "seize the moment" to become all and to do all God has placed within you to do, for He gives us the desires of our hearts. There is something we all have been purposed to do in every season of life—single, married, with or without children, divorced, empty nest, or elderly. We are not finished until God calls us home. Is it easy in all cases to fulfill our purpose? Certainly not. Are we fearful and do we lack courage at times? Certainly. Is God at work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure? YES. Let's begin today, WOMEN, to do all that Esther did as we continue to live a full life and serve the present age.

Women on Wisdom helps women to live on purpose during each season of life. Founder: Rev. Dr. Cynthia J. Walters. For more information or to arrange speaking engagements, PO Box 12083, (803) 361-2053, www.wowleap.com

... spiritual growth and transformation as we question, learn from others, and seek lives of meaning and reverence.



NEW MINISTRY PLANTING SEEDS

by Alicia C. Phillip



Pastor Michael Tré Mitchell

Whole Life Outreach Ministries, Inc., a Florence-based religious organization, was founded in 2007 by Pastor Michael Tré Mitchell. Pastor Mitchell received the calling to enter ministry at a pivotal point in his life, and when he knew that the time was near for pastoralship, he began to make preparations under the oversight of his pastor at the time. In determining a name for the ministry, Pastor Mitchell wanted to select a name that would accurately represent the type of ministry that God wanted him to

pastor. He recognized that Whole Life Community Development Corporation, Inc., located in Baltimore, Maryland and founded by Pastor Barry McDonald, was similar to the mission of his ministry. Thus, Whole Life Outreach Ministries, Inc. was born.

Whole Life Ministries was founded on May 23, 2007, when Pastor Mitchell led the first Bible Study called "Empowerment Hour" inside the old Carver Elementary School. The first Sunday service was also held inside the old Carver Elementary School on October 21, 2007, and the first disciples of the ministry were the Mitchell Family. In April 2014, Pastor Barry McDonald of Didasko Ministries in Baltimore, Maryland officially became overseer of Whole Life Outreach Ministries, Inc. Whole Life Ministries is not just a church, it's also a movement; a way of life built on "Kingdom Principles." "Whole" means: healthy; not diseased or injured; not broken or damaged; intact; containing all the parts; complete; not divided up; not a fraction. "Life" refers to one's manner of living. According to Pastor Mitchell: "God requires us to be faithful stewards managing our whole life according to the Word of God in all areas of our life, i.e, love, children, giving (tithes and offerings), spending, debt, investments, work, honesty, and counsel."

The mission of Whole Life Ministries is to create wholeness in every aspect of a person's life, to reconcile man back to God, and to equip the Body of Christ for the work of ministry. As such, Whole Life Ministries offers pre-marital classes for those who are getting married, and a once-a-month marriage ministry class for married couples. In addition, because the ministry believes in ensuring that leaders are equipped, it offers a leadership training that is held once a week at the church, for several semesters. Further, Pastor Mitchell has a vision for several other types of ministries in the future. Pastor Mitchell is persistent to do what God has called, appointed, and anointed him to do, believing and trusting God to fulfill the main purpose and mission of the ministry.

Whole Life Outreach Ministries, Inc. is located at 783 N. Cashua Drive, Florence, SC 29501, with services on Sundays at 10:30am and Wednesdays at 7:30pm. Elder Mitchell can be contacted via email at wholelifeoutreach@hotmail.com.

WHOLE LIFE OUTREACH *Ministries, INC.*

"WILL THOU BE MADE WHOLE?" JOHN 5:6

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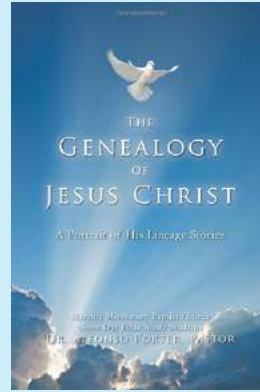
Wednesday Night Prayer / Empowerment Hr. -- 7:00 pm

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BUILDING A PEOPLE!

TRACING JESUS' KINFOLK REACHES ALL

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



For Majority Missionary Baptist Church noonday Bible Study students, what began as a mere research project grew so intensely that it turned into a book about the lineage of Jesus Christ. Since we are all heirs to His kingdom, reading it really pays off to become acquainted with His different relatives and the roles they played, many of whom strongly resemble our ordinary neighbors today and who mutually made impact on and received the same from His earthly life.

"This printed work is the result of the students' devout efforts. Each selected, researched and wrote on a figure from Christ's genealogy from a personal perspective, growing closer to God in the process," said their pastor Rev. Alfonso Porter, who was himself transformed more than once by getting into the family of Christ.

Based on characters in the Gospel of Matthew's first chapter, the 25 authors walked in the footsteps alongside Jesus, lived vicariously through their characters from Abraham to Uzziah and Hezekiah and grew nearer to God in the process. Some of the female writers assumed the identity of prominent males as well as females during that time and some of the males likened themselves to literal giants and sages who changed history forever. Dr. Porter said the book is a "record of God's interacting with humanity and a wonderful starting point to learn of the history of our Lord's unconditional love," a product that they are gratified to share with their reading publics.

The book also contains translational meanings of the Biblical names in that section of Matthew as well as a profile and photo of each writer and their reasons for choosing a particular persona to take on, some being very similar to their modern day life realities and some just the opposite.

The writers, their roles and name meanings are as follows: Blanche Stantly Coleman and Deacon Alford Daniels – both Abraham and Deaconess Thomasenia N, Daniels – Abram (father of a multitude); Joyce Hill – Jacob (as he outwits his enemy); Cencenella Lenora Reese Johnson – Judah (one who praises God); Camie Brockington – Tamar (Palm or date tree); Mary Gregg Charles – Rahab (storm, arrogance, broad or spacious); Mary Kay Cusack – Boaz (with strength); Janice Stroman-Godbolt, Vickie Diane Williams and Wanda Alease Richardson -- all Ruth (friendship); Deacon Jerome Grodes Brooks and Janie M. Jordon – David (one well loved); Tyrone K. Dunlap – King Solomon (peaceful); Deaconess Deloris Ann Myers Brooks – Bathsheba (daughter of an oath); Deacon Mitchell Mangum –Asa (the healer of); Anthony McCall – Jehosaphat; (Him whom the Lord judged); Rosa L. Johnson – Uzziah –(the Lord took hold of me); Ernestine Alecia (Mack) Bacote – Hezekiah (the strength of the Lord); Modestine Johnson Cooper – King Hezekiah (prayer warrior); Lucille Windom and Janice Prease Goodman – Manasseh (meaning forget); Deaconess Doris B. Williams Mangum – Josiah (whom the lord healed; Rosa Singletary Nowlin and Yvette Baker –Mary (wished-for child; rebellion, bitter).

According to the bibliography, Porter is a native South Carolinian and the first son born to the late Albert and Vera Ann Brown. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in religion and philosophy from Claflin University and studied at both Candler Theological Seminary at Emory University and Lutheran Theological Seminary. His master of divinity degree is from Erskine Theological Seminary, and he received his doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton Ohio.

Since 1984, Dr. Porter has ministered in many settings. His first pastoral appointment was at Shiloh Baptist Church in Newark, NJ and now he serves as pastor of Majority Baptist Church in Florence.

A former member of the US Army and the New Jersey National Guard, Dr. Porter has been married to his best friend, Lois D. Dixon Porter for 42 years. They have five children and are proud grandparents.

RECOGNIZING OUR TEACHERS



Teachers play a vital role in shaping our lives and our student successes. They teach us much more than just science, math, and language. They teach us to live. A ‘thank you’ for all that they do for us may not be enough. But that’s the least we can do to express gratitude towards them. While appreciation alone will not reduce the challenges teachers face, it will let them know their efforts are not going unnoticed. Teachers - are pillars of support, an epitome of strength, as loving as a mother, as strict as a father, as caring as a friend, a disciplinarian, yet always so approachable and warm at heart. Teachers - are beautiful human beings. That’s precisely what a teacher is for every student. Teachers are mentors. They are students’ role models. Everything they say feels right. Everything about them looks nice. If you have been lucky to have teachers like these, think... have you thanked them or appreciated them for their noble work? Maybe you never got a chance to. Take it now. It is a teacher who, with a chalk and board, teaches us the art of living. They nurture talent, cultivate young minds and make successful individuals and beautiful people out of ordinary girls and boys. They teach us what it means to be successful, they expose us to competition. They tell us what achievement means and teach us what it takes to accomplish something in life. They teach us to dream big and to never fear failures. They are there for us whenever we need them. They see us grow.

BRANDI BENTON-SPENCER: MARION COUNTY’S TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Brandi Benton-Spencer

Brandi Benton-Spencer didn’t always want to be a teacher; she wanted to be veterinarian until fate took over and sent her down the path of education. Now, with 18 years to her credit, she is Marion County’s Teacher of the year for 2014—2015. She enrolled in her high school teacher cadet program at the encouragement of her friend and was placed in a classroom for children with special needs. As she worked with the students and their challenges and observed the passion in the teacher

she knew her life would alter course. She treasures the notes her students have given to her and posts them to read again and again. She believes teaching is not just about the standards, it is about the whole

child. Her core beliefs include

- **Believing in your students and their capability to learn**
- **Failure is not an option**
- **Connecting with your students**
- **Daily reflections**
- **Valuing every adult in the school building**

“She is a consummate professional,” states Marion Intermediate Principal Mrs. Shalah Sweeney. “who maintains high expectations for her students and herself while employing a variety of teaching strategies to motivate and engage them. She is truly a gifted educator who loves each and every one of her students” We are all glad that Brandi Benton-Spencer is a part of the Marion County team.

LAURA J. COOKE: DILLON SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Laura J. Cooke

Laura J. Cooke was recently selected as Teacher of the Year for Dillon School District Three for 2014-2015. She was one of three school level Teachers of the Year vying for the position of District Teacher of the Year. This year’s school representatives are as follows: Latta High School – Rachel Caulder; Latta Middle School – Laura J. Cooke; Latta Elementary School – Pamela B. Watson

Laura J. Cooke is a native of Latta, and continues to reside in Latta. In 1983, Ms. Cooke was awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree and then a Master of Education Degree in 1988, both earned at Francis Marion University. Her teaching career has covered most of Dillon County spanning grades 4K through 5th. Her additional duties, during her career, include service as an Athletic Director and Volleyball, Basketball, and Softball Coach. In addition, she has mentored First Year Teachers and taken on various other leadership roles.

In August of 2000, Ms. Cooke joined the educational team of

Dillon School District Three. She credits two Latta High School teachers as playing the pivotal role in her choice of becoming an educator. Like those teachers she is now able to not only help her students academically but also take an interest in their lives and encourage them to succeed in and out of the classroom. Thus, she is actively involved in the schools as well as the community. She states: “Educating our children academically, socially and spiritually is a lifelong mission and I have been privileged to share the gift of knowledge and hope during these outreach events.”

Being selected as District Teacher of the Year qualifies Miss Cooke as a participant in the selection of South Carolina Teacher of the Year. The South Carolina Teacher of the Year Program is coordinated via the Division of Educator Quality & Leadership and is designed to honor those who are representative of the state’s many exceptional teachers. Miss Laura J. Cooke is the proud daughter of Elizabeth B. Cooke and the late Billy W. Cooke. She has two younger sisters; Billie Ann Allen and Sandy Owens. “I believe an education should empower a child and help him or her make a positive contribution to our society.” We congratulate her on receiving this honor.

LINDSEY BIBLER NAMED FLORENCE ONE'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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



Lindsey Bibler

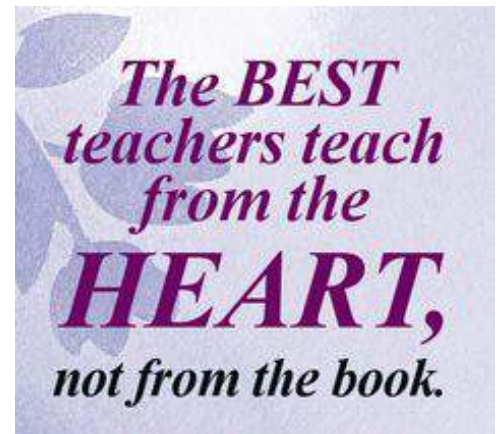
“There are two things I remember thinking in my first year of teaching,” said South Florence High’s Lindsey Bibler. “The first was I couldn’t believe they left me in charge of all those teenagers by myself! I have since gotten used

to being the only adult in the room. The second, and more poignant, was that I couldn’t believe this was actually a job. I love what I do so much that I sometimes wonder why I get a paycheck for it,” she added. Bibler was selected as Florence School District One’s 2014-15 Teacher of the Year from over 20 applications submitted by teachers of the year at each school. The announcement of her selection was made at the School Foundation Gala. Bibler, who has six years of teaching experience, became the mathematics department chair at South Florence this past January. Among her other leadership activities are service on District One’s Mathematics Curriculum Document Team; a participant in Habits of Mind Training; and recognition as

the South Florence Optimist Teacher of the Year. South Florence High School Principal Carol Hill notes that Bibler has made the most of her years of teaching experience. “In the six years that Mrs. Bibler has taught, all of which have been at South Florence High School, she has embodied integrity, collaboration, professional learning, and a student-centered focus,” said Hill. Bibler also receives an endorsement from Corbin Witt, President of the South Florence High School Student Body. “There is no other teacher that I know of that is more dedicated, hard-working, and motivated. I have been her student for two years and have participated in clubs with her advisement since my freshmen year. Her insight and guidance are second to none. She has imparted upon me a passion for mathematics and learning as a whole, and I feel like that is the true merit of an incredible teacher,” said Witt.

Bibler’s 2013 AP Calculus classes achieved a 100% passing rate. Said Bibler, “My teaching style isn’t complicated. I set out to teach the content with accuracy, enthusiasm, and wonder for the subject.” Bibler also said she meets with her students before school, during her planning period, during her lunch and after

school for tutoring and bonding time. “By the end of the year, the class feels like a family because they have supported each other in their learning. For many students, this display of confidence in their abilities is all they need to reach their goals,” she said. She is a recipient of the Bachelor of Science in Mathematics with a Teaching Certification from Francis Marion University, and a Master of Education in Educational Technology from Lesley University. She will represent Florence School District One in this year’s South Carolina Teacher of the Year Program.



Florence School District One
2014-15
Teacher of the Year
Lindsey Bibler
South Florence High School

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Public School District One
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Florence, SC 29506
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KATHRYN WRIGHT NAMED DCSD TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Kathryn Wright

Kathryn Wright, an exceptional education teacher at Brunson-Dargan Elementary school, has been named the Darlington County School District's 2014-2015 District Teacher of the Year. Wright, who has been teaching for more than 16 years, beat out four other finalists for the top honor. The Darlington County School District Teacher of the Year program is designed to honor and award those teachers who exceed expectations to provide meaningful and rewarding learning experiences. It is dedicated to all teachers

who work diligently every day for their students.

Wright holds a Bachelor of Sports Science and a Masters of Arts in Special Education from the University of the Philippines. For the past nine years Wright has taught exceptional education at Brunson-Dargan Elementary School in Darlington. Before joining the staff at Brunson-Dargan Elementary, Wright was an Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines, a preschool teacher, a physical education instructor, and a community recreation program instructor. In addition to her teaching duties at Brunson-Dargan, Wright serves as the Collaboration Tuesday Facilitator and mentor to a first-year teacher.

To become the district's Teacher of the Year, Wright 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 five finalists. The finalists then participated in an intensive interview session that included a videotape review of their classroom skills. Based on the interviews, the judges selected the district Teacher of the Year. The four remaining finalists become "Honor Roll Teachers."

As the District Teacher of the Year, Wright 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. Wright will also go on to compete for the South Carolina Teacher of the Year title.

The Honor Roll teachers are members and leaders of the district's Teacher Leadership Council for the next two years. The school-level Teachers of the Year are members of the Darlington County School District Teacher Forum. Both the Leadership Council and the Teacher Forum participate in leadership opportunities throughout the year, as well as represent their schools at a variety of functions.

EMALEE BRYANT CHESTERFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR



L to R is board chair James Sweeney, Emalee Bryant and Superintendent Dr. Harrison Goodwin

Emalee Bryant of Petersburg Primary School in Pageland was named the Chesterfield County School District Teacher of the Year at the district's annual banquet in the spring. Bryant was selected by two teams of judges from both inside and outside of the district. The pool of

candidates included the school teachers of the year from the district's 16 schools. A native of Chesterfield County, Bryant is currently in her fourth year as a teacher. In accepting the award, Bryant said that

teaching is both her passion and her profession.

"I want to recognize each of my fellow teachers here tonight for all that you do each and every day," she continues. "I would like to thank our district administration for their guidance and leadership, along with my principal Mrs. Janice Kiser, who fosters a love for teaching and children.

"I am honored to represent our school district. This is a blessing beyond measure and I am truly honored."

Kiser said that Bryant is an enthusiastic, energetic, and innovative teacher.

"She has the leadership skills of someone with much more experience," says Kiser. "Beginning, idealistic teachers want to emulate her, and even veteran teachers respect and follow her."

BRANDI BAKER NAMED FCSD3 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Brandi Baker

Afifth grade math teacher who credits two of her own teachers as influences on her decision to become an educator has been named Florence County School District Three's Teacher of the Year. Brandi Baker, a 10-year veteran teacher at Scranton Elementary School, was named Teacher of the Year during the district's annual Opening Ceremony welcoming back teachers for the new school year. She represented FCSD3 in the State Teacher of the Year competition.

"Brandi Baker is an amazing teacher," said Allana Prosser, Scranton Elementary principal. "Last year, she was given a challenge and not only did she attack the challenge head on, but she made more growth in her area than any teacher in our district. Her goals are all about student achievement and she does whatever it takes to make sure that ALL of her children meet their goals," Prosser added. "She models Scranton Expectations on a daily basis and we are proud that she is our Teacher of the Year."

Baker earned an Associate's degree from the University of South Carolina Sumter and a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from the University of South Carolina Upstate. She is a member of the South Carolina Council for Math Teachers, South Carolina International

Reading Association and Delta Kappa Gamma International Society for Key Women Educators. She has served as a mentor teacher and served as the coordinator for Empowering Writers professional development for peers. Baker said she was not a good student and she struggled through elementary school, barely passing from one grade to the next. "As I walked into my fifth grade teacher's class on the first day of school, I was in awe of the lady that stood before me," she recalled. "I remember her soft voice welcoming me into her room coupled with her calm nature. I was hooked from the moment I walked in."

Baker said in addition to the soft-spoken elementary teacher, a 10th grade English teacher with a reputation for being tough, led her to choose education as a career. Baker said that English teacher "was not as tough as her reputation sounded but she demanded excellence and hard work from her students. She pushed when it felt like you couldn't be pushed anymore but she loved you through the process.

"I am thankful these two ladies passed through my life before I became a teacher because they are the basis for why I am the teacher I am today," she said. "The influences that I have on these 20 students that step through my classes each day are representative of who I am. Students are the direct recipients of the way that I act, teach, and respond in a variety of situations. In order to equip them for the life that lies ahead, I make it my responsibility to have them prepared in each and every way."

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RENOWNED ENGINEER AND ENTREPRENEUR SPEAKS AT FDTC

Submitted by Clay Williams, FDTC Director of Public Relations



Dr. Calvin Mackie

Anationally known leader in the fields of engineering, education and social policy helped Florence-Darlington Technical College commemorate Black History Month, Monday, February 23, 2015. New Orleans

native and motivational speaker Dr. Calvin Mackie told Darlington and Florence County high school and FDTC college students that they can succeed during his appearance at the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology. Dr. Mackie was introduced by Dr. Shelley Fortin, FDTC Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management.

Dr. Mackie completed a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Morehouse College, graduating Magna Cum Laude. He was then awarded a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech, where he subsequently earned his Masters and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering.

Dr. Mackie, said, "I told the students

that the first name of the past is the present and the first name of the present is the future. We have to talk about the past to understand the present and the present allows us to know where we're going in the future."

After serving as a professor, Dr. Mackie was invited to the White House to receive the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Math and Engineering Mentoring. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Louisiana Governor appointed him to the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), the guiding agency to lead the state's rebuilding efforts.

He told the students how he grew up in crowded public housing in New Orleans, but became a successful scholar and businessman. He continued, "The past infuses the future and they can have the power to make an extraordinary future for themselves!"

Dr. Mackie is also an inventor and entrepreneur. He was awarded a patent on a device to retrofit luggage stow bins on 737 and 757 Boeing commercial airliners and he is currently a partner in Golden Leaf Energy (GLE). GLE promotes and distributes the ethanol fuel blend E85.

He is a true believer of STEM (Science,

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. Dr. Mackie said, "Growing up somebody did that for me and four STEM degrees later I have the power of knowledge."

Dr. Mackie has presented around the world to numerous civic and educational institutions, government entities and businesses of every size and industrial focus. He has written several books including his memoir, *A View from the Roof: Lessons for Life and Business*.

FDTC's Black History event was free and open to the public. It was co-sponsored by Florence-Darlington Technical College, Darlington County Intervention School, Alfred Rush Academy and the Pee Dee Regional Education Center.



SPRING BRINGS TESTING

Submitted by Dr. Dan Strickland



Dr. Dan Strickland Superintendent

In March we usher in a new season, spring. And with every season we have attributes. For spring we think of rebirth, flowers and baby field animals, sweet scents lingering in the newly warmed air, newness. In education, we think of testing. Here in South Carolina we get both because new laws passed by the General Assembly have resulted in new tests to be administered to our students.

There are three new tests for spring of 2015: ACT Aspire™, ACT Workkeys® and The ACT®. Results from these tests will help teachers understand where their students are succeeding and where extra help or academic assistance is needed. By having a better understanding of a student's skills, abilities and knowledge, teachers and parents can work together to determine what students need to know to be successful in the future. Last year our elementary grades 3 – 8 took a test called Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) for English, writing and math. This year they will be taking the ACT Aspire™ for those subjects which is a very different type of test. Unlike PASS, ACT Aspire™ is a timed test meaning the students will have to stop when time is called whether they have finished the test or not. This will require new testing skills for our students. This year the test is paper-based where the students will have an answer document and a test booklet for each subject. Future testing will be online. During testing we want to encourage our students to:

- *Get plenty of rest the night before the test*
- *Follow directions exactly, and ask questions*
- *Don't spend too much time on any one question because ACT Aspire is a timed test!*
- *Go back and review if you finish the test with time to spare.*

The ACT Aspire™ will be given April 28th through the 30th.

There is also an optional Science test from this series that may be given but is not mandatory. Many of you may remember students at the high school level had to pass the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) in order to earn a diploma. That test is history and now our 11th graders are required to take ACT Workkeys®. This timed test consists of three 45-minute sections; reading, math and finding information. It tests real-world skills that employers seek in everyday situations. Because this test evaluates students for career readiness, students will earn an ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ in one of four areas, platinum, gold, silver or bronze. These certificates indicate whether they have the foundational readiness to work in up to 99 percent of jobs in the Workkeys® database. Earning a high certificate level will help our high school students find summer and part-time jobs as well as internships. Look for this test on Wednesday, April 29th, 2015 with a make-up day of May 13th, 2015.

The last new test is The ACT® which will also be administered to all 11th graders in South Carolina. This college-readiness test will help teachers and parents understand how prepared students are for higher education including both two and four-year institutions. Once again, this is a timed test that covers reading, math, science and writing. This test will be given on April 28th with a make-up day of May 12th, 2015. The South Carolina Department of Education's website (www.ed.sc.gov) has a link with detailed information about all three tests, including a free ACT® Preparation course. Parents are encouraged to visit the Department's home page, and then click the ACT button to learn more about our new tests so they can help prepare their child(ren).



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Facebook at www.facebook.com/MarionCountySchools

FMU ONLINE RN-TO-BSN PROGRAM TOUTED AMONG BEST

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Dr. Rhonda Brogdon

Francis Marion University's program was recently recognized by RN-to-BSN.org as offering one of the best online classroom experiences.

The organization, whose mission it is to connect current and prospective nurses with the resources needed to pursue and obtain their BSN, says FMU's program demonstrates excellence in all areas. The measures that factored into RN-to-BSN.org's decision to convey FMU the distinction

were accreditation, commitment to online education, academic and career counseling services and academic quality.

"It takes dedication, preparation and determination at anything worth having in life," says Dr. Rhonda Brogdon, assistant professor of nursing. "Going back to school is never easy, but earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Francis Marion University's RN to BSN Online Program challenges you to grow personally and professionally."

The list is the most rigorous of its kind, based on data from a wide range of sources, including Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDs), institution websites and statenuring boards.

For additional information about FMU's RN-to-BSN program, contact Brogdon at 843.661.1674.

OVERTON CLIMBS LADDER AT CCU

by Alicia C. Phillip



Dean Travis Overton

If you asked Coastal Carolina University (CCU) students to describe Travis Overton, they would likely tell you that he is an incredible leader who is respected and appreciated for his guidance in their lives. In his position as dean of students, Overton serves as a generalist for students on the campus, assisting them with advocacy, addressing and resolving their behavioral concerns, supporting students through crises, and reviewing and developing policy that may affect students on the campus.

Overton's professional career path started very early. He was fortunate to be provided an opportunity with INROADS, the nation's largest non-profit source of paid internships for undergraduate, diverse youth, to participate in a full-time internship with Middle Tennessee State University immediately upon graduation from high school. During that internship, he worked in student affairs. That was his first opportunity to see how such a University department operated. During his sophomore year at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he pursued both bachelor's

and master's degrees in business, Overton joined the management team of a collegiate apartment community, a position which he held throughout his college career. That position solidified his decision to pursue a career in higher education. While completing his master's degree, Overton worked as a resident director in housing, served as adviser to the gospel choir and the National Pan-Hellenic Council, and completed a practicum in student affairs, working with student organizations. He subsequently transitioned to Coastal Carolina University as the coordinator of Greek life, later serving as the director of student conduct. In 2012, he obtained his current position as dean of students. Said Overton about the allure of the position of dean of students, "This position was a mixture of supervising the student accountability process for the University and also finding global methods to support students through various challenges while attending school. This hybrid approach to the holistic development of the college student was very appealing."

However, the position of dean of students is not without its challenges. It is particularly difficult when a student has a lot of potential, but the University is unable to help the student see that potential. According to Overton, "Our students come to the University prepared to

grow and learn, so we want to provide that atmosphere for them. In case where a student is challenged with obstacles, that potential can be masked."

On the other hand, there are also rewards. And according to Overton, "the most rewarding [sic] is when a student realizes that potential and moves in the direction of that potential. To see a student grow is one of the highest rewards a University administrator can receive."

In collaboration with numerous campus administration departments, including student life, athletics and the office of the vice president of student affairs, the office of dean of students is continuously working to examine, expand and enhance the means by which students on campus come to feel connected to the University. Forging a connection to CCU is an invaluable facet of the student experience, leading to improved student retention and student success. Overton advises all students to understand the roles of individuals in their lives, and, in the words of Mahatma Ghandi, to "Be the change you want to see in this world."

For more information, Overton can be contacted via e-mail at toverton@coastal.edu or at 843.349.4161, and you can connect with him on Twitter @CCU_DSO.

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GSSM PREVIEWING SUMMER CAMPERS

Submitted by Alison Mann, Director of Marketing



COLUMBIA, SC.. -- Governor's School for Science & Mathematics (GSSM) is accepting applications for GoSciTech, GSSM's week-long,

residential summer camp for rising 8th, 9th and 10th graders. The online application is available at: www.scgssm.org/goscitech. GoSciTech, held on GSSM's Hartsville campus, will be offered for four separate weeks this summer: June 14-20, June 21-27, July 5-11 and July 12-18. With a wide variety of courses to choose from, students can select which week (or weeks) to attend. Course costs range from \$760 to \$860 per week, including room and board. Financial aid is available. Courses offered this summer include, but are not limited to: Pre-Med and Anatomy, Arduino Robotics, Adventures in Chemistry, Codes and Cryptography, Creating Computer Games, 3D Printing and Design, Greatest Hits of Math, Astrophysics, Digital Forensic Science, Advanced Robotics Programming in Minecraft, Tour of Engineering, Field Ecology in the Southern Appalachians and Carolina 201, a race engineering camp, in partnership with Darlington Raceway. Courses will be taught by GSSM faculty, college and university professors, and professionals in their respective fields.

"This summer we're excited to offer 28 unique classes, six of which are brand new," says Susan Engelhardt, GoSciTech director. "For example, a course like Carolina 201 at the Darlington Raceway provides an opportunity to teach complex engineering concepts in a fun, hands-on setting. This type of learning environment is engaging to students and delivers a more meaningful experience. That's what GoSciTech is all about!"

Acceptance to the GoSciTech program is based on academic achievement. Rising 8th, 9th and 10th graders who have demonstrated scholarship in science, math, computer science, technology or engineering, and desire an academically challenging experience are strong candidates. The application deadline is May 8, 2015. Financial supporters of GoSciTech include: BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, Nucor Steel, Alcoa Foundation, Aiken Electric Cooperative and Vulcan Materials Company. Online applications are available at www.scgssm.org/goscitech. For a paper application, contact the Center for Science Education and Outreach at 843.383.3958. For more information, contact GoSciTech Director Susan Engelhardt, at 843.383.3901 x3950 or engelhardt@gssm.k12.sc.us.




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FDTC HONORS PTK ALL AMERICANS

Submitted by Clay Williams, FDTC Director of Public Relations

Florence-Darlington Technical College recently recognized its two Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) All American Academic Team winners. The FDTC chapter of the two year college academic honors fraternity sent Daphne Converse and Scott Rollings to the state house in Columbia during a ceremony recognizing their collegiate accomplishments, March 31, 2015. Dr. Jimmie Williamson, President of the South Carolina Technical College System, presented medals to the students. Daphne and Scott joined PTK members



Daphne Converse



Scott Rollings

from the other 15 technical colleges for the ceremony in the State House Lobby. To be recognized as a member of PTK, honorees have to maintain a 3.5 Grade Point Average. Daphne and Scott were also nominated by their PTK Alpha Chi Pi chapter sponsors at the College. They are Derk Riechers and Majory Hall. The two FDTC students will also be featured in a full page section in the USA Today newspaper along with the other All American Academic Team members from throughout the nation. PTK was founded over a hundred years ago to provide top two year college students with a fraternity that recognizes their accomplishments.

Photos: Daphne Converse; Scott Rollings. FDTC's Phi Theta Kappa All American Academic Team Winners.

SCIENCESOUTH SUMMER CAMPS: WHERE FUN AND SCIENCE MEET

Submitted by Andreaka Johnson, Marketing and Communications Coordinator



With spring break comfortably in your rear view, the finish line to the end of school is now in sight. So what do you do with the kids during the summer? Look no further than ScienceSouth.

All parents want a special or unique camp experience for their children. A place where kids not only look forward to attending daily, but also teaches skills transferrable to the classroom. At ScienceSouth there's no need to sacrifice fun or learning, they work together.

"Kids love having the chance to construct their own rocket or build their own robot," said Summer Camp Coordinator Erin Powers. "While they're thinking 'hey this is cool' they're also learning about principles of flight and circuitry."

The aim of ScienceSouth's camps is to bring science concepts to life in a very tangible and memorable way for the children.

"It's very encouraging to see the interest in our science camps increase year after year, especially with our younger camps. Many of our former Junior Scientist campers are now exploring some of our other camps," Powers said. "It's great that the foundation for their interest in science was laid at such a young age that they continue to want to build on it as they get older."

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 for a full listing of ScienceSouth's camps and their descriptions.

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GRAHAM RECEIVES FMU DIVERSITY AWARD

Submitted by Angela Crosland, Director of Communications



Graham, husband James, and daughter Kaile

Crystal Graham, Francis Marion University instructor of nursing and simulation coordinator, is the sixth recipient of the FMU African-American Faculty and Staff Coalition (AAFSC) Diversity Award. The award seeks to recognize a faculty or staff member for their significant contributions to enhance the university's diversity and inclusiveness on and off campus.

"Crystal is most deserving of this award. Not only does she contribute to the well-being of faculty, staff and students across this campus but her work within her profession and in the community is above and beyond what is asked of her," says

Teresa McDuffie, chairman of the Diversity Award Committee.

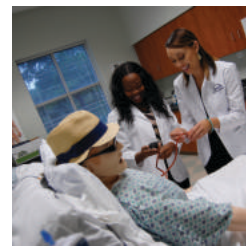
Graham has been employed with the university since 2011, during which time she's provided the FMU community of students, faculty and staff with knowledge and resources to integrate simulation into the learning strategies and assessment processes of the curriculum. Graham also finds ample time to mentor students – the premier ingredient for producing quality nurses.

Past recipients include 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).

Also honored were founding members of the AAFSC Coalition, particularly: Dr. Joseph E. Heyward, who served on FMU's executive staff for 30 years, including 23 years as a vice president; Dr. Leroy "Pete" Peterson, Jr., a professor of chemistry and

Trustee Research Scholar (2011) at Francis Marion University, where he has served since 1991; and the late Rebecca S. Lunn, who served as a counselor at FMU from 1979-2005 and as the president of the AAFSC for five years.

FMU's Young, Gifted & Blessed, the Mayo Stars & Phoenix Phame of Mayo High School and Justine Roberts & the Performing Arts Academy of Marion highlighted the event with musical theatre, song and dance.



Student & Graham



NEW SUPER DID HOMEWORK ON FLORENCE ONE

by Mallory Brayboy



Randy Bridges

Superintendent Randy Bridges is Florence School District One's newest superintendent. Dr. Bridges comes from North Carolina bringing years of valuable experience and wisdom along with him. Originally born in Shelby, NC

and spent the majority of his life and professional career in the state. There are several different routes that can lead to the superintendency, but he took the traditional route. Dr. Bridges was a classroom teacher for nearly 13 years and loved it. "I entered administration as an assistant principal, and moved up the ranks fairly quickly," says Bridges. He was a middle school principal for one year, high school principal for two years, and assistant and associate superintendent over a three year period of time.

While teaching in the public school system Dr. Bridges got involved in another one of his lifelong passions; basketball. A self-proclaimed "basketball junkie" Bridges played basketball

in high school and college. He also enjoyed coaching the sport at Scotland High School for 8 years. "I still enjoy watching high school and college basketball" he said. Though Bridges really loved the sport his passion for education shone through. As a coach he really enjoyed practice because he got to teach the fundamentals of the game. "I loved Monday, Wednesday and Thursday of game week. Practice didn't include the pressures of winning and losing."

Dr. Bridges path in the education system eventually landed him in Florence School District One. "I did an interim superintendency in Scotland County for about three months and one of the assistant superintendents there was from Florence. He shared information with me from time to time about the search process for a new superintendent", says Bridges. Dr. Bridges did not apply for the position at its initial availability. However, the district did not come to a decision for superintendency and decided to start the process over again. "I was invited to have a conversation with the selection committee. The committee had done their homework on me, and I had also researched their school district as well", he said. Dr. Bridges believes he is in a good school district

and a supportive community similar to other districts he has served as superintendent.

Having been superintendent in three states Dr. Bridges does not see being new to the region as a challenge. "Educational issues are educational issues no matter where you are. I believe and can prove that public education is doing a better job today educating children than ever before in the history of our country", states Bridges. Dr. Bridges believes that public schools are doing a good job of evolving to meet the needs of the 21st century student. Extra resources are provided for students facing educational difficulties. "Our children need more time and help to meet their needs, and as educators we have to design ways to provide that time and help. It begins with making sure each classroom has a highly qualified and effective teacher". He does not compare his school district to others initially. Instead, he looks for internal continuous improvement each year. "We are our first competition each year to make sure we improved in all aspect of the organization over the previous school year. If we can accomplish that task, I will be pleased".

FMU PRESENTS ALUMNI AWARDS

Submitted by Angela Crosland, Director of Communications



(L-R) McMillian, Hyler, Brayboy, Sponic

Francis Marion University honored Deborah W. Hyler ('82) as its 2015 Outstanding Alumnus at the university's annual Alumni Appreciation Dinner.

Hyler was one of four FMU alums honored at the Feb. 26 event held at the FMU Performing Arts Center in downtown Florence. Emily Brandenburg McMillan ('10) received the Benjamin Wall Ingram III Young Alumnus Award; Stacey Y. Brayboy ('94) received the Professional Industry Award in Public Service and Law; and Bradley A. Sponic ('04) received the Professional Industry Award in Education and Arts.

Hyler received a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology from FMU in 1982. Hyler has been executive director of The School Foundation in Florence since 2006.

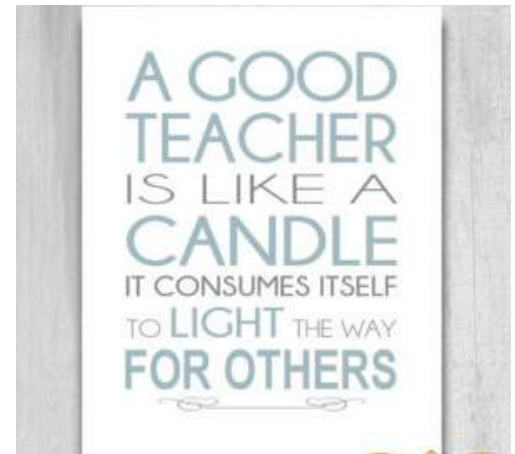
During her leadership, The School Foundation has funded and awarded more than \$900,000 in grants to local public schools. Hyler is an accomplished organizer with more than 20 years of experience in community-related activities. In 2014, she was the recipient of the Mary Dean Brewer Woman of Distinction award from the Girl Scouts of the Eastern South Carolina. She resides in Florence with her husband, Dr. Daniel Hyler '81. They have three children: Jonathan, Jennifer, and Julia.

McMillan received a Bachelor of Arts in political science from FMU in 2009 and is a third year law student at the University of South Carolina School of Law. After her spring 2015 graduation, she will work as an associate at Sweeney, Wingate & Barrow in the areas of estate planning and appellate advocacy. Emily and her husband, John, a 2013 FMU MBA graduate, reside in Columbia.

Brayboy received a Bachelor of Science in political science from FMU in 1994 and a master's degree in public administration from Clark Atlanta University. She is chief of staff for the Food and Nutrition Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., where she manages the

daily priorities of FNS. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her daughter, Madison Lilli PhilhowerBrayboy.

Sponic received a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts from FMU and a Master's of Education from Walden University. He is expected to graduate with a Master's in Education from Arkansas State University this spring. He has been employed by Florence School District I since 2008, where he teaches theatre arts in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program at Williams Middle School. Bradley resides in Florence.



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SHAW EARNS DEGREE AT COKER WINTER CEREMONY

Submitted by Laura Hoxworth, Editor & Content Strategist



Sandra Shaw,
Adult Degree Program student

Sandra Shaw always had a personal goal to get her bachelor's degree. On December 12, 2014, that dream finally came true. Sandra, a business administration major in Coker College's Adult Degree Program and a native of Lake City, was among 64 graduates to walk across the stage in the new Harris E. and Louise H. DeLoach Center gymnasium and receive their bachelor's degrees during Coker's 2014 Winter Commencement ceremony.

Rainey Knight, former superintendent of the Darlington County School District, delivered the commencement address and was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters. Knight currently serves as an educational consultant for school districts across the state and state agencies throughout the Southeast. In her address, Knight advised graduates to be open to collaboration and to never stop chasing their goals. "Choose your course of action cautiously, and wisely, and with a deep passion for what you do," she said. "It is your time."

Several years ago, Sandra decided it was her time—time to pursue her degree. She wanted to move beyond the management level in her career and knew that earning a bachelor's degree was the only way to get there. "Now you have to have more than just experience," she says. "You need that degree to get you to the next level. You need everything you can possibly obtain to distinguish you from other candidates."

Sandra says she knew from day one that her Coker family -- professors to classmates to administrators -- really cared about her success. "The instructors that I've had with Coker, they care about your education and they will go the extra mile to help you in any way possible," she says. "They pushed me to want to do better."

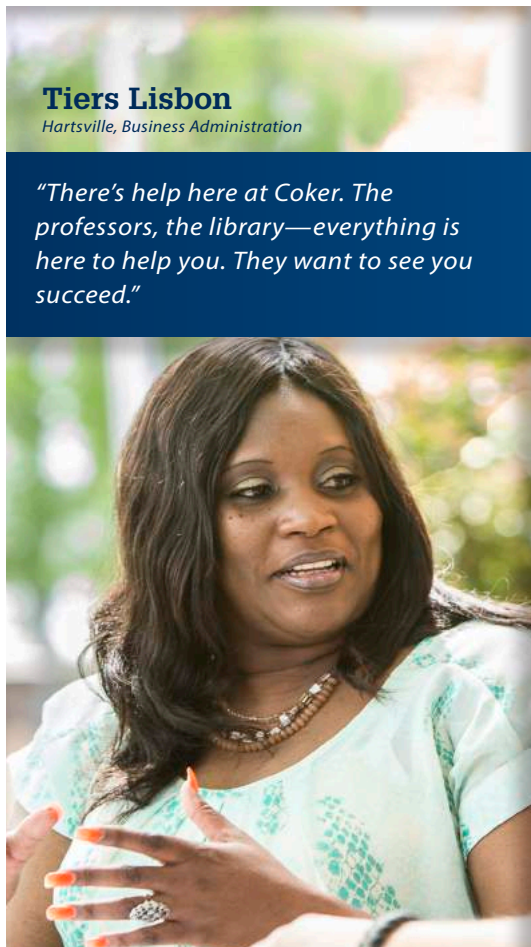
"I think back to my first day walking into the classroom, and I did not know what to expect. Never in a million years did I think that I would feel just totally comfortable, totally at home, and totally relaxed with everything."

For more than 40 years, Coker's Adult Degree Program has given adults in the Pee Dee region the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree at night. The program offers majors in business management, criminology, early childhood education, elementary education, psychology, sociology and social work. Each term is eight weeks, and a semester is two eight-week terms. Courses are offered two nights a week in three locations: Hartsville, Marion County and, most recently, Florence. In 2013, the program relocated its Lake City branch to

the Poynor Adult & Community Education Center in Florence. With support from Coker combined with her personal drive and strong desire to set an example for her daughter, Sandra worked through the tough times and accomplished her goal. The moment she walked across the stage on December 12 represented more than getting a degree. It represented one of the most important accomplishments of her life.

"Tonight's graduates all have unique stories and paths that have led them to this moment," said Tracy Parkinson, provost and dean of the faculty, during the ceremony. "However, in every case, whether a bachelor's or a master's graduate, each one has achieved something that will better him or herself, his or her family, and his or her community. That is what makes our work at Coker College so very rewarding."

Sandra's story is one of perseverance and success. And it has only just begun. Sandra says she'll miss her Coker family, but she can't wait to put her newfound knowledge and confidence to use. "Before I would stay in the background, but now I have the confidence to step up and be that leader," she says. "I am owning my career now—and I feel like the sky is the limit." For more information on the Adult Degree Program, contact Elaine Hodges at (843) 857-4194 or ehodges@coker.edu.



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FINDING AND BEING OUR BEST SELVES BRING ULTIMATE REWARDS

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



If it is true that the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy, then The Hon. George Jebaily – who knows both positions well from lessons learned in

his ongoing quest as a civil servant -- is never fully satisfied with either. Never bitter, as a first impression of this description might conjure, he is the most positively engaging and enthusiastic personality to ever encounter. Sporting numerous hats as a newly elected Florence City Councilman, veteran managing partner at Jebaily Law Firm, husband/father/family man, Chairman of the South Carolina Pecan Festival Committee, former board chair of Florence's Downtown Development Corporation and its Master Plan Update Committee (which is now taking brilliant visual effect), arts benefactor, youth sports coach, church volunteer and so much more, he believes that mankind and Florence has made great strides in getting lost, becoming (re)focused on new vision, and understanding how to get to "there" from "here."

"For example, there is great benefit to being actively involved in the process making things happen. Imagine what would happen if we all were more actively engaged in working to create the type of city and community we want to build and see... learn to recognize the best in each other, and find our common ground instead of what divides us. We would discover a Florence that is so much more than that which has been tapped into thus far," he said. One of his great joys is in helping others reach their full potential. "What if we built each other up instead of tearing each another down? It consumes energy to tear down but it creates energy to build up," he said.

In his late-50's, he has travelled much of that long and winding road, making an indelible impression everywhere he touched as a bridge-builder who connects with everyday people. "What works best is for us to use the one mouth and two ears that

God gave all of us for good reason – to listen twice as much as we talk. By listening to the concerns of others from all walks of life, I can do a better job of being an "at-large" City Councilman who represents all the citizens of Florence. Not only those with influence, but also those who don't normally get a chance to be heard," he said.

Regardless of a person's standing as a client or constituent, Jebaily says his aim is to always move the position forward; not treading water or maintaining the status quo. "Some of the greatest gifts I've ever received are the "pearls of wisdom" from my clients. The way they see the good in life, even while enduring some very tragic circumstances, help make sense of it all. My job is to understand and connect with the truth in their lives. If we take the time to really get to know each other, we will learn that virtually everyone has a story to tell worthy of a full length feature film, even if it never gets fully told. The best part of running for this office was in meeting so many different people and learning their stories. To now get the chance to help make a difference in people's lives is the culmination of everything my mom and dad taught us about the importance 'of service to others' as a calling," he shared.

Whether working in politics, professionally or personally, Jebaily says that there is one common mistake that he has seen people frequently make—losing perspective. "I've seen, witnessed and worked with so many who wanted so much to make their own efforts recognized that they would go to great lengths to discount the efforts of others. Now for us to do that is so shortsighted because we all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us (i.e.) human beings, family members, friends, etc. and I am extraordinarily grateful to those who have helped me. It all comes back to understanding and appreciating people," he said. "I stand on the shoulders of so many who came before me and who helped me each and every step along the way. Keeping that awareness helps me remain focused and clear about what's important," he said.

The framework for his *raison d'être* is found, in part, in a Mark Twain quote which states that the two most important days in a man's life are: the day he was born and the day he discovers why he was born. It's all about the journey, the process and doing

each step well. Really good coaches talk to their team about the details of how the team practices and doing each step well. It can sometimes be slow to see the progress. But if you sacrifice long term sustainable goals by taking shortcuts instead of sticking to best practices, it will frequently come back to haunt you in the end," he quipped.

And since anywhere you see him is likened unto a workplace, George Jebaily believes that living in a diverse community like Florence makes it easy to relate to people from all walks of life. "When we share understandings, embrace diversity and are better able to reach across racial, ethnic, gender and age lines to better understand the different perspectives that each individual brings to the table, we then have a better chance to connect with each other and truly care about making a difference in the lives of all those who live in our community," he said.

Whether as a councilman or as an attorney, Jebaily has a proven track record of delivering great individualized personal service, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. "At the law firm, we take pride in knowing that our experience, determination and caring approach have allowed us to distinguish ourselves as a firm that can be trusted to give excellent client service," he concluded.

His mantra every morning is to view each client and constituent as an opportunity to make a new friend and build a new trust relationship.





NEW SERVICE HELPS MORE SOUTH CAROLINA VETERANS

Submitted by Krista Petty, Marketing Manager



Lance Newman

family members may request military records and apply for VA education and housing benefits. All this can be done through a user-friendly, online approach.

“We are very happy to introduce this new Veterans’ application option to our already proven and trusted Benefit Bank system at SC Thrive,” says Lance Newman, Director of Military and Veterans’ Affairs. “This will allow current military, veterans and their families to have easy access to apply for a number of benefits.”

The MVP self-serve option uses a standard question-and-answer interview format, making

The nonprofit organization SC Thrive, has announced a new online service specifically for veterans and their families in South Carolina. Through SC Thrive’s Benefit Bank, veterans, current service members and their

it easier to understand, fill out, and submit. This service comes just in time to assist the large number of military personnel expected to leave service with the proposed cuts in military spending in the coming year, as announced by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel at a Pentagon press conference in February.

Newman shares, “As a veteran myself, I know what a critical time the transition from military to civilian life is for the veteran and his or her family. SC Thrive is dedicated to helping make that process smoother and easier.” To get started, veterans and service members can simply visit www.scthrive.org or call 1.800.726.8774.

SC Thrive leads South Carolinians to stability by providing innovative and efficient access to resources. Military and Veterans’ Program is just one of the many programs offered. SC Thrive is home to The Benefit Bank of SC, a web-based, self-serve and counselor-assisted program helping individuals and families more efficiently apply for assistance with health and food benefits, receive free tax filing and more. Since 2010, 78,420 applications

have been filed through the system.

(See related SC Thrive ad on page 33)



MARION NATIVE DEPLOYED AND DETERMINED

Submitted by Angela Crosland



Sgt. Sherman Crosland and his wife Angela

Crosland is the senior human resources sergeant for the 4-7th CAV, consisting of more than 600 personnel. He is responsible for planning, directing and managing the human resource competencies and supervision of assigned and attached personnel. He has traveled to several countries during his career, which took him a very long way from his humble beginnings in Marion, S.C.

Once a linky, quiet, little boy sporting the box haircut, Crosland was reared in the housing project on Strawberry Street in Marion. This knee-baby of David and Sarah Crosland was for most of his childhood, the most stubborn of the three children. His father felt confident this trait would work to his benefit later in life. It most certainly did.

There were things he didn’t know and oh so many places he never thought he would go, but the military changed all of that.

Earlier this year, Sgt. 1st Class Sherman Crosland found himself on a 17-hour flight to Camp Hovey, Korea on a year-long assignment.

“If you showed him how to do something, no matter what, he would find a way to do it differently. He wouldn’t stop either until it was done,” says David Crosland. “For quite some time, we would spank him for being disobedient, not knowing he would later be the problem solver of the bunch. And resilient, that boy was resilient.”

His bounce-back approach to challenges would prove most important when he became the Master Resiliency Training Facilitator for the U.S. Army Training Center at Fort Jackson, S.C. nearly 20 years into his military career. Crosland provided training to all branches of the Army Forces, Department of Defense Civilians and government contractors and is directly responsible for the facilitation and training of the resilience competencies, fundamentals and skills for more than 1,000 students.

“It is the ability to persist in the face of adversity no matter what,” says Crosland, who calls it a job made in heaven. “Of all the jobs I’ve held, this is the one that leads people to become the leaders they were always meant to be. The self awareness, the mental agility, it all combines to create the formula for success.”

The non-commissioned officers are not only taught how to persevere but the course teaches them how to pass those qualities on to

their recruits. Crosland, who began his career with the Navy in 1992 and switched to the Army four years later, says that training would have made a world of difference. As a postal clerk on the U.S.S. Ogden, Crosland’s first duty station was in San Diego, Calif. There he was responsible for receiving and sorting mail and various other duties. As a young soldier with mounting responsibilities, Crosland says it is easy to become overwhelmed. The Master Resiliency Training gives you the ability to endure, he adds. Crosland has also utilized the techniques from the training in his job as a drill sergeant and supervisor in other capacities. He has even employed the skills in raising his children, says his wife Angela. The couple have three children, Amonti, Jaylen and Lauren and reside in Columbia, S.C.



Drill Sgt. & Sgt. Crosland

Crosland holds an associate degree in arts from the University of Maryland and is set to earn the bachelor of science in human resource management from Columbia Southern University in December.

Help Reach Out to Veterans



MVP

Military & Veterans' Programs



**SC Thrive is
here to help.**

We simplify the process
by offering online
application options.

Apply at www.scthrive.org

- Request Military Records
- Apply or Transfer VA Education Benefits
- Apply for VA Housing Benefits
- Locate a Veterans Service Office
- View other benefit application options

*SC Thrive is a nonprofit organization leading
South Carolinians to stability by providing
access to quality of life resources.*



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Sexual Assault Awareness



ASSAULT & ABUSE FIGHTERS DRAWING PARTNERS

by Anna Bowman



The Pee Dee Coalition is once again preparing for the annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month which is observed during the month of April. In recognition of Sexual

Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Pee Dee Coalition is collaborating with the City of Florence, the Boys and Girls Club, and other community partners to host a free, family-friendly event called, "Spring into Safety," on April 11.

Lucy Christenberry, a Sexual Assault Program Coordinator who recently joined the Pee Dee Coalition, said, "In the past, we have hosted "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," which focused on recognizing survivors. That event is very powerful, but this year we are working to increase participation from people that might not have attended that event and make the cause more approachable to a broader group of people. Of course, we are honoring survivors at that event and are very excited to have Arthenius Jackson share her message of hope, healing, and the journey from victim to survivor.

Being able to physically and mentally transcend from victim to survivor is an enormous accomplishment when you consider that the statistics for sexual assault are alarming. According to Christenberry, "1 in 5 women and 1 in 77 men will be the victim of rape or attempted rape during their lifetime. The majority of victims experience acts of sexual violence before the age of 30, although sexual assault happens to everyone, men and women, old and young, regardless of socio-economic

status, race, or ethnicity. Adding to the trauma of sexual assault, The National Crime Victim Survey reports that approximately 44% of victims are under the age of 18." Approximately 48% of victims are raped by a friend or acquaintance; 30% by a stranger; 16% by an intimate [partner]; 2% by another relative; and in 4% of cases the relationship is unknown. (NCVS).

She added that, "Because sexual assault is the most under-reported crime, the numbers of reports can't fully describe the actual occurrence. A person's gender or cultural background can affect their willingness to report. Self-blame, distrust of law enforcement, fear of retaliation, and lack of access to services are problematic because they skew statistical information. College Campus sexual assault is a hot topic issue right now, but there has been little research on that age group to compare. It is without a doubt a major problem among college and university populations, but I suspect that the rates are similar for individuals in that age group that are not enrolled in school."

In her position with the Pee Dee Coalition, Christenberry says that she, [along with the Coalition's team of highly trained advocates] has the privilege of providing crisis intervention and advocacy services to survivors of sexual violence. "This aspect of my work involves responding to emergency rooms to provide information and support during the evidence collection process, making referrals to counseling and therapy providers, and communicating with criminal justice professionals to ensure victim's rights are being upheld," she said.

My work with direct victim services

informs the manner in which I approach the other duties of my job, which generally fall into three categories: training for professionals, public awareness, and prevention/education.

The prevention/education program offered by the Pee Dee Coalition is run by Tracey Williamson. She works in schools and other youth-serving programs to provide comprehensive prevention programming. This consists of multi-session interactive presentations that focus on defining healthy and unhealthy relationships and establishing boundaries, among other things. Her skills and training allow her to foster an environment that permits open discussion about the challenges presented to young people by a culture that can often send the wrong messages about sexual health.

The goal of these programs is to facilitate cultural change in our communities. "We have come a long way in the past 20 years in the movement to eliminate sexual violence, but sadly, there are still major hurdles to achieving equal justice, said Christenberry." This is why awareness is so important.

For additional information, Christenberry invites everyone to visit the website at www.peedecoalition.org or call the Florence Crisis Center directly at 843-669-4694. Free, confidential crisis intervention services can be accessed 24 hours a day by calling our hotline at 1-800-273-1820 or 843-669-4600.

The numbers to all of the local crisis centers, they are as follows:

- Florence – 843.669.4694 • Chesterfield – 843.623.7364
- Bennettsville – 843.479.0882 • Hartsville – 843.383.0240
- Marion – 843.423.6568 • Dillon – 843.774.0898
- Kingstree – 843.354.6481

In recognition of April as Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month, join us for

Spring → Safety

A free, family-friendly community event!

SATURDAY,

April 11th

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

at the

Boys & Girls Club of Florence

310 Roughfork St.



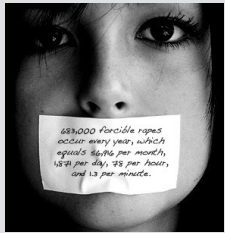
Enjoy music, activities, food, drinks, and more with your families and neighbors while you learn about the prevalence of child abuse and sexual violence and what you can do to prevent and report it!



Sexual Assault Awareness

I AM A SURVIVOR!

by Anna Bowman



Telling your story for the first time takes a tremendous amount of courage; especially when your story involves a journey of horrific events that has caused insufferable pain and sorrow. But Amy, a survivor of sexual assault, wants to help others who've suffered the same fate, to find their way out of the darkness. Every two minutes, someone in the United States is

sexually assaulted, a statistical fact that Amy is all too familiar with as a survivor of sexual assault. Speaking out for the first time, Amy has finally found the voice that she's been searching for since the first time she was sexually abused at the age of 3, an age of innocence that turned into a lifetime of nightmarish lessons.

"The very first time I was attacked sexually was by a now deceased uncle," she said. This is a common scenario. In fact, according to data, 82% of all sexual assaults are by people who know the victim. The sexual abuse that started at home would follow her to school, where she was assaulted at the age of 10 by several male students, during recess. Like so many victims, Amy was embarrassed, humiliated, and blamed herself for the attack. She didn't tell anyone about what happened, and was even chastised for returning from recess late! So she remained silent. Silence, Amy learned through counseling, is what keeps a sexual assault victim captive. This "victim silence," said Amy, "Is what allows rapists and sexual

abusers to continue to cause harm to victims." When she did reach out for help, after being assaulted twice at age 13, she wasn't believed; and the attackers were never prosecuted. So, she remained silent again.

"Left to suffer in silence I began to act out violently," she stated, "I was confused and devastated by the attacks." Although she went to counseling, she didn't stay long enough for healing to take place. "I blamed myself for it all. Surely I could have done something different to keep these things from happening," but there wasn't anything she could do differently, she later learned.

As a "SURVIVOR," Amy knows how important it is to break the silence, seek and continue counseling until full healing takes place. After breaking her silence and getting counseling, Amy stresses that a sexual assault victim must understand that being assaulted is never their fault! The attacker is fully responsible for their own actions! For those needing assistance, Pee Dee Coalition can help in overcoming the trauma, dealing with law enforcement, and help family members be more supportive. She also recommends, a support group called, Empowered to Heal. The founder, Mrs. Robinson, helps people to understand the adverse effects of the trauma; find additional resources; encourages you to see yourself as a survivor, overcomer, and to empower you to stay on the road to complete healing and restoration. Amy wants everyone to know that they can survive and overcome the traumatic effects of sexual assault. "Recovery is hard, slow and painful; but it's well worth the effort."



Child Abuse Prevention

CHILDREN'S CENTER NEEDS ADVOCATES

by Les Echols



Gloria Davis

The Durant Children's Center was established in Florence in 1994 as a program of the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault, a non-profit organization dedicated to the reduction of rape, family violence, and child abuse and to meet the needs of its' victims. Named for Elizabeth Pettigrew Durant, a longtime advocate for children, the Durant Center assists an annual average of 400 children from 10 counties. Gloria Davis of Pee Dee

Coalition is the Program Director for Durant Children's Center. She is responsible for the overall leadership, coordination and service provision for the children advocacy center in Florence and Hartsville and serves Dillon, Williamsburg, Darlington, Florence, Marion, Marlboro, Clarendon and Chesterfield counties.

Davis initially became involved involved with the Pee Dee Coalition as a volunteer because the issue of domestic violence is personal and dear to her. In the past while working with children and families of abuse and neglect, she noticed that there were similar issues that correlated with family violence as to those children who had witness domestic violence in the home. "I am passionate about this issue and I believe that it is necessary for everyone to understand their role in reducing or preventing this epidemic that is destroying our families. It's important that our community is knowledgeable and aware of child abuse and neglect. Durant Children's Center offers therapy and support for families who are dealing with this issue"

The Durant Center, known as "the house where the healing begins" is located on 226 South Irby Street in downtown Florence and is adjacent to the Pee Dee Coalition's primary crisis center. Two interview rooms, a medical

suite, conference room, and workspace for outstation professionals facilitate the teamwork necessary to making the assessment experience non-traumatic for the child. Collaboration with other Coalition program staff enables expedited services such as emergency shelter for a mother and her children and a network of advocates through satellite centers in six counties surrounding Florence. As an Associate Member of the National Children's Alliance, the staff and multidisciplinary team members meet monthly to staff cases and coordinate services in accordance with Memoranda of Agreement. Staff and team members conduct in-service training for area professionals, participate in national conferences, and provide expert testimony for Family and Circuit Courts.

Gloria also realizes the impact community can have to help the situation. "The community can help by being involved in the lives of these young people and asking questions and not turning their heads to what is visible to them. Get connected by volunteering and also allowing someone to come out and educate them about signs and symptom of child abuse. Durant Children Center served 345 children last year," she said.

To recognize National Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness month, the Pee Dee Coalition will sponsor events to increase awareness reach out to victims, and demonstrate how the community can help victims and their families. There are several events that will take place across the Pee Dee during the month of April with details displayed on the Pee Dee Coalition's website at www.peedeecoalition.org and on their Facebook page. Another way to support awareness is to become a volunteer with Pee Dee Coalition. The Durant Center also asks community members and businesses to display spin wheels or wear a blue ribbon to signify their support of local efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. Call 843-669-4357 or the 24 hour crisis line 1-800-273-1820

Child Abuse Prevention

CARE HOUSE BEFRIENDS ALL

by Les Echols



As adults, we cringe at the thought of children being victims of heinous acts of abuse. When children face these type obstacles, CARE House of the Pee Dee starts them on the right

path. CARE House of the Pee Dee is a children's advocacy center dedicated to provide child abuse and trauma victims a safe and child friendly environment where a child can tell their story of victimization and begin to heal. CARE House of the Pee Dee provides assessment, therapy and advocacy services for the victim and their supportive caregivers, while working in conjunction with other involved entities such as law enforcement, Department of Social Services and prosecutors. CARE House was established in 2005 and provides services to the Pee Dee Region as well as some other counties.

Like any non-profit agency, CARE House depends on a diligent staff of professionals, and Executive Director Meg Temple is the main cog in this well-oiled machine. Raised in Darlington, Meg went to Presbyterian College for undergraduate

studies and Francis Marion University for graduate school. She received her MS in Clinical Psychology, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and LPC Supervisor. "I have experience working with adult assault victims, alcohol and drug clients, and child abuse. I have worked in the child abuse field since 2009 and have been in the role of Executive Director of the CARE House since 2013", Meg stated. As the Executive Director, Meg is responsible for the operation of the non-profit as well as the supervision of all staff. Since she is also a licensed therapist and a trained forensic interviewer she provides some direct services. Meg looks at child abuse work as a calling, and makes it clear that child abuse is a difficult field that not everyone is cut out for. "I think for the staff at CARE House we know that children are primarily resilient and with the right support and tools most children can heal. I also know whatever horrific thing that has happened, already happened, and someone has got to be part of a solution". Meg lives in Florence with her husband Tallon and two young sons.

Without the proper support research has shown us, in studies such as the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Studies, that child abuse and trauma

can take a huge toll on a life, resulting in all types of maladaptive coping skills and risk behaviors. Some possible early symptoms are nightmares, flashbacks, aggression, depression, and anxiety. High quality advocacy and therapy for the parents can make a difference for the child, because if the primary caregiver is no longer anxious, a child can sense that. The other main aspect of what CARE House does is the forensic interview. Giving a child a friendly and comfortable place to tell their story where the only goal is the best interest of that child can do wonders for getting them ready to move on to other services.

CARE House interviewers are all Master's degree level clinicians, and CARE House thinks that is vital for understanding all of the potential dynamics of interviewing a child, such as what type of information a child is capable of providing at what age. If the wrong question is asked during an interview, it could cause problems with prosecution. Meg added that "all of the services CARE House of the Pee Dee provides help to make a difference not only in the child or their family, but more largely in our current and future community and society".

Autism Awareness

SOS HEALTHCARE SEEKS AUTISM ANSWERS

by Anna Bowman



L to R: Ben, Sarah & Liem

Sarah Pope, the Executive Director of SOS Healthcare, Inc., is keenly aware of the special needs associated with autistic children and their families; she's the mother of two handsome sons, Ben, 20, and Liem, 13, who are both autistic.

The SOS Healthcare, Inc., formed in 1989, is a 501 (3) (c) nonprofit organization, located in Myrtle Beach, and offers a range of programs to assist individuals diagnosed with autism and their families. The exceptional programs are funded through grants, fundraisers, and private donations. The Building Futures Autism Clinic receives part of its funding from the PDD Waiver, private insurance and tuition. The funds are used to pursue community goals and address un-met needs in the region of autism. As the rate of children being diagnosed with autism continues to grow, (1 in 68 children are diagnosed, according to the Center for Disease Control), the programs available to assist them and their families become more essential each day. In her current position, Pope, who has been the executive director for the past five years, is responsible for fiscal

management, program development, staff management, board liaison, grant writing, marketing, fundraising, events coordinator and community outreach/awareness duties. Pope doesn't mind wearing several hats in order to keep the programs available for individuals and their families. She, along with the entire staff, truly understands the importance of providing outstanding service(s) on a consistent base. Some of the services offered include: ABA Therapy, which is an early intervention program for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Each child's program is individualized to meet the needs of the child and their family.

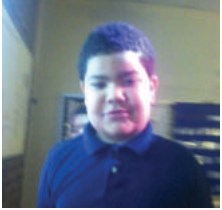
The After School Homework/Activity Program, for ages 6 and up, is for children attending schools in the Myrtle Beach area to get help with homework in the after school program. The program also includes other planned activities, such as wellness/fitness groups, social group/games and gardening. S.O.U.L. "Skills of Understanding Life," is a program focusing on assisting children and adults with Autism Spectrum disorders, developing greater awareness and understanding of perspectives different from their own as a means for improving conversation skills, developing relationships and dealing with emotions.

The Job Coach Program is one that assists young adults with Autism in finding skill-appropriate employment in the community. The Job Coach works with young adults seeking employment and adjusting to their new job role, by providing training with participating employers. This program fosters real life job skills and independence for adults with ASD and related disorders. The agency offers additional programs, and currently operates primarily in Horry County. However, they do provide social programs and early intervention in Georgetown, ABA Therapy in Charleston, Dorchester, Summerville and Berkeley counties. Pope stated that the agency is working on an expansion of services into the Florence area to assist additional families with ABA services.

Pope encourages families to contact SOS Health Care, Inc., for information about all programs, some of which are covered by private insurance, Medicaid, and some with tuition fees. Additionally, she encourages everyone to participate in the agency's upcoming fundraisers: The Advantage Camp, in partnership with The Reggie Sanders Foundation, at the Pelican Field, which will be held on May 16th and the SOS Health Care Memorial Golf Tournament, on August 22nd. For additional information, visit the website at www.sos-healthcare.com, or call 843-449-0554.

LUKE MELTS THE HEARTS OF EVERYONE HE MEETS!

by Anna Bowman



Luke Cain

It's no secret that every mother feels that their child is the best child in the world and Megan Cain is no exception when it comes to her adorable 8-year-old son, Luke.

"There aren't enough words to describe the love I have for my son," she said. "He has the most beautiful smile, the cutest laugh, and the best hugs," she said as she described her oldest son.

Like other new moms, Cain watched as her son Luke developed into a very healthy baby. "He met every milestone from 3, 6, and 9 months old," said Cain, and like every little boy his age he knew how to say cat, dog, mom, and animals sounds. Luke was a normal baby up to around 12 months old, then everything changed," she recalled. "He wouldn't respond to his name; wouldn't react with facial

expressions if something was funny; and he wouldn't say his words anymore. After visiting the pediatrician, audiologist, and several other doctors, my son was finally diagnosed with autism at the tender age of 2 1/2."

As she realized the journey that was ahead of her to ensure that Luke would have the best that life could offer, she had to become her son's number one fan. "I wanted to be a positive support system for my son and I knew that I had to be fully engaged in his developmental process – both in school and socially."

Today, Luke is making monumental strides in his education as a student at Lester Elementary School in a self-contained autism classroom. Cain is proud of the assistance the school is providing her son in order for him to achieve a quality education. "He receives speech therapy and occupational therapy at school," she gleefully stated. "He is currently in a classroom with seven other children and his teacher has a wonderful background in

autism with several years of experience serving students on the autism spectrum," she said. "I'm fully involved in his school and after school care. When I first signed Luke up for the YMCA's afterschool care, I explained to the staff that he was non-verbal but did know some sign language. The staff accepted him without hesitation, and they treat him with respect and cares for him like he's their own."

An advocacy for her family has been the Autism Advocacy Group of Florence (www.autismadvocacygroup.com). "We meet once a month, and it's an environment where the parents can get together, bring our children, and not be judged and/or stared at if our children get loud or make noises that other are not used to. This has been a wonderful outlet for our children with special needs.

Cain, the mother of two boys, Luke, 8 and Liam, 4, is amazed at just how lucky she is to be able to raise sons that are completely different, but have so much love for each other.



Saluting Our Volunteers



VOLUNTEERS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Submitted by Deane Martin, Volunteer Coordinator



Licensed Massage Therapist, Wendy Moore, administers Reflexology treatment on Agape patient in his home. Oh, how relaxing!! Volunteers, Agape Appreciates YOU!!

Agape Hospice of Hartsville has an amazing group of caregivers that make up its volunteer ministry. These volunteers are making a

difference in the lives of our patients, their families, and caregivers. This is the #1 reason that we appreciate each and all of them!!! However, to enumerate, we share many, many reasons to appreciate these volunteers.

Our volunteers have individual gifts and talents that they utilize while offering love, support, and companionship to our patients. Sit back and visualize looking through a large window while observing these volunteers with our patients. You may see them in a patient's home or in a residential community setting. They may be reading to our patients, holding their hands (touch therapy), or playing card or board games with them. They may be sitting outside enjoying the sunshine and a beautiful

spring day, talking about the flowers and reminiscing about what flowers the patient used to plant.

Then there are other heartwarming scenes you may envision. A Licensed Massage Therapist administering reflexology, a foot massage, which has been medically proven to help relieve stress, pain, and enhance relaxation. What joy our patients are expressing while soft music plays and this treatment relaxes them, often times, into a restful sleep. How blessed we are to have a LMT that actually has her own private practice, but closes on Mondays to give that time to volunteer for Agape Hospice. Other volunteers provide the yarn and will crochet shawls or lap robes in beautiful colors. Then the perfectly stitched "labor of love" is presented to the patient. Just another way volunteers meet the needs of the patients.

Volunteers also call our patients or caregivers every month to learn about any needs that they may have and just to visit with them and let them know we who is available to them. Many hours are invested in these calls and we have found that it is an avenue for them to open up and express their personal frustrations

and feelings. Their lives are changing and they need to have an outlet for their emotions. There are many more opportunities for volunteering at Agape. We have opportunities in the clerical area, special projects, and bereavement, just to name a few. Our mission is to provide integrated healthcare services to meet the needs of senior adults in a faith-based atmosphere.

Agape volunteers are selfless. There are many types of selflessness in this world that can accomplish a better future that are ignored and taken for granted every day. We, at Agape, try to never take these selfless volunteers for granted or ignore what their selflessness can accomplish. They represent Agape. Their works are an expression of who we are!

We appreciate how these caring people share their time with Agape. We appreciate their qualities and their desire to help others. They all realize that they have become an integral part of Agape Hospice and that they are admired, appreciated, and needed!! So for this Volunteer Appreciation month, we say, THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!!



Saluting Our Volunteers

LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRIES SERVE AS CATCHALL

Submitted by Cecilia Meggs, Executive Director of Lighthouse Ministries



Lighthouse Ministries' Volunteers

National Volunteer Week is about thanking one of America's most valuable assets, our volunteers! National Volunteer Week is always held in April. It began in 1974 to show how important volunteering is to a nonprofit as well as to a community. When I attend civic organization meetings or community functions, I look around and see volunteers everywhere; most of us volunteer our time in one way or another.

Volunteers are the strength of our community and the lifeblood of most nonprofits. Volunteers work hard, performing essential jobs for no monetary gain. Consider your community without volunteers. There would be no Red Cross helping with disasters. No place for a battered woman seeking emergency refuge, no volunteer firefighters. No soup kitchens to feed the homeless and no way for a community to come together to support a BBQ fundraiser to help one of our own.

Volunteering gives us the opportunity to help those in need; it gives us a sense of accomplishment and gratification. It allows us to use our

time and talents while learning new ideas and new ways of doing things. Volunteering increases our understanding of what services are offered within the community and it allows us to share and give back what we have learned. Whatever the reason, volunteering is essential to nonprofits. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, the dollar value of volunteering for South Carolina is \$20.15 per hour. Every nonprofit that depends on volunteers is able to provide their services at a minimum cost because of volunteers. Lighthouse Ministries' volunteers provide more than \$161,000 in services each year with more than 8,000 hours. This is about taking action. It is about individuals becoming a part of their community and actively donating their talents in order to make a difference.

Lighthouse Ministries is a volunteer based organization and our volunteers are amazing! They take time out of their day to offer their skills to further our mission. They jump in whenever something needs to get done; they are the heartbeat of our organization. The small staff we have supports the volunteers and ensures they are trained and answer any questions they might have. We have volunteers young and old, from 16 to 92. Some of our volunteers have been committed to our organization since we opened our doors more than 18 years ago, while others come for a short period of time. We could not offer our services to the community without our volunteers, they are like family. A quote from one of our volunteers helps explain why someone would want to give back to the community: "From childhood it has been a lifelong goal of mine to reach out and help other people. It is a joy to help those in need," said volunteer Doug Amos.



THESE GROUPS STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY

by Les Echols

The late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr said that "everybody can be great because everybody can serve". As long as people are destitute and in need, community service is an ongoing movement. From feeding children to housing families to just dedicating a few hours, service is vital to empowerment of the less fortunate. April is Community Service Month and highlights a plethora of helpful organizations and causes

to take notice of worldwide.

Florence Kiwanis club President Cherry Gerrald has so much

love for the Kiwanis Club because of all they do for the children in the community and worldwide. The Pee Dee Kiwanis club helps children in the Florence community with sponsorships, community projects such as House of Hope, Salvation Army. The club participated in a project this year called The Eliminate Project. Cherry explains "this project

helps more than 100 million mothers and their future babies get the neonatal tetanus shot. If these mothers do not get this shot the likelihood that the babies live is very grim. This is to help tackle iodine deficiency disorders, achieving one of the most significant public health successes of the 20th century. This project will reach the poorest, most neglected mothers and babies with additional lifesaving health care".

Lions club President Will Crosswell cites similar successes and attraction to service. The mission of Lions Club is to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through the Florence club. Lions

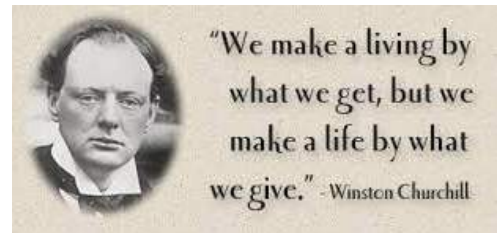


Will Crosswell

Club focuses particular on those with hearing and vision needs. The club works to meet these needs through fundraising efforts, led by an annual Toy Run in December, and through the

efforts of members. "The reason I joined Lions Club back in 2011 was because I wanted to be around a community of individuals whose primary focus was on giving back. While I clicked with many members in the group, their motto of 'We Serve' resonated with me because that should be the mission of every man and woman. The focus is not on us; it's on our community, Crosswell explained.

The type of selfless thinking displayed by both Cherry and Will is what makes Kiwanis Club and Lions Club among the top community service organizations in the world. They stand tall as beacons of hope to help make the community and the world a better place to live.



BUILD A TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

As a business owner, you probably handle most of the responsibility of running the business yourself. But what if you could utilize a team of professionals to consult and guide the management of your company? What if this team could understand your situations and needs on an ongoing basis?

No matter what type of business you own or how successful you are, everyone can benefit from the guidance and knowledge of these four key business specialists, many of whom are independent business operators just like you.

Attorney: You may want to hire an attorney who specializes in the needs of business owners and can consult with you on asset ownership, best-choice business form, succession planning, contract review, and employee-employer relationships. It's crucial to establish a relationship with your attorney, so that you can pick up the phone when you have a question.

Accountant: Again, you may prefer someone who understands the needs of independent business people and, if possible, also knows your industry. An accountant should help you "read" your books more effectively, translate raw data, plot areas of profit and loss, and show you how to manage your tax liability. In short, your CPA could save you money. Don't make the mistake of meeting only once a year at tax time: give your accountant the opportunity to work with you all year long.

Financial institution officer: Credit is the lifeblood of many businesses. It's always important to maintain contact with a person who can help you access the cash flow you need when you need it, and at a favorable rate. In addition to issuing credit, many financial institutions frequently provide a wealth of other services at minimal or no charge. Regular contact with your institution will keep you abreast of new opportunities that can benefit your business.

Insurance professional: An insurance agent familiar with the challenges facing independent business owners can act as an effective problem solver. Specifically, a trained, licensed insurance professional can play several crucial roles in your business:

- **Help your company meet its immediate insurance protection needs.** This includes helping select and fund insurance for key executive coverage, death and disability* buy-out, pension, and other qualified plans.

- **Help meet your personal insurance and financial product needs.** Family decisions can be a key factor in making any business decisions. Your insurance agent can help you coordinate a cohesive insurance program that satisfies your needs and goals on personal and professional levels.

- **Help coordinate the work of other professionals.** Insurance agents will help you focus on the big picture and work to help you put together a team of professionals.

This educational, third-party article is provided as a courtesy by Julie A. Cord, Agent, New York Life Insurance Company. To learn more about the information or topics discussed, please contact Julie A. Cord at 317.289.3010 or jacord@ft.newyorklife.com.

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FARM COMMISSIONER SPROUTS OTHERS LIKE HIM

by Alicia C. Phillip



Commissioner English Warren Dixon of the Horry Conservation District

“Good farmers, who take seriously their duties as stewards of Creation and of their land’s inheritors, contribute to the welfare of society in more ways than society usually acknowledges, or even knows. These farmers produce valuable goods, of course; but they also conserve soil, they conserve water, they conserve wildlife, they conserve open space, they conserve scenery.”

- Wendell Berry, Bringing it to the Table: Writings on Farming and Food.

One such good farmer is Commissioner English Warren Dixon, who was the 2014 recipient of the Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Award for his conservation efforts. He was inspired to pursue farming as a profession by his family, as the previous three generations were farmers, and he wanted to keep the farm in the family. Consequently, he succeeded his father as owner and operator of Dixon Farms, a 350-acre farm that produces sweet potatoes, corn, soybeans, and tobacco, which he has farmed for more than 40 years. In addition, Commissioner Dixon has served as a Horry Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner for over 21 years, initially serving as secretary-treasurer until he was appointed to his current position of vice chairman.

Commissioner Dixon expresses his immense passion for his work in these words: “Farming and soil and water conservation are in my blood. I feel it is my calling, and nothing makes me happier than knowing that I am doing something to help society.” And receiving recognition for his work is an added bonus. Says Dixon about the Award: “It feels good to know that others are watching what you do.” And indeed, there is a lot to watch, as Dixon has been very active in the agricultural community. He serves on the boards of several farm organizations, including the South Carolina Vegetable Committee, South Carolina Farm Bureau Board, and the USDA Farm Service Agency State Board. In addition, he has been a strong proponent of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to farmers to implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits, such as conservation of water sources, reduced soil erosion, and improved water quality. Further, he has promoted Conservation Security Programs and Farm Bill Programs among his fellow farmers. Dixon describes his greatest career accomplishment to date as “being able to assist the community and other local farmers

with helping them meet their needs.”

According to Dixon: “Conservation of soil and water is important so that you can protect your environment for future generations.” Soil conservation involves management strategies that prevent soil erosion and/or chemical alteration of soil by overuse, salinization, acidification, or other contamination. Soil conservation practices include crop rotation, planted windbreaks, and cover crops. Water conservation encompasses strategies implemented to manage fresh water, to protect the water environment, and to meet current and future human water demand. Water conservation practices seek to reduce water loss, use and waste, and avoid water quality damage. Both soil and water conservation are intertwined, as conservation practices conserve soil, which consequently improves water quality, by reducing sedimentation in rivers and streams.

Conservation is everyone’s responsibility, and Commissioner Dixon encourages the public to get involved in conservation efforts by attending meetings and conservation events to get educated about methods for conserving soil and water and avoiding pollution of the water supply.

He advises young people who are interested in entering the farming profession to continue their education and obtain a business degree first. In addition, be sure to study the habits of current farmers and study agriculture to learn the current methods of farming.

When he is not pursuing his passion, Commissioner Dixon enjoys serving on the Steward Board at St. Peter’s Church, and spending time with his wife, two children and four grandchildren.

For more information, Commissioner Dixon can be reached via telephone at 843.358.8282 or via email at nina.warren@sc.nacdnet.net. The Horry Conservation District is located at 1949 Industrial Park Road, Room 125, Conway, South Carolina 29526.

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BUILDING FINANCIAL SECURITY BY SAVING

Submitted by Susan Grant, Marketing Officer



Susan Grant

If you dream of becoming financially secure in your future, you need to take the first step to cut expenses and start saving; here are some tips to help. The first step may be the hardest, then some little steps and before you know it, life will begin getting better. To begin create a record of all you spend day to day then a budget to help you take control of how you spend your money. This is a very important step in learning to manage your spending along with saving. The objective is to track daily spending, prepare a spending plan by estimated income and expenses. This will also help reduce the anxiety of not knowing whether you have enough money to pay your bills when they are due. Then identify ways to decrease spending by reviewing expenses to negotiate lower rates or eliminating lavish spending. Not all of these tips will apply to everyone, but just go through the list and for those that fit your life style give it a try and before you know it you will be saving a significant amount over the long haul.

- **Turn off the television; you will save on electric bill, but that's not the biggest saving. The real savings is in the form of less spending by impulse buying of the gadget of the day ads. You know the miracle water hose, the tool that will last a life time or the must have beauty product to turn back time.**
- **Limit impulse buying; ask yourself is this something you need or want. If it is a want and not a need, by waiting a day or two you may not have that urge to buy it anymore or even find it on sale somewhere else.**
- **Ask for rate reductions; companies that provide phone, internet or cable services often have special programs or discounts that are available to long time customers when asked, even if for a limited time of 6 – 12 months adds up. And don't forget any credit card accounts for rate**

reductions for good account behaviors. You may have to ask to speak to a supervisor, but rate reductions on accounts with high balances can really save a lot over a year.

- **Do you have a collection or habit that you could cut down on? If you collect something that maybe you have run out of room for; have more than one or just have some that are not as important to your collection, you may do a little organization and have a yard sale, take to consignment shop or ebay. Habits like collecting can become expensive so you need to evaluate if it gives you joy or has any true value to your life.**
- **Meal planning and lists are great sources to control compulsive spending in grocery stores. Make your list and plan weekly meals by using the weekly sales ads and coupons. You may not be the coupon king or queen, like on some reality shows, but every ten or twenty cent coupon used adds up over a year.**
- **Preventive maintenance or cleaning of appliances can lead to big saving or repair costs down the road. Monthly cleaning or replacing filters for AC and heating units can add many years to these expensive items. Do not forget about your refrigerator, dryers or vents. Not only does this help your appliances last long, they help with energy costs.**
- **Research bank accounts and services as most banks offer no service fee accounts or options to reduce or eliminate account fees, such as signing up for eStatements or setting up automatic transfers. Setting up automatic transfers to a savings account can help to build up your savings plan. In addition, online services such as Bill Pay can serve as two savings advantages, postage costs and faster delivery of payments if available for electronic delivery this too could limit late charges for payments that may not arrive in time by mailing.**

If you want to be in control of your money, you must understand where your money goes. One way to do this is to keep a personal spending record of everything you spend. Then take this information to track over time to see how you are spending. You may become very surprised at how just the normal canned drink or pack of cigarettes several times a day can really add up over a month. This will help you determine what spending you can cut out or back on in order to have money to pay monthly bills or contribute to a savings plan. These are just some simple changes that everyone can benefit from to save and stretch their hard earned dollars. When you apply these tips together over the long haul they can improve your financial security. *The opinions of the author expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of Anderson Brothers Bank and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.*

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BONE UP ON BONE HEALTH: OSTEOPENIA CAN BE A WARNING SIGN OF OSTEOPOROSIS

Submitted by Robert Turner, MD



Dr. Robert Turner

From childhood, we've heard the importance of drinking plenty of milk and maintaining a healthy diet throughout life, to help prevent bone loss. Yet, more than 40 million American men and women have osteoporosis or are at high risk for it, due to low bone mass. Long before that first fall or broken bone, the first signs of the disease can show up as osteopenia – a risk factor for developing osteoporosis.

Osteopenia, also called low bone density, does not always lead to osteoporosis, but it indicates that one's chances of developing osteoporosis are higher than average. The National Osteoporosis Foundation reported that by 2020, 14 million cases of osteoporosis and more than 47 million cases of osteopenia will be diagnosed among men and women over age 50. Osteoporosis is thought to be a woman's disease, but men are also at risk – particularly as they age. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more than two million U.S. men have osteoporosis.

What causes osteopenia?

Many factors can contribute to osteopenia: heredity; insufficient development of peak bone mass during youth; certain medications; and abnormally accelerated bone loss due to illness or certain medications. Also, osteopenia is sometimes seen in young female athletes as a result of overtraining and excessive weight loss, and decreased estrogen levels.

Primary risk factors, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians, include:

- Aging
- Caucasian or Asian heritage
- A family history of osteoporosis
- Inactive lifestyle
- A diet low in calcium and vitamin D
- Certain medications, such as steroid medications for arthritis or asthma, antacids, proton pump inhibitors, or chemotherapy drugs
- Heavy use of alcohol or tobacco
- Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa
- Certain diseases such as celiac disease or inflammatory bowel disease, which make the body's absorption of calcium and vitamin D difficult
- Hyperthyroidism, or an overactive thyroid
- Beginning menopause, or undergoing surgery to remove the ovaries, before age 45

Bone is built during childhood and youth, and reaches its highest density – or peak bone

mass – around age 30. From there, bone mass gradually declines, because the body is no longer producing new bone at a faster rate than the older bone is resorbed. So, the more dense one's bones are at age 30, the longer it will take to develop osteopenia or osteoporosis.

A bone mineral density test – which measures a person's current bone mass, compared to peak levels in their youth – can diagnose osteopenia. The test is painless, similar to an x-ray, and reports bone mass as a number called a "T-score." A T-score between +1 and -1 is considered normal or healthy. Bone density of -1 to -2.5 is considered low bone mass, or osteopenia. A T-score of -2.5 or more is defined as osteoporosis.

A bone mineral density test that reveals osteopenia should be a red flag that a person with low bone mass should take steps to slow down bone loss and prevent, or delay, osteoporosis, including eating a diet rich in calcium, taking vitamins C and D, and making weight-bearing exercise a regular habit. Depending on your bone mineral density test score, your doctor may prescribe medication to slow your rate of bone loss. Learn more by visiting www.carolinahospital.com, click on "Health Resources" and "Interactive Tools," and test your knowledge with the Osteoporosis Risk Assessment, or the Osteoporosis Quiz.

Dr. Turner is associated with Carolinas Rheumatology and Osteoporosis Center and is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System. Dr. Turner and his partner, Dr. Supen Patel welcome new patients.

Remember that this information is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor, but rather to increase awareness and help equip patients with information and facilitate conversations with your physician that will benefit your health.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians, www.familydoctor.org, National Institutes of Health, www.nlm.nih.gov, International Osteoporosis Foundation, www.iof.org, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, www.niams.nih.gov.
Sidebar: A Diet for Healthy Bones

If you have low bone mass – or even if you don't and you're simply trying to prevent bone loss down the road – a diet rich

in calcium and vitamins C and D will help maintain healthy bones. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, calcium is key in building bone matter and keeping bones strong.

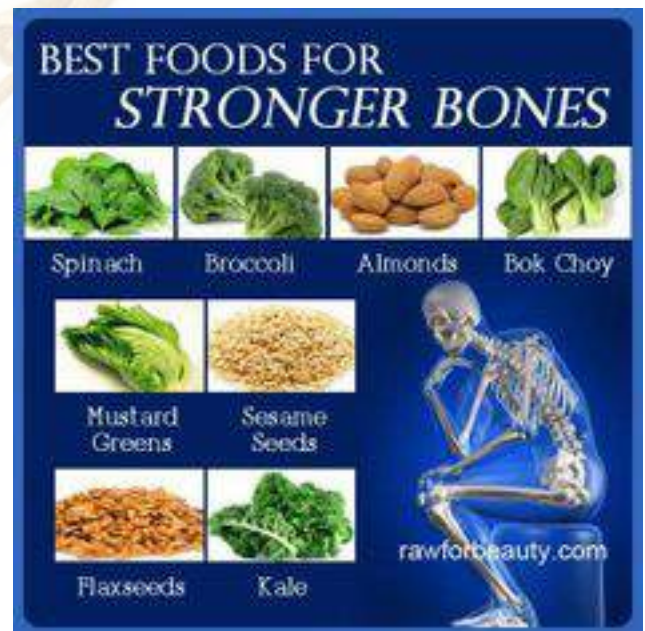
Vitamin D, obtained through moderate sun exposure, foods, and multivitamins, helps with calcium absorption, and keeps bones strong and healthy. Recent research has confirmed the protective role of vitamin C, as well. Vitamin C contributes to the formation of collagen, the fibrous protein part of bone and cartilage. A 2010 study at Baylor University School of Medicine showed that vitamin C protects bone health by not only inhibiting bone breakdown, but contributing to the growth of new bone matter.

For strong bone health, follow these guidelines:

Calcium: Adults under age 50 need 1,000 milligrams daily, increasing to 1,200 mg daily for women age 50 and men age 70 and older (total recommended daily intake includes both foods and vitamin supplements).

Vitamin D: Adults under age 50 need 400-800 international units (IUs) of vitamin D every day, and 800-1,000 IUs over age 50. **Vitamin C:** Men age 19 and older need 90 milligrams per day and women age 19 and older, 75 milligrams per day. Smokers or people regularly exposed to secondhand smoke should increase their daily intake by 35 milligrams per day.

Sources: WebMD, www.webmd.com, National Osteoporosis Foundation, www.nof.com, National Institutes of Health, www.nih.gov





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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.



Reynald Garma, MD

CHIROPRACTOR SENSITIVE TO CALLING

Submitted by Brian Hutcheson



Dr. Brian Hutcheson

Dr. Brian Hutcheson received his calling to become a chiropractor when he was a sophomore in college studying business management. As a young child, Hutcheson recalls Tyler, his brother, being born with two small holes in his heart (Ventral Septal Defect) and having open heart surgery at three months old. After his chest was closed, he went into cardiac arrest. The surgeons were unable to see that there was a second hole and had only closed one.

Remarkably, he survived after defibrillation but suffered developmental abnormalities as a result of the lack of oxygen.

“I was too young to remember the majority of this,” explained Hutcheson. “As we were growing up together we went to every type of medical specialist to provide relief and help for Tyler who was developing a progressive scoliosis.”

Tyler ended up needing a life saving spinal fusion to prevent organ collapse. Whereas the surgery was indeed life saving, Hutcheson’s fascination for chiropractic care grew based on the changes he observed throughout his brother’s visits with one. Hutcheson remembers Tyler becoming more engaged in activities after his chiropractic treatments. “We could tell he was in less pain. He smiled and laughed more frequently. All these feelings came back in my sophomore year, and I realized that I was being called to become a chiropractor.”

This experience led Hutcheson to always want to work with other providers. “I know that patients receive the best outcomes when they have a team of various physicians working together toward the best patient care. At HopeHealth our patients feel comfortable in that all of their doctors are on the same page and up to date with their treatment plans and findings.”

While chiropractic care is a specialty, Hutcheson helps people of all ages with a wide variety of conditions. He alleviates neck pain, back pain and headaches. He also treats conditions related to loss or decrease in function including transitioning from lying to sitting, from sitting to standing and reaching or bending. Hutcheson is also able to help prevent falls, increase leg strength for endurance during walking and improve balance. Alleviation from pain and discomfort during pregnancy and relief from constipation and colic for infants are also common. Chiropractic care is also great for those suffering from strained muscles or tightness. Very often chiropractors are able to eliminate the cause of radiating pain, numbness, burning, and tingling in the arms and legs. Additionally, chiropractors help rehabilitate patients involved in trauma or injury as well as following surgery.

To learn more about chiropractic care at HopeHealth Specialty Services or to make an appointment, call 843-664-3608. The office is located at 491 West Cheves Street in Florence. HopeHealth also serves as a health care home for anyone in Florence, Williamsburg and Clarendon Counties needing a primary health care provider. All insurances including Medicaid and Medicare are accepted, and there are special programs in place for those without insurance. For more information about our services and locations, visit hope-health.org or call 843-667-9414.

BRINGING NEW LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY TO ROCHE CAROLINA

by Mallory Brayboy



Rudy Moffett

Roche Carolina is a pharmaceutical manufacturing company located in Florence. It is a branch of Roche Pharmaceuticals which employs more than 88,500 people worldwide. The company has sites in a multitude of locations including Brazil, Mexico, India, Afghanistan, and several other countries with its headquarters located in

Switzerland. The Florence site opened its doors nearly 20 years ago and they currently manufacture four life-saving medications, with its main two drugs being Tamiflu and Xeloda. Tamiflu is used for prevention and treatment of influenza while Xeloda is used to treat patients with colorectal, breast, or colon cancer. Rudy Moffett is the Senior Large Scale Manufacturing leader over these two medications. "Being an African-American male in the pharmaceutical industry in a senior leadership position is very rare", says Moffett. "I've been fortunate and blessed enough to take advantage of the opportunities that have been afforded to me in this industry and in my career."

Born in Chicago, Moffett says the gang recruitment was very strong in the late 60's. At the age of only 8 years old he was approached by gang members who told him he must decide which gang he would join by his 9th birthday. Moffett informed his mother and three months later they relocated from the Southside of Chicago (with a predominantly all Black population) to Erie, PA (predominately White). Moffett says the experience was definitely a culture shock for an eight year old boy but

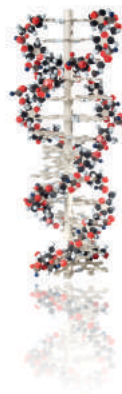
he sees it as a great move that provided him and his family with more opportunities to succeed. Moffett has been in leadership roles for more than 30 years including ten years in the pharmaceutical industry and eight in the U.S. Marines. After leaving the Marines he began his career in manufacturing in the metal stamping industry for names such as Honeywell, McDonald Douglas and Cooper Halo. "Some twenty-plus years later I'm still in manufacturing, but in a different industry. "One that is doing now what patients need next", says Moffett.

Moffett has been with Roche Carolina for 2 ½ years and Roche Pharmaceuticals as a whole for 10 years. He previously worked at the Roche Genentech division in Oceanside, CA. Moffett, along with a number of other employees, transferred to Roche Carolina in 2012. Site President Jami Debrango-Palumbo's transition from California to South Carolina prompted their move. Moffett admired Palumbo's style of leadership at the site in California and took advantage of the opportunity to work for her in a leadership role. "Basically, we followed a great leader", says Moffett regarding changing coasts.

According to Moffett, Roche has definitely diversified over the past three years. There has been an increase in African-American and Female front line leaders and supervisors. Jami Debrango-Palumbo became the 1st female site head in 2011. Moffett himself became the 1st African American in senior leadership in the history of Roche Carolina. The company currently has two DNA (Diversity Network Association) groups in the making, Women's Diversity and Veteran's Diversity. Both groups should be established by the end of 2015.

Moffett cites "the people" as his most enjoyable part of working for Roche Carolina. "The most enjoyable aspect for me as a leader is finding out what motivates people and bringing out things in them that they didn't realize was inside of them, helping them to develop and grow and ultimately advance. That's what we're here for as leaders; to help our people".

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UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH JAD SKAF, M.D.

Submitted by Kim J. Greiger, Director of Marketing



Dr. Jad Skaf

When Dr. Jad Skaf moved to Florence to work as a cardiologist, he was delighted to discover that he found his home. Dr. Skaf joined CMA – Cardiology in September 2014. According to Dr. Skaf, “This is the place where I want to raise a family. There is so much about the area that I enjoy. The weather is wonderful and the people are very laid back. The traffic isn’t bad at all, and I like that Florence is close to the beach and other major cities.”

Dr. Skaf is originally from Lebanon where he spent his childhood and adolescent years. During this time, he experienced the turmoil of growing up in a country involved in civil war. “The war ended in 1990. I lived in a large city and it seemed like people were just waiting for it to stop so they could just move on with their lives.”

Dr. Skaf went on to attend the Lebanese University – Faculty of Medical Science where he completed his Degree in Beirut. He spent one year in general studies and six years focusing on his medical degree. “I then pursued an Internal Medicine residency at the AP/HP Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital in Paris, France, one of Europe’s largest hospitals,” said Dr. Skaf. However, two years into the residency, he decided to move to the United States to join the rest of his family and complete his training at the University of Medicine and Dentistry and Rowan University in New Jersey.

“I was drawn to cardiology because I have a passion for people. In this field, you can make the most difference in a patient’s health and see tangible results. Electrophysiology allows me to combine my surgical skills and medical knowledge with the latest innovations in technology to provide the best care for my patients. I also enjoy being

involved during the whole healing process and building long-term relationships with my patients,” explained Dr. Skaf.

“Some of the most common problems I see in patients are heart failure and irregular heartbeat. However, new guidelines and medications are making a difference in this ever growing field. Medicine is much safer and effective. Devices are being created that increase both the quantity and quality of life for patients with a heart condition.” Dr. Skaf further explained, “My main concern is the patient and their well-being. The advances in cardiology are giving patients better results and improving their day-to-day life, I like to offer that to my patients, while maintaining an open discussion with my patients and helping them make the best decisions to live a healthy and longer life.”

Dr. Skaf has two brothers. Dr. Ziad Skaff is a hematologist / oncologist at Carolinas Hospital System and his brother, Rudy, works in Dubai, U.A.E. for General Electric. Dr. Skaf recently married. He met his wife, Stefani, in Atlantic City, New Jersey. She currently travels and works as a creative graphic designer.

During his free time, Dr. Skaf enjoys non-fictional literature because, he says, “It expands a reader’s imagination and inspires them.” He also enjoys scuba diving, keeping his saltwater aquarium and fast cars, specifically the 1967 Mustang, referred to as “Eleanor” in the movie “Gone in 60 Seconds.”

Dr. Skaf is board certified in Cardiovascular Disease, Electrophysiology, Echocardiography, Nuclear Cardiology, and Internal Medicine. He is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance – Cardiology, and is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System. Dr. Skaf is accepting new patients and consultations. To make an appointment or refer a patient, please call 843-674-4787.

Heart.

His top priority is a healthy heart for you.

Carolinas Hospital System is pleased to welcome Jad Skaf, M.D., to Carolinas Medical Alliance - Cardiology. He is board certified in clinical cardiac electrophysiology, cardiovascular disease, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, and internal medicine. He can help diagnose, manage and treat heart disease and provide routine checkups. Same-day appointments are often available. **To schedule an appointment, call 843-674-4787.**

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Member of the Medical Staff at Carolinas Hospital System.

WHAT IS NEUROLOGIC RELIEF CENTER TECHNIQUE?

Submitted by Dr. David Gittens

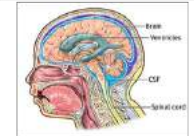
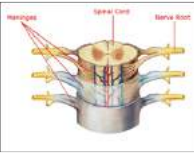
The Neurologic Relief Centers Technique™ (NRCT) helps relieve the symptoms associated with neurological disorders such as Fibromyalgia, RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy), Migraines, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis and numbness and tingling of arms or legs.

The symptoms to these disorders can include headaches, migraines, chronic fatigue, digestive disturbances, sleeping difficulties, high blood pressure, brain fog, body pain, facial pain, arthritis, nervousness, dizziness, breathing difficulties, wake up exhausted, communication problems, severe low back from failed surgeries and emotional difficulties.

So, what is Neurologic Relief Centers Technique™? (NRCT) When you have had physical or emotional traumas

(stress), tension can build up at the base of your skull and can pull on the meninges, which are not that flexible. Meninges are attached to all the nerve roots that exit your spine. When the meninges are pulled it could irritate those nerves. NRC Technique (NRCT) releases the tension in the meninges thus releasing the irritation to the nerves. When one's nerves are irritated, one may experience many symptoms because nerves control every function of the body. The vast majority of health problems other than infectious diseases could be stress and neurological in nature. We advise everyone to be tested to see if NRCT

(Neurologic Relief Centers Technique™) could help. NRCT is non-invasive and is usually painless. The doctor will perform a test to see how you respond to help determine if you are a candidate for NRCT. Many people respond to the test with a percentage of their symptoms relieved for minutes or days. The Neurologic Relief Centers have more than 200 offices throughout 6 countries. For more information visit www.nrc.md or call 843-678-9394 to schedule a free test.



HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS HOST "WALK TO HEALTH!" 2015

Submitted by Patricia E. Lewis, MBA- Chair, Public Relations & Planning

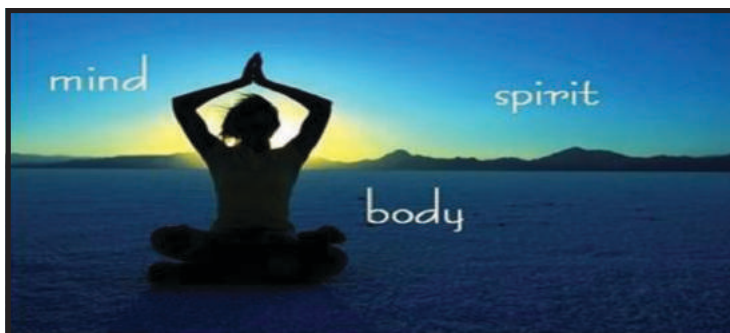


Walk to Health 2014/Photo courtesy of Ronald James photography

Annual "WALK TO HEALTH!" 2015 - Saturday, April 18th. The event includes a downtown two mile walk, light healthy breakfast and health fair. Live demonstrations and sessions on diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, stroke, cancer, healthy living, cooking, nutrition and exercise will be offered to the public free of charge. Rain or shine, participants will depart from Mt. Zion AME Church, 1305 East Cheves Street, Florence. Final registration and exercise warm-up begins promptly at 7 am, the walk and health fair at 8 am. Runners are welcome to participate.

"WALK TO HEALTH!" 2014 was a success due to the thoughtfulness, humble attitude, service to the community and ultimately, generous donations of PDMPA's more than 15 sponsors, 55 community partners and 9 churches. With more than 400 participants in attendance, PDMPA and Mt. Zion AME Church provided the community with health education sessions, on-site screenings, free giveaways and healthy cooking demonstrations. Founded in 2012, the Pee Dee Medical Professionals Association (PDMPA) is a non-profit organization which includes minority healthcare providers serving the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. PDMPA's primary goal is to educate the surrounding communities regarding health and healthcare related issues. Through education and community outreach projects, the organization seeks to decrease health disparities in underserved communities.

PDMPA's hands-on approach brings the compassion back into healthcare. Creating additional awareness opportunities outside the physician office such as "Walk to Health!", gives the community additional venues to understand their health issues, move towards preventative maintenance measures and ultimately, make better informed decisions regarding their everyday lives. For more information on how to become a Sponsor, Community Partner or to register your walking group, contact PDMPA at pdmpa2012@gmail.com. Donations should be made payable to: PDMPA, P. O. Box 7536, Florence, SC 29502. PDMPA thanks you in advance for your support.



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SO MUCH FOR WISFUL THINKING

Submitted by John Thibodeaux, 2015 Florence's Biggest Loser Contestant



John Thibodeaux

When Florence's Biggest Loser started, there were 72 people with 72 different reasons for moving forward in this important process of getting healthy. "I'm sure that we all had high hopes and visions of what we thought we would get out of it. We're more than halfway into the program now and I see that we need to evaluate where we are and how our expectations have or haven't been met," said John Thibodeaux.

I'm not sure what we were thinking. Did we really think that we would look like Beyoncé in 10 weeks? Did we think that eating one less Snickers per week was going to give us a six pack? After seven weeks, reality has set in for most of us and we realize all of the variables that go into fitness and weight loss: genetics, exercise, calorie intake, calorie quality along with work/family pressure and even depression. All of those unrealistic expectations have crashed into the hard reality that personal growth and change of any kind is difficult.

The simple truth is that it's just flat-out hard to overcome the relentless nature of the obstacles in front of you. The scale doesn't care how hard work was today. Your butt doesn't care if you had an argument with your spouse. The gym building doesn't care if you workout there today or not. That bag of potato chips doesn't care if you eat one chip or the whole bag. It's your MIND that's the key, not your body.

Many of the habits that we've developed over our lives work contrary to our own best interests but it's such a gradual process that we may not realize how far off we are from where we need to be. On top of that, our culture barrages us with images of unattainable beauty juxtaposed with commercials for greasy bacon and cheese surrounded by a deep fried chicken "bun". Oh, and let's wash it down with something so sugary that it's like drinking syrup. Yet, despite it all, everyday people decide to make major changes, and not just those people in this year's Biggest Loser. Anyone trying to make any major change deserves to be congratulated because it isn't easy to confront your fears. The truth is that most people WISH for change but they don't really STRIVE for it.

Wishful thoughts are fun (ex. I wish I had a body like Beyoncé.) However, these thoughts have no real role in determining personal success. Whatever major change you are working on, purposefully and definitively address it. And do it now, not tomorrow, not next year. This is not some platitude. I mean LITERALLY attack it...right now. You will be stunned at the weight it takes off your shoulders, no matter what the specific goal is. That's the difference between wishing and striving. When you take on your very toughest issues, you get all of the benefits of striving for improvement and leave behind the draining mentality of unfulfilled wishing. Each of us "losers" can attest that the benefits of "attacking" a challenge are far more important than the relatively little bit of misery that we go through to reach a goal. So, slap those obstacles in the face and keep striving for what you really want out of life.

About John: John Thibodeaux lives in Florence, SC with his wife Anne Elizabeth. He moved here a year ago from Louisiana to be closer to family. In his free time, he enjoys SEC football, working on his house and photography.

About Biggest Loser: Biggest Loser is the programmatic and fundraising arm of the Burn & Learn initiative which promotes a healthy lifestyle to the community. Burn & Learn is produced by United Way, McLeod Health & Fitness Center, Morning News, HillSouth, Sozo Life & Leadership and Miller Communications, and is sponsored by Armstrong Wealth Management, Hope Health, First Bank and Kelly Services. To learn more about Burn & Learn and to support the 2015 Florence's Biggest Losers, visit www.burnandlearnflorence.com.



John Thibodeaux (second from right) performs wall sits with other participants of Florence's Biggest Loser (L-R: Richard Sprague, Tiffany Strauss, Marlene Porter, Windy Sitton) while McLeod Health & Fitness trainer, Tory Zwanziger, observes during the first team challenge for the program, Work-Out Like a Viper, on March 3, 2015. Contestants were challenged to complete a Viper work-out. Florence's Biggest Loser participants have lost over 1,100 lbs. since beginning the program!



4 Tips for getting started *to get fit*

1

Define your goals.

Write out your fitness goals, desires, and dreams. Don't hold back. Write anything that comes to mind. There is no wrong or right.

2

Find your daily inspiration

Look at inspiring quotes. Listen to music. Read something. Watch something that inspires you. Anything to build your drive to start.

3

Create a plan.

Know exactly how you plan to achieve your fitness goals. Does that mean working out at a gym, at home, in a group class, personal training, or DVDs. Have a plan so you are prepared to start.

4

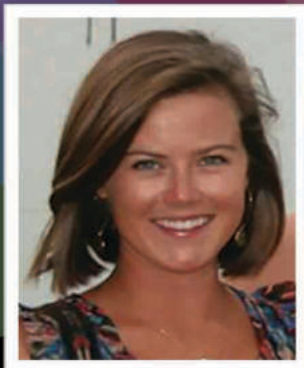
Just do it.

What is stopping you. Nothing. Go out and start. Do anything.

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IS FAMILY AFFAIR HERE

Submitted by Jeannie James, Clinical Operations Director Circle Park



Jeannie James

The Chrysalis Center has been changing the lives and the futures of SC families for almost 22 years. The Chrysalis Center is an inpatient facility of Circle Park Behavioral Health Services on Cashua Drive here in Florence, which specializes in the treatment of substance dependent women and their children. Initially being an 18 month program, the Chrysalis Center has continued under the changes of managed care to

provide quality treatment services so that women and children are able to make dramatic changes in only three months.

The daily treatment services offered to the women are group services, individual and family therapy. The therapeutic groups focus on trauma issues, alcohol and drug edotherapy and coping skills, parenting skills, medical edotherapy, and family management. A very important fact that the public may not know about the women that enter facilities like The Chrysalis Center is that most if not all of these women have suffered trauma in their lives and this has played a significant role in them turning to substance use and therefore being sensitive to this and addressing this while in treatment is crucial. During family management time women learn how to interact and positively parent their children, as well as learn how to cook, clean, organize, make a resume, fill out job applications, prepare for job interviews, etc. Family sessions are scheduled with outside positive social support members in an effort to improve the important relationships in their lives to better prepare them for success once they leave The Chrysalis Center.



The residents may be pregnant when they are admitted or may bring 1 to 2 children up to age 10 with them. The infants and preschoolers attend a therapeutic daycare center on site at Chrysalis Monday-Friday and each child has an individual treatment plan, just like their mothers, in which they are working on goals such as self-soothing, walking, talking, learning their letters/numbers, manners, basic social skills, etc. The school age children attend Del Mae elementary during the day and receive group, individual, and family therapy after school. So healing from the effects of addiction is really a family affair at The Chrysalis Center. The benefit of women coming to treatment at facilities like The Chrysalis Center is that they can receive the help they need without worrying about who will care for their children in their absence. Women can be referred from all over the state and can be self-referred to The Chrysalis Center or come as a condition made by their family, DSS, probation/parole (state or federal), probate court, drug court, a healthcare provider, etc. Even if a child is already in foster care, DSS may grant physical custody of the child to the woman while she attends The Chrysalis Center.


Once a woman/child completes treatment at The Chrysalis Center they may either return to the county of referral or remain/relocate in Florence County. Each woman participates in a discharge

plan before she leaves The Chrysalis Center to map out a plan for her to continue to be successful – this includes outpatient services for herself and her children, involvement with social support groups such as AA and NA, etc. This journey of healing has only begun with three months at Chrysalis so the length of time in outpatient treatment will vary greatly depending on each individual and their goals/progress. According to Jeannie James, Director of Clinical Operations at Circle Park/The Chrysalis Center, in her 15 years at this agency, she has found two things that really have a lot to do with the success of an individual dealing with addiction or any other major healthcare issue such as heart disease or diabetes, these things are the strength/involvement of the support system in the patient’s lives, and how/if they apply the skills/knowledge they are given – there is no “magic bullet” as they say, just a lot of work to change and maintain that change. With the treatment services at The Chrysalis Center and the continued support from family, friends, social support groups and the community as a whole, patients can make these important and difficult changes to improve their lives, their family’s lives for generations to come, and end up making a real difference in the community that supports them.




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WHY WOMEN NEED TO REASSESS RETIREMENT PLANNING

Men and women are not the same when it comes to retirement planning. Consider this: A husband and a wife of the same age, earning the same salary and looking to retire during the same year need to account for different factors in retirement planning. This is true even if they share a household, hold joint responsibility for their finances and equally contribute to the amount of incoming funds.

Despite a remarkable career trajectory and rapidly changing roles in the workplace, women need to account for longer life spans as well as unique career patterns. Many women are feeling the impact of these differing retirement realities.

Nearly six in 10 women fear not having enough money throughout retirement, and their amounts are notably higher than their male counterparts. It's important that both women and men recognize the retirement landscape is changing, and proactively address the factors and situations that are personally unique to them to help ensure a financially secure retirement.

So what can women do to better prepare? How can they plan to address these factors and live comfortably in retirement? Here are a few important tips to help you pursue your investment goals:

* Start now to maximize contributions: Save and invest as soon as you can through your employer-sponsored retirement plan, such as a 401(k) or 403(b) account, or set up an automatic transfer from your bank or brokerage account into your personal IRA, Simplified Employee Pension (SEP-IRA) or SIMPLE IRA. Whatever options you choose, aim to increase and diversify your contributions as frequently as possible. But, remember that diversification does not ensure a profit or protect against loss in declining markets.

* Take advantage of unexpected money: If you receive a significant influx in funds, such as a lump-sum bonus, insurance payout, tax refund, divorce settlement or inheritance, avoid the lure of spending frivolously and think about the long-term. If you are willing to assume the risk, consider investing some, or even all of the funds.

* Try not to sacrifice growth for safety: Guard against being too passive in your approach to retirement investing. Be strategic by increasing your level of involvement and make investment decisions based on your retirement liquidity needs and risk tolerance, which is essential to building a robust portfolio.

* Take care of your health now: Practicing preventive healthcare can make an impact on your bottom line by lowering healthcare costs

and allowing you to contribute more to your long-term future. It can also help cut costs during retirement and will hopefully lead to a longer and healthier life, too.

* Consider waiting to collect Social Security: While everyone's situation is different, if you can delay retirement, you may be able to reap significant rewards. By working longer or using income from other sources first, your Social Security benefit grows 8 percent each year until you reach age 70 in the current market.

The bottom line is that while both men and women should invest as much as they can, as early as they can, women face some different realities when it comes to planning for retirement.



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ECCF ENRICHING PEE DEE LIVES

by Jenafer Wenteler



From left: Libby Wiersema, marketing coordinator for Big Give Pee Dee, and Sarah Shelley, executive director of Eastern Carolina Community Foundation

Eastern Carolina Community Foundation is an agency supporting the nonprofit sector in the Pee Dee. Dedicated to creating awareness and generating funds for community improvement, ECCF began to take shape in 2005

with a focus on strengthening and growing services that enrich life in the Pee Dee for all citizens.

“Philanthropy takes a huge heart,” said Sarah Shelley, executive director. “You have to care about your community and the people in it. But most importantly, awareness is key. Being aware of your surroundings and the things that happen around you opens up opportunities for giving back.”

In keeping with that philanthropic spirit, Shelley is working alongside Libby Wiersema to present a day of online giving that supports nonprofits across the Pee Dee. On May 5th, 2015 from midnight through 11:59 p.m., Big Give Pee Dee will accept online donations for 52 area nonprofits. During that 24-hour cycle, donors can visit www.biggivepeedee.org and make a secure donation to a local charity, or charities, of their choosing. Having a minimum donation requirement of just \$25 reflects The Big Give’s motto that, “everyone can be a philanthropist,” said Wiersema. Before May 5th, potential donors are encouraged to visit the site and read the profiles of participating nonprofits. Nonprofits can win bonuses and prizes by meeting certain milestones, such as getting the most donations or the largest single donation. Donors may even have a chance to select a charity to receive a prize. By participating in this new national trend for online giving day, ECCF aims to reach younger donors and help nonprofits attract new donors.

“Nonprofits depend on philanthropy year-round and not just during the holiday giving season,” said Shelley. “The people in the Pee Dee have a generous heart, and we believe that will be evident on May 5th.”

For more information about the Big Give Pee Dee, call Libby Wiersema at 843-472-7990, email biggive@easterncarolinacf.org, or visit www.biggivepeedee.org.



Big Give Training: Jannie Harriot of South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation asks a question during Big Give nonprofit training on March 23 at the Drs. Bruce & Lee Foundation Library.

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Live Entertainment Senior Bingo

Children's Trackless Train Inflatables Bungee Jump
More events & Schedule: www.cityofdillonsc.us

The El-Shaddai Choir performance is funded in part by the SC Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts and the John and Susan Bennett Memorial Arts Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation of SC



4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Bryan Pittman's
"Tribute to Elvis"

7:00 pm - 9:30 pm
Carolina Soul
Band



2:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Elshaddai Ambassadors Choir



BURUNDI CHOIR TO PERFORM AT CELEBRATE MAIN STREET IN DILLON

Submitted by Maggie Riales, City of Dillon Revitalization Coordinator



The El-Shaddai Ambassador's Choir

DILLON --The El-Shaddai Ambassador's Choir is an East African gospel music group. The group's members are refugees from Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Congo, who were relocated from East Africa to the United States because of the Rwandan Genocide, then finally to Dillon. Their music tells the story of their cultures, all the while praising the Lord for all He has done for them. The group sings in Swahili and Kirundi – both languages of their native East Africa – as well as English. There are 23 members in the choir. They have performed in churches and theaters throughout Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. For booking information, contact (843) 433-0655.

"Celebrate Main Street" is an annual festival held in the heart of historic downtown

Dillon. It starts at 10:00am and lasts until 9:30pm. There will be venders, food concessions, senior bingo, pony rides, inflatables, trackless train rides and a car show. Live entertainment will perform on stage, the El-Shaddai Ambassadors Choir will perform at 2 pm, Bryan Pittman will do his "Tribute to Elvis" starting at 4 pm and finally the famous Carolina Soul Band will strike up the stage at 7 pm.

New this year are bike rides: Pearl of the Pee Dee Pedal Pushers, there will be a 25 mile, 15 mile and a 5 mile family ride, all starting from the Main Street clock. Out at the Wellness Center there will be a Pee Wee Pee Dee bike ride on the walking track for youth ages 4 to 10. Helmets are required. Out at the "Muni", our municipal golf course, there will be a "Shootout" Tournament. For more details please log on to our website: www.cityofdillonsc.us or call Maggie 843 774-5167. The El-Shaddai performance is funded in part by the SC Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts and the John and Susan Bennett Memorial Arts Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation of SC.



TOURS FULL OF BEAUTY AND HISTORY

By Eastern SC Heritage Region Program



EASTERN SC HERITAGE REGION

Not much compares to the beauty of Spring in South Carolina. Combine that with its rich Revolutionary War history and you have a great excursion in the making. Two distinctive tours come to mind: The Black River & Francis Marion Driving Trail near the historic town of Kingstree, and the Revolutionary River Paddling Trail on the Lynches River near Johnsonville.



Thorntree (c. 1749) in Kingstree, SC

Kingstree and Williamsburg County are at the southern tip of the Pee Dee Region. You'll notice that the shape of the large oak trees resembles the Lowcountry's landscape—somehow they seem stouter and more wide-spreading than the oak trees farther up the Pee Dee region. At the county museum, you can ask

to visit Thorntree, the 1749 house which once served as an encampment for British dragoons.

The Scenic Black River is a perfect example of a Coastal Plains black-water stream and you can get to it easily at Gilland Park, not far from Kingstree's historic downtown. Visitors and locals alike consider parts of the Black River in Williamsburg County to be the prettiest anywhere around; and large sections of the river's banks are undisturbed due to forestland conservation efforts by landowners, along with The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Pee Dee Land Trust, and other regional land conservation organizations. The whole area is full of Revolutionary War history that you can learn about through the recordings and stories on the Francis Marion Trail driving tour.



Francis Marion statue by Alex Palkovich in Johnsonville, SC

If you're interested in both military history and kayaking, you won't find another guided tour quite like the Revolutionary Rivers Trail. Paddlers navigate the Lynches River as they learn about the heroic General Francis Marion, famously known as the Swamp Fox.

Guides tell tales of the nearby swamps and forests where he hid out, fought, and helped defeat the British. At Venters Boat Landing on the Lynches River in Johnsonville, there is a dramatic bronze statue of General Marion.

To learn more about the skirmishes of the Revolutionary War in this area, follow the Francis Marion Trail Pee Dee Driving Tour and see the Revolutionary Rivers maps. Links to these and to other sites mentioned in this article are on the website: www.easternsheritage.com/military_history

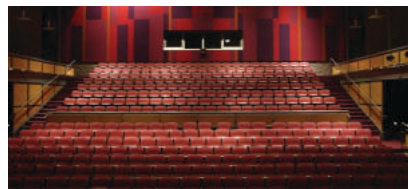


SPAMALOT (MUSICAL) APRIL 24-MAY 2, & MAY 6-9, 2015

AprBook and Lyrics by Eric Idle Music by John Du Prez
Directed by Arlene Boyd Underwriter Wells Fargo

Lovingly ripped off from the classic film comedy MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL, SPAMALOT retells the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and features a bevy of beautiful show girls, not to mention cows, killer rabbits, and French people. The 2005 Broadway production won three Tony Awards, including "Best Musical," and received 14 Tony Award nominations.

Florence Little Theatre auditions are open to everyone. We pride ourselves on having newcomers backstage or in the cast of every production.



All auditions are held at the Florence Little Theatre, 417 S. Dargan Street, Florence, South Carolina 29506. Prior experience is not required and all audition materials will be provided. Usually, those who are auditioning will be asked

to read scenes from the show with others. For musicals auditions, you will be asked to sing a song which demonstrates your vocal abilities. The musical director will go over the song before you are asked to sing. You will also be required to dance and the choreographer for the production will go over a dance with you before you dance for the director. Sometimes, there are callbacks after the auditions; these are opportunities for the director to make his final decision before casting roles. It is important to know that not being called back does not mean that you will not be cast in the production.

Florence Little Theatre

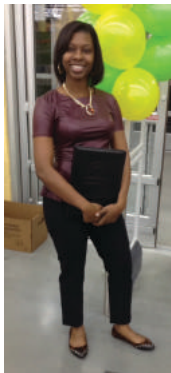
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LDTS EMPOWERS YOUNG LADIES

Submitted by Shakeita Price, Founder



Shakeita Price

“Ladies Divine to Shine” was founded on December 30, 2014 by, Ms. Shakeita Price with the assistance of the current Director, Ms. Drucilla Self. Ms. Price, 22, is an entrepreneur from Lamar. She currently works as a Behavioral Modification Specialist with Wright’s Care Services and is a member of the United States Armed Forces. She graduated with honors from Wilson High School in 2010 and moved to Conway, where she attended Coastal Carolina University, obtaining her Bachelor’s degree in Political Science in May 2014.

Her plans were to attend law school after obtaining her bachelor’s degree until she found a hidden passion of helping youth. Ms. Price uncovered

her passion for helping young children, while volunteering her time as a mentor and pursuing her undergraduate degree. After Ms. Price graduated she moved back to Florence, and began pursuing her masters degree in counseling at Liberty University. A few months later Ms. Price founded her non-profit organization -- Ladies Divine to Shine -- with the assistance of her friend Drucilla Self. Ms. Self, the director of “Ladies Divine To Shine” is a 22 year old successful young from Florence who graduated with honors from Wilson High, then furthered her education at Horry Georgetown Technical College in Myrtle Beach. She now holds an Associate degree in Dental Hygiene and has always had a passion for motivating and uplifting others.

Together they work diligently to provide a program that helps empower young ladies between the ages of 12 and 18 to make positive life choices. This program uses adult volunteers to commit to support, guidance, and friendship to a young person. By becoming part of the social network of adults and community members who care about the youth, the mentor can help the youth develop and reach positive academic, career, and personal goals. This program will be used to meet the needs of the community by offering guidance to the youth who are powerful for what they contribute as individuals, family members, community members, and most importantly, citizens. We believe every child has the potential to change the world, we plan to motivate children to go to school, cultivate their leadership skills, and promote societal changes so they can flourish,” Price said.

The mission of “Ladies Divine To Shine” is to help young ladies develop self-awareness, cultivate their leadership skills, and reach positive academic and career goals.

The purpose of “Ladies Divine To Shine” is to promote higher learning, enhance self-esteem, and promote societal changes so the youth can flourish.

The vision of “Ladies Divine To Shine” is to develop successful women and leaders within the community.



Positive Thoughts

L to R are as follows: Kierra Shuler, Drucilla Self (Director), Katherine Hyman, Kourtney Thomas, Allison Scott, Raven Rose, Beatrice Toney, Shakeita Price (Founder), Sherell Winns, and Valencia Jackson.



It's finally spring and we can't wait to see you!

Our green team has been hard at work this winter growing only the best and most colorful blooms and we're ready to decorate your homes and gardens. Looking forward to seeing you soon! " We'll see you in the garden!"



Tim and Lisa King

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Quick Tips on how to Make Your Garden Look Great:

- Time to divide, re-locate and plant perennials. Lisa is planting accent shrubbery and anything else she can get Tim to plant before it gets too hot.
- We're cleaning out clay pots and other containers that we're planning on planting with fresh summer flowering annuals after Easter. We group them together in place then fill with Tim's mix until we're ready to plant.
- We're fertilizing our Blueberry Bushes with Holly Tone.
- We are planting our herb garden and bringing in the Basil on nights when it's too cold.



GIRL SCOUTS RECRUITING, REFINING

by Mallory Brayboy



Benita Jacobs

The Girl Scouts Mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. “In Girl Scouts we’re looking for girls to have the fun, friendship and fellowship of Girl Scouting”, says Benita Jacobs of Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina.

Girl Scouts welcome all girls from 5K through 12th grade regardless of background, race, or religion. “We’re just looking for them to do their best to do what our promise and law says”, says Jacobs.

Benita Jacobs has been a Girl Scout staff member for 30 years. As a student at Benedict College, Jacobs worked part time with Congaree Girl Scouts Council, Columbia, SC doing light office work. Upon graduation, a Field Executive position was available and Jacobs secured the job and worked there 9 ½ years handling recruitment, retention, and training. Upon securing a Field Director position with formerly Pee Dee Girl Scout Council and now Girl Scouts of Eastern SC

(Florence) she is now the Volunteer Enhancement Coordinator. Jacobs’s position entails training, membership cultivation and adult retention. March 12, 2015 marked 103 years that the organization has been in effect. “Such a long tradition is very strong and still standing. That means a lot in itself”, says Jacobs. She attributes Girl Scouts to helping her in many ways including overcoming a fear of public speaking.

Girl Scouts of Eastern SC is serving more than 8,000 girls and is open to all girls grades K5 through 12th. Currently there are about 19 troops in the Florence area and more to come. All experiences in Girl Scouts incorporate the Discover, Connect and Take Action keys to leadership. Girls discover themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world. They connect with other girls and adults and they take action to make the world a better place. For each grade level the Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting book is available. It lists the different badges that can be earned and the activities to complete in order to receive them. Each activity must be signed off by a parent or guardian. Girl Guide books have recently been accompanied by Journey books as additional resources.

For Jacobs seeing the growth of the girls is the most rewarding aspect of working in the organization. “I have seen girls that have been Daisies go all the way become Ambassadors. Some of them have received their Gold award, which is the highest award in Girls Scouts.” Each award has specific activities and tasks that must be completed successfully in order to be awarded. All awards correlate to specific grade levels within the organization. Bronze, Silver, and Gold are the highest awards.

Jacobs says the troops of Girl Scouts of Eastern SC are mostly diverse. “We have girls from many different backgrounds that are in Girl Scouts.” She recalls a former Girl Scout telling her how much she enjoyed Girl Scouts growing up. The organization left a lasting impression on her because she was insecure about her appearance as a child. In Girl Scouts she was welcomed and accepted. “People come in and they all have different things going on in their lives and sometimes given that ear just to listen makes a difference in their lives” says Jacobs.

If interested in placing a daughter in Girl Scouts or becoming a volunteer, contact Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina at (843)669-5174 or visit them at www.girlscoutseasc.org.

SMITH RECEIVES AWARD

Submitted by Pam Little-McDaniel, Florence School District One Director of Public Relations



Kendra Smith

Kendra Smith, a senior at South Florence High School, is the recipient of the national, coveted Stellar award for her gospel album, Something New. She received the award in Las Vegas this past weekend at Orleans Arena. The Chicago-based Central City Productions, Inc. (CCP) produces the Stellar Gospel Music Awards which have become the premier gospel event that recognizes and honors African American artists.

Smith’s youth album, which edged out three other national youth artists, is sold in over 1600 stores in the country. Locally, it can be found at Lifeway, Pee Dee Christian Bookstore, and Ray’s. The Stellar awards will be televised on Sunday, April 5th on TV-One. This one-of-a-kind award show has showcased top Gospel artists and many television and film stars. Check your local listings for the specific schedule.

Kendra is the daughter of Kenneth and Tasha Smith. After graduating from South Florence, she plans to attend Winthrop University. Her album, Something New, is produced by John P. Kee’s music director, Garland Miche Waller. To learn more about Kendra, visit her website at www.kendrasmithmusic.org

FCC IS CATALYST FOR GRADS

by Les Echols



Jamie Seastrunk

With a number of graduates having moved on into well-paying careers, the Florence Career Center is more than a center for occupational education, but a viable part of workforce and economic development in our community. Florence Career Center has become a springboard for career and personal development in the Pee Dee area. From firefighting to robotics, the innovative programs offered to high school students are molding the next generation of employees,

leaders and executives.

Jamie Seastrunk completed a welding program at FCC in 2012. Less than three years later, he is employed as a welder by GE Healthcare, one of the most prominent companies in the world. Jamie cites a good foundation and hands on experience as keys to his career success. FCC gave him a basic knowledge of how to work safely and how to use welding equipment. Jamie went on to complete the welding program at Florence-Darlington Technical College and started his internship with GE upon completion. He was hired full time in the summer of 2014. I would recommend the Career Center to anyone, stated Jamie, adding, “without them I would not be where I am today”.



Crayton Davis

Crayton Davis is also an enthusiast about his experience at Florence Career Center. A 2013 graduate of West Florence high school, Crayton went directly to work for Sam Carbis Solutions (formerly Aluminum Ladder). “Welding is a great field” said Crayton, who looks to ship out for the US Navy in the summer of 2015. “All the practical work helped to benefit me in the long-run”.

Al Bradley, Director of the Career Center stated that “Here at the Career Center, we continue to pride ourselves on the accomplishments of our students as they move into the professional world”.



QUARTERLY QUESTIONS...

by Jenafer Wentler

JenaferWentler Would Like to Know the Answers to the Following Questions:

How do you/would you show your appreciation to the United States' Armed Forces?



Ron Midbrod, 68, of Florence

Belongs to the Marine Corps League in Florence, SC. Specifically, detachment 410. Ron and many others join together to discuss matters concerning veterans and how the community can benefit from the acts and services from the Marine Corps League.

The League participates in Toys for Tots, Honor Guard for veterans' funerals, and many more community-based services.



Cooper Gasque, 26 , of Marion

is a veteran of the U.S. Army. He believes in staying true to the meaning of the American flag, the U.S. Constitution, and the foundation that the Founding Fathers created for this country. Cooper states, "Everyone deserves an amount of honor and respect", and he always thanks his fellow veterans for their service.

What would you say to someone who is a victim of domestic violence?



Annie Charles: 59, Dillon, SC

"To me, you are a beautiful person. Don't let anyone treat you otherwise." Ms. Annie's advice is to get out of a bad situation as fast as possible. She is a strong believer that God intended for all victims to have a better life. Annie recommends seeking agencies for aid or a friend to confide in, in order to uplift and inspire people stuck in a horrible situation.

uplift and inspire people stuck in a horrible situation.



Betsy Davis: South Carolina

Being a former victim of domestic violence, Betsy understands the struggles of finding yourself in an abusive situation. Betsy advises for victims to look for the signs and make the right decisions to have a better life. She understands that each situation is different and the level of difficulty is even worse

when the victim has children in the home. Betsy says, "Once it happens, it will keep happening. The best thing for you to do is walk away. Give them and yourself a better life."

What does it mean to give back?



Kacey Lewis: 21, Florence, SC- Student at FMU

Kacey strives to bring people to a level where they are comfortable. To her, giving back means helping anyone who is without basic necessities. Kacey says, "I want to help people that aren't doing as well as I am to make sure they feel safe."




Garrett Smith: 19, Lamar, SC- student

Garrett believes in caring for the community and the people who live in it. He wants to give them something to thrive on. Garrett says, "You reap what you sow."

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LEGACY: THE ANSEL ADAMS EXPERIENCE

Submitted by The Florence Regional Arts Alliance



Large Format Camera by Kathleen Kennebeck

In collaboration with the Florence County Museum, the Florence Regional Arts Alliance is introducing a new exhibition in the museum's Waters Gallery. The Legacy exhibition, traces the influence and legacy of Ansel Adams in the work of 5 local women artists. It is the second exhibit in the newly restored space following the Pee Dee Regional and will run April 10 - June 28. Legacy features the work of Tari Federer, Kathleen

Kennebeck, Elizabeth Kinser, Julie Mixon and Allison Triplett. In the Fall of 2014, Julie Mixon, Assistant Professor of Art at Francis Marion University, took the students featured in this exhibit to the Eastern Sierras of California for a trip she titled: The Ansel Adams Experience. The project title references one of the most revered photographers of all time. In short, Ansel Adams was a pioneer in the world of photography, specifically in landscape photography. Adams is revered for his complete dedication in every step of the photographic process and is known for his majestic landscape images of the American West. During this travel experience, the group went to places such as Yosemite National Forest, Mono Lake, Bodie Ghost Town and surrounding areas.

One of the goals of this trip was to experience just a little bit of how Adams created his iconic images by using a large format film camera. Students were also encouraged to photograph using digital means and emphasis was placed on creating images that define their personal vision and interpretation of the Eastern Sierra landscape. The exhibit title references the enduring importance of the teacher-student model. The artists featured in this exhibit have a lineage to Ansel Adams because of the passing of information. One of Mixon's professors of photography (Gilbert Leebrick) was inspired by Adams and learned much directly from him. In turn, Leebrick shared this information and inspiration with Mixon, which she has shared with her students. This legacy of information will continue with the artists featured in this exhibit. The hope is that the students will take these fundamental techniques and ideas which have been passed on and apply them to their own purposes in image-based media.



Eastern Sierras by Julie Mixon

The students' trip was funded by Francis Marion University's REAL (Ready to Experience Applied Learning) Grant Program, which is designed to enhance the student's learning through nontraditional learning, which takes place outside of the classroom. The Florence Regional Arts Alliance hopes Florence County will enjoy these encounters five local artists have captured. The exhibition will feature a looped video chronicling the artists' stories and experiences. The Alliance invites the viewer to connect with the artist by hearing their story and hopefully providing a deeper level of understanding between the gallery visitor and the artist. The Artist Reception for this exhibit will coincide with the Florence Regional Arts Alliance's Arts Awards Presentations on May 12 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. This event and exhibit is made possible through the generous support of individual donors and the sponsorship of First Reliance Bank, She Magazine and Diversity Works Magazine.



Eastern Sierras by Julie Mixon

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 Tuesday through Saturday from 10am - 5pm and on Sundays from 2pm - 5pm. The Florence Regional Arts Alliance is a community-based local arts agency that serves the citizens of Florence County and the Pee Dee. It strives to promote the arts as a catalyst for community cohesiveness, educational advancement and economic growth. For more information on the Arts Alliance or its programs, visit www.florenceartsalliance.org or call director Jeffcoat at 843.407.3092.

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LEGACY

THE ANSEL ADAMS EXPERIENCE



APRIL 10 - JUNE 28
WATERS GALLERY

135 SOUTH DARGAN STREET
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Legacy is an image-based media exhibition featuring the work of Tari Federer, Kathleen Kennebeck, Elizabeth Kinser, Julie Mixon and Allison Triplett.

Artist Reception will coincide with the Florence Regional Arts Alliance Arts Awards Presentation
Tuesday, May 12, 6 to 8 pm

www.florenceartsalliance.org / www.florencemuseum.org

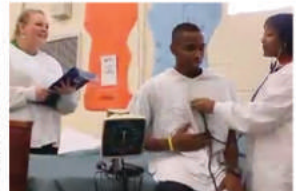


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